

Chair Report

— David Milroy

The theme of this year's CPFA Plenary at Glendale College was "Empowering Part-Time Faculty". All of us have heard "Adjuncts are the majority! PTers teach most of the classes! If you got organized, you could take over the union if you wanted to!"

In truth, the vast majority of part-time faculty don't want to "take over the union." They just want a fair deal when it comes to class assignments, salary, benefits and job security. Organizing and empowering part-time faculty, activities which are quite often compared to herding cats and then trying to get them to meow in unison, rather, speak to the reality of part time faculty involvement in doing more than wanting: ***parity pay, paid office hours, health benefits and job security or rehire rights.***

Yet, our sheer numbers are astounding! 39,000! There are more than twice as many part-timers as full-timers in the state and on our campuses. It is easy enough to calculate the ration of PTers to FTers is at least two to one. In some departments, the ration approaches ten to one!

So why do we still have unresolved problems which drastically affect our lives, such as low income, lack of benefits and tenuous employment status? The answer is sadly apparent: we do not speak with a unified voice, either because our respective unions do not pay attention to us, or, more typically, because we are not ACTIVE participants in shaping our own individual and collective destinies. You hear part-time faculty complain at every meeting you attend and any time you get two or more of us in the mailroom. However, talking amongst ourselves is not going to change anything. Neither will the occasional protest by a single part-timer as he or she voices discontent at an open union or faculty association meeting.

Imagine what would happen if part-time faculty were more involved with one campus, or even two, instead of flying the freeways to cobble together a living by working at three or possibly four campuses!! Adopting SB 847 would go a long way toward addressing our disenfranchisement and make more of us "players" in union politics on our one or two campuses .

With increased member participation in union meetings and membership forums, sustained progress is not only possible, but inevitable. Imagine appointments of part-timers to serve as members of negotiating teams so that our part-time issue would have a first person voice at the bargaining table! Imagine what progress could be made towards making the benefit of hiring part-time faculty true flexibility for academic and departmental reasons instead of the current purely financial incentives which guide the hiring policies of most colleges. We all know that the reason 63% of the classes around the state are taught by part-time faculty is not because the Deans want to be able to cancel the core of each college's curriculum at a moment's notice...***they want to save money!***

A LOT of money! The part-time parity funding is currently at \$50 million and resulted in an average increase of about \$5 per hour per part-time faculty member. The statewide average salary for full-time faculty is now \$73,877. Yet a part-timer cobbling together a full-time equivalent earns an average of just \$30,350. Calculated by the classroom hour, which makes it seem like we're earning more than we are, the average part-time salary is less than \$58 per hour — approximately 40% of the full-time rate for 15 hours per week of instruction (525 hours per year), which translates to more than \$140 per hour.

Thus, we are going to have to see more than a doubling of the average hourly rate to even approach pay parity. In round numbers, we will need to see \$750,000,000 in order to fund parity, and even more if we plan to hire many of these same part-time as full-time faculty with all the niceties of benefits, retirement and sabbaticals.

For next year, our union budget experts are forecasting the best community college budget ever in the history of the system. Now would be an excellent time to make good on the promise to increase part-timer equity, fund part-time benefits and provide paid office hours by fully funding these line-items in the system's budget.

It would also be an excellent time to make good on the expressed desire to have more full-time hires. Everyone seems to agree that we should hire more full-time faculty, but nobody wants it to come out

of his or her share of the pie. Every local and statewide union office needs to be figuring out how to make certain that a fair share of those funds goes to the largest single group of employees ...the part-timers!

Who is going to make certain that our administrators and union leadership act fairly and do the right thing? It's up to us! The part-time faculty in each department or school, on each college campus and in each faculty association...every one of us! Go to meetings! Write letters and e-mails to your representatives and union leaders! Join your faculty association and elect officers who will take the moral high ground instead of maintaining the same status quo and the policies which for the past 20 years have brought us to the sorry situation in which we find ourselves today.

Will this work? Just look at those campuses where the part-time faculty are most involved and integrated into the system. These colleges are shining examples of faculty unions working to ensure hourly rates at or near parity, paid benefits and job security. It can be done!

Remember, all it takes for evil to succeed is for good people to do nothing. Please consider becoming an active part of the solution! Join your part-time and full-time colleagues who are truly trying to improve the working conditions for each and every one of us and let's see what we can achieve together!