

September 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Given this very busy semester for our faculty, I will do my best to be as concise as possible in providing you updates from our negotiations team.

Spring 2021 Temporary COVID-19 MOU Negotiations:

Last week, our team was proactive and sent a Demand to Bargain to the District to negotiate the significant changes in working conditions for our faculty for Spring 2021. Given how dynamic the COVID-19 pandemic has been, we understand that you are likely discovering additional demands and obstacles that need to be addressed in future temporary COVID-19 MOUs; therefore, it is important that you provide feedback to the representative council member in your division. Of course, you are always welcome to reach out directly to our negotiations team if you prefer.

The first two MOUs that we negotiated since the beginning of the pandemic were a huge success in terms of approval and participation. This was only possible through our unity. We managed to negotiate some of the strongest MOUs in comparison to surrounding districts, and it resulted in financial relief for our faculty during a much-needed time. It is important that we maintain this unity as we continue negotiating additional MOUs. When our negotiations team wins, we all win.

Fact-finding:

Due to COVID-19 concerns and travel considerations for the fact-finding parties, the fact-finding date has been postponed for a few weeks, until 12/17/2020 and 12/18/2020. In addition, the fact-finding panel agreed on avoiding a Zoom fact-finding session in the best interest of all parties. The good news is that the District's final budget (reported to the state) will be out by the end of October. During this time, our Organizing Committee will be working on building solidarity and flexing our union power to the District.

"Working Out of State" Email from Julie Kossick:

Our faculty received an email yesterday from Julie Kossick (Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources) requiring remote work to be performed in the State of California. Given the fact that there is no collective bargaining language on the topic, yet it involves the working conditions of our members, we sent a Demand to Bargain to the District to discuss further and make sure that faculty are protected. Please provide feedback to your representative council member on this topic.

Red-Shirt Wednesday:

Red-Shirt Wednesday is back! Please send us pictures every Wednesday while wearing your red United Faculty shirt, and email your pictures to our Communications Chair, Brandy young at byoung@cypresscollege.edu. And if you still need a shirt, please email us, so that we can mail it to you.

Upcoming Newsletter:

Please keep up eye out next week for an upcoming newsletter with important articles that will cover a wide-variety of union-related topics.

Amid all the historical moments that are unfolding in front of us during 2020, we must have our own. Our fight for meaningful on-schedule raises, health coverage for dependents, and lab/lecture parity is about equity that is lasting and consequential. It is about important changes that disproportionately impact our BIPOC colleagues, that are disproportionately on the lower end of the salary schedule. Even our very own Vice Chancellor of Finance stated in a 2016 memo: "The results of the 2015 Total Compensation Comparability Study indicated that our District is low in both salaries and benefits across the member units."

Since then, the District failed to fulfill its promise to bring us to the 75th percentile, despite having the second largest carryover reserve among community college districts in the State of California. For the past few years, our district projected deficits in the millions, but ended up with carryovers in the tens of millions. Our faculty are saying: enough! We are done with the district playing politics with the livelihoods of our colleagues and their financial well-being. Meanwhile, we remain open to good-faith efforts from the District to come to an agreement.

In Solidarity,

Mohammad M. Abdel Haq, M.A.
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"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will" - Frederick Douglass