

-- Martin M. Goldstein

The CPFA Part-Time Summit in San Francisco on October 8, 2005 brought union activists together from all sectors of the PT spectrum, uniting them in the effort to change the 60% Law. Over a CPFA and Keenan & Associates sponsored buffet, they hashed out tactics and strategy, shared war stories and planned meetings, capping what proved to be an very informative and vital FACCC Annual Conference, "The Meeting of the Minds." Indeed it was.

The Summit was preceded earlier that day by the FACCC Part-Time Committee meeting, which more or less set the stage for the evening's discussions. It was a Kafka-esque meeting, beginning with the fact that it was deliberately not conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. It was to "reach a consensus," explained FACCC's legislative director Jennifer Baker, and she would "convey that consensus to the FACCC Board, since we were there simply in an advisory role."

FACCC President Dennis Smith and past President Rich Hansen were in attendance. FACCC's two part-time governing board members, Deborah Dahl-Shanks (Contra Costa) and Kathy Holland (Los Angeles) co-chaired the meeting. Also present were FACCC board members Timothy Dave (Peralta, former CPFA treasurer) and Mona Field (Glendale union local president and member of the LACCD Board of Trustees) in addition to most of the CPFA executive council and several other part-time faculty members and representatives from various districts.

At the meeting all of the faculty reps pushed the CPFA Resolution hard, with Rich Hansen playing an acknowledged devil's advocate questioning any change, and Dennis Smith listening, generally neutral. The atmosphere grew heated at times, but eventually we reached a "consensus" that the FACCC Part-Time Committee would recommend to the FACCC Board that they re-visit the change of the 60% Law, and generally, we were for that change to 80%.

Ultimately, everyone left the room learning something significant, which is no small feat. FACCC learned that we are all serious and committed and forceful in this effort, and that we are moving forward to change the 60% Law, and FACCC will either be helping or not. And we learned that the arguments of the Full Timers have to be dealt with, even if we think them specious, since they could sabotage our efforts if we don't. In fact, it became clear through the course of the Conference that there is no other group that is likely to oppose our efforts *except* Full Time faculty -- a sobering thought indeed.

The evening Summit was set up splendidly by David Milroy in a large covered patio area of the hotel, where all the large events had been held. If things had to be run by consensus, we were not in trouble here, since this truly proved to be a like-minded group. Everyone indicated their clear and present support of any and all efforts to change the 60% Law, and pledged to work to build this consensus locally through unions and Senates, as well as statewide. I noted that at Santa Monica College we had already passed the CPFA Resolution unanimously in our general assembly, and that a separate wording for the Senate has been developed, and that both are on the cpfa.org website.

It was further suggested that a set of "FAQs," Frequently Asked Questions, on this issue be prepared, and that is now also on the CPFA website. All in all, it was a chance to make sure we are doing everything we can on this, as well as reminisce with some old friends and make some new ones. And, absent a crystal ball, I'm going to fearlessly predict that FACCC, too, will soon become a willing and strong ally in this effort. It's the right thing to do, and generally, that's what they are about. As are we.