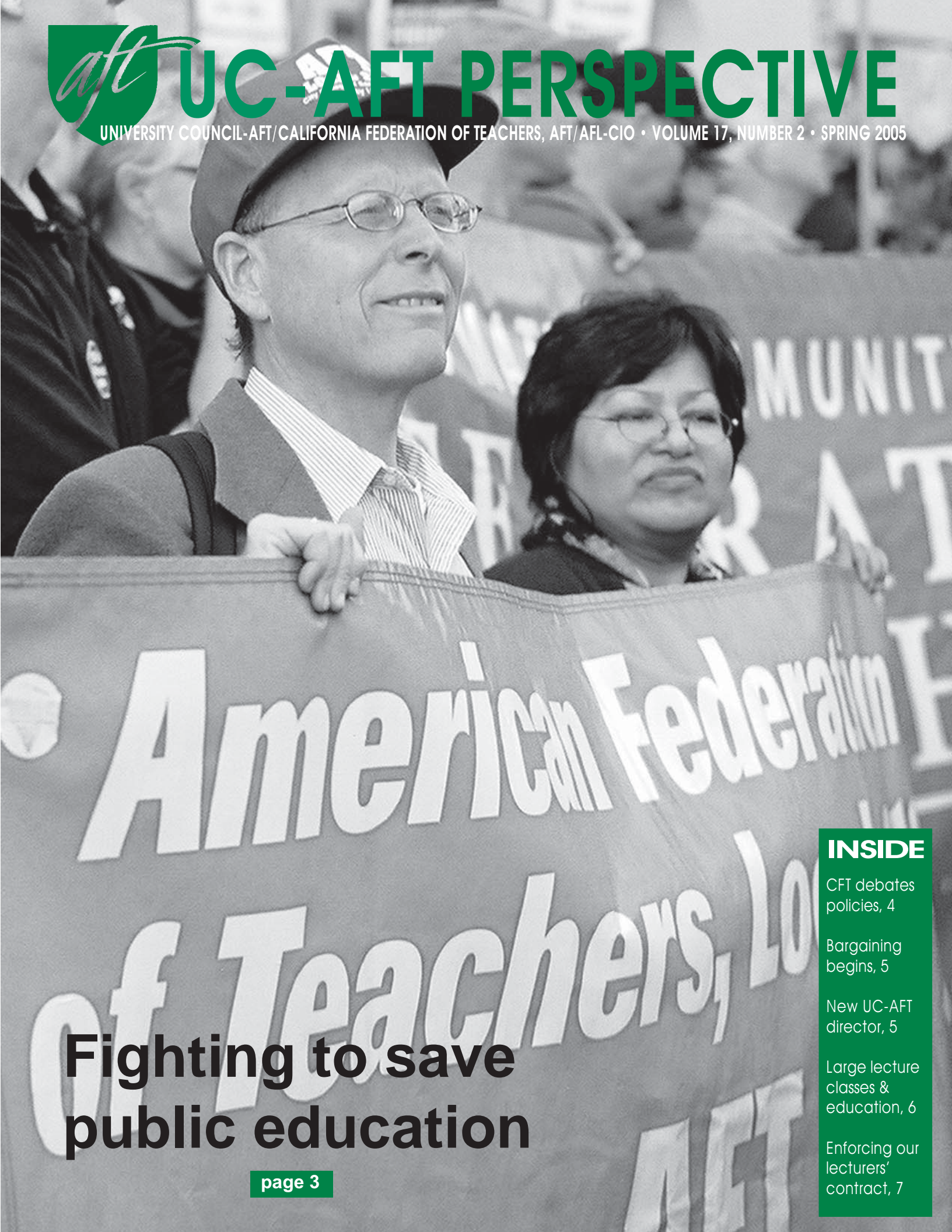




# UC-AFT PERSPECTIVE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL-AFT/CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFT/AFL-CIO • VOLUME 17, NUMBER 2 • SPRING 2005



## Fighting to save public education

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BOB SAMUELS, UC-AFT PRESIDENT

## Working for change on many fronts

As president of UC-AFT, I will continue to work to help defend the rights and professional status of all members in Units 17 (librarians) and 18 (lecturers). While it is true that the current contracts of both units have improved the foundations of our professional status, we still need to educate our co-workers and our general campuses about the important functions we perform in the UC system.

In fact, the recent workload committee meetings on each campus (see related story on page 7) have been very helpful in providing a venue for increasing the awareness about the vital contributions our members make to all aspects of the university system. I want to thank Alan Karras, Karen Sawislak, and Mike Rotkin for taking the lead on our workload meetings.

Another way we have worked to improve the status of Unit 17 and 18 members is by pursuing an aggressive legal agenda. We recently won major victories in both the Public Employment Relations Board and on local campuses through our improved grievance and arbitration processes. I want to commend Kevin Roddy on his leadership in handling the "Davis Seven" settlement case.

I also want to thank Miki Goral for her leadership in helping to protect the status of librarians. I plan to work with Miki and other Unit 17 members in their efforts to reopen and negotiate important aspects of the librarians' contract. Miki has also been instrumental in our effort to improve UC-AFT's financial stability.

Finally, I would like to continue to professionalize our union and work with our executive director to help support and coordinate our staff. I am proud of the recent contract we have

negotiated with the staff, and I am also confident that our recent success in increasing dues has made our union stronger and more effective.

### New CFT initiative

At the recent California Federation of Teachers convention, the delegates voted to have each local contribute \$3.00/month for each full-time equivalent member to the CFT Education Defense Fund, which was established to defeat Governor Schwarzenegger's initiatives (see opposite page).

Starting in September 2005, UC-AFT will be making this contribution to support the CFT effort. In fact, the CFT has already taken out a three million dollar loan to pay for television advertisements and other activities dedicated to preventing the governor from dominating the media. This increase in our payments to the CFT may force our union to remove the dues cap that we currently employ.

We will also be asking our members to make individual contributions to the UC-AFT COPE (Committee for Political Education) Fund. As a union, we feel that the current administration has presented some of the most destructive policies ever to face higher education in the state of California.

### Come to Sacramento

If you haven't made plans to be in Sacramento to make your voice heard on these proposals and others, now is the time.

UC-AFT will be participating in the California Federation of Teachers' "Lobby Days" from May 23-25 in the Capitol. Activities during the first two

days include briefings on the state budget and other legislation, visits to individual lawmakers' offices to tell them how governmental changes affect working people, as well as a reception and dinner with invited legislators.

On the final day, Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata will address the participants. Afterward, they'll be shuttled to the Capitol Building for an afternoon rally. If you are interested in attending for all or part of the three days, please contact your UC-AFT local.



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# Governor's proposals undermine working families

*California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has announced that he intends to call a special election in November 2005.*

He is touting his own package of proposals, and his allies among big business and right-wing groups have proposed yet additional items.

In response, labor and consumer groups have filed a series of initiatives. In total, more than 80 initiatives have been filed. While some are circulating, others are currently under review by the attorney general.

The stakes are extremely high because Schwarzenegger has allied himself with President Bush in his effort to privatize pensions and reduce public services. He is also directly attacking labor as part of a strategy to get himself a friendlier legislature.

## **Pension attack thwarted – at least for now**

In the face of widespread public opposition led by public employee unions such as the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), Schwarzenegger has backed off from his plan to outlaw “defined contribution” pensions, like those in the UC retirement system.

Union members from every corner of the state, along with concerned citizens, had protested the proposal, turning out at rallies and demonstrations wherever the governor spoke. Schwarzenegger acknowledged that the pension plan was damaging his credibility and his chances to pass his other ballot measures. But battle isn't yet over. The governor says he'll pursue the same ends through the legislature.

Meanwhile, the governor continues to tout the following items as his “package”:

- ❖ **Spending cap.** Tightens the cap on total state spending, ends protections for schools and colleges under Proposition 98, and triggers automatic across-the-board cuts when revenue drops. This would dramatically reduce the money going to education. It would also lead to a drop in funding for a wide range of social services.

- ❖ **Teacher merit pay.** Mandates that local districts pay teachers based on merit. Authority is given to local school boards to implement.

- ❖ **Redistricting.** Would require a mid-decade redistricting. Three retired judges would draw the new legislative boundaries. This is seen as a partisan power grab because, by law, redistricting occurs only every ten years after the census.

The governor's allies have also introduced a number of additional initiatives. Already circulating is one extending the period before a teacher can attain

tenure to five years, the misnamed “Put the Kids First” initiative. They also include a new “Paycheck Deception” act, a new version of a Proposition 226-style limitation that would prohibit just public sector unions from donating to political campaigns.

Other initiatives would encourage privatization of school and other government services, erode teacher tenure, give further advantage to charter schools, reduce fees for consumer attorneys, and make it harder for the legislature to adopt fees.

## **UC-AFT joins CFT and other unions to fight Schwarzenegger's proposals**

**Y**ou have certainly by now become aware that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has launched a broad offensive against education and the rights of public sector workers. One of the major targets of this attack is on the wages, benefits and working conditions of California's teachers. The governor has already begun raising money to fund voter initiatives to implement his plans.

The governor's proposals include overriding Proposition 98 protections for K-12 education spending, the replacement of state pensions with some form of 401k investment alternative, and substitution of bonus or “merit” pay for the existing system of pay increases that exists in public education throughout the K-12 system in California. These proposals would devastate a system already reeling from multi-decade cutbacks that moved California's educational system from among the best in the country to near the bottom of the fifty states, measured by spending per pupil.

At this year's annual convention, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) voted to assess every member of the federation, including members of the University Council-AFT, three dollars a month which will go to a special fund to support the political fight against the governor's plans.

The UC-AFT will not assess individual members any increase for this effort, but rather pay our organization's \$72,000 share for this year out of our existing funds. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the CFT, and with the educational community throughout the state, that is actively fighting back against these destructive proposals. The effective political campaign being waged by CFT and state educators has already forced the governor to retreat from a number of his earlier proposals related to pensions and merit pay, and we intend to continue working to rescue the state educational system from this outrageous series of regressive initiatives. – *Mike Rotkin*

# CFT convention tackles tough issues

*Beneath the shadow of Governor Schwarzenegger's attacks on public education and public workers, four hundred delegates to the statewide CFT convention*

debated and crafted their responses during the weekend of March 18-20, 2005, in Manhattan Beach. In a spirited foretaste of coming actions, chanting and sign-wielding delegates left the convention hotel during lunchtime of the first day to march to a nearby shopping mall, where they leafleted shoppers and passing drivers, asking them not to sign the governor's reactionary ballot measure petitions (see story on page 3). The convention also reelected President Mary Bergan, Secretary Treasurer Mike Nye, and Senior Vice President Marty Hittelman to another term of office.

## Debate and action

That combination of discussion and action marked the entire three-day meeting. The main speakers during the plenary sessions moved readily from analysis of the current dire situation to prescriptions for remedies. Kent Wong, director of the Center for Labor Research and Education at UCLA, rebuked the governor's attacks. He told his audience about the unfair attempt

by Schwarzenegger to single out the two small UC labor centers for elimination, leaving all other similar UC programs intact. At the end of his remarks, the delegates picked up signs and walked out of the hotel.

Accompanied by television cameras and a radio reporter, the members walked three and four abreast on the sidewalk of Rosecrans Avenue, strung out for more than a block, drawing appreciative honks from passing motorists responding to signs like "Fund schools today or prisons tomorrow" and "Don't grope my pension." They handed fliers to shoppers, explaining that the governor's proposals to privatize their pensions would have a detrimental effect on retention of good teachers, and garnered "thumbs-up" signs and supportive comments from lots of mall crawlers.

Bill Fletcher, Jr., former education director of the AFL-CIO, delivered a fierce critique of the labor federation's failed efforts to transform itself and its member unions over the decade of John Sweeney's presidency. While acknowledging the AFL-CIO leadership's good intentions and several key initiatives, Fletcher lambasted the federation's foreign policy, which he characterized as more or less a continuation of its historic cold war orientation. In its current internal debate, he said, the AFL-CIO needs to begin with the question, "How, over the next twenty

to thirty years, do working people achieve power?"

## Organizing to save education

In a surprise, unscheduled appearance, state treasurer Phil Angelides brought a loud cheer from the crowd with his stark comparison of the



*Mona Field, Glendale Community College instructor, argues a point during floor discussion.*

governor's promises and actual record. "He promised to protect education, but he cut funding at a time when California ranks 43rd in the country in per pupil spending," said Angelides, "at the very time we need to prepare our children for the economy of the 21st century. He won't ask the most fortunate to pay one dime more or close corporate tax loopholes, but he told 25,000 students, who had done all their work and made all the grades, that there was no room for them at our state colleges and universities."

The delegates, after some debate, approved a resolution bumping per-capita payments to CFT so that the organization could mount an effective political response to the governor's attacks. Another resolution called for local support actions to accompany the May 25 demonstration in Sacramento. Other resolutions reaffirmed CFT support for US Labor Against the War, Labor History Week, organizing pre-school workers, and defined benefit pension plans (and opposed the governor's attempts to privatize the latter). – Fred Glass



*John Laird, Assemblymember from Santa Cruz, who received CFT's Legislator of the Year award, tells delegates his mom was a teacher, and made less in a year than the governor receives from a single donor for the privilege of having a picture taken together. "Who's the special interest?" he asked.*

Fred Glass, photo

Fred Glass, photo



## Contract reopeners for lecturers and librarians

**B**argaining for Unit 18 – UC’s lecturers – began on April 28 in Oakland. That’s when UC-AFT’s elected bargaining team sits down with the University team to begin negotiating over several contract provisions.

After surveying our members, we decided to open Article 7 (Appointments) and Article 23 (Merit Review). In relation to pre-sixth year appointments, we are asking that after two years of service, all rehired lecturers will be on two-year contracts until they reach their sixth year.

We are also arguing that quarters and/or semesters taught in different departments or at different campuses in the UC system should be counted towards continuing appointments. In relation to the first six years, we are also demanding that faculty be reviewed or assessed before they are either rehired or not rehired. In the current system, pre-sixth year faculty are often reviewed

after a decision has been made to either rehire them or let them go.

Another aspect of our contractual proposals is the idea that pre-sixth year lecturers should be hired for the following year by March 1. Furthermore, we have proposed that all lecturers be put on yearly appointments and not be hired quarter to quarter.

### Merit reviews revisited

In terms of merit review and pay, we want pre-sixth year lecturers to be reviewed for a two-step merit after their third year. We also want to clarify that non-Senate faculty (NSF) can receive more than a two-step merit increase. Finally, we want to insist that Unit 18 members can defer their merit review, and that the merit review process for continuing appointments should not be confused with the old excellence review for post-sixth year lecturers.

Although we are making very mod-

est and reasonable demands for change in our proposals, it is likely we will meet some serious resistance from the administration. If we are going to be successful in improving our labor agreement, it will take the concerted action of our members as a whole. Therefore we count on your continued support, and we plan to communicate with all members on a regular basis through email and our web site.

Our bargaining team this year includes our executive director, two pre-sixth-year lecturers, and two continuing lecturers: Mike Rotkin (UCSC, chief negotiator) <matlin@cruzio.com>; Bob Samuels (UCLA, formerly UCSB) <bobsamuel\_us@yahoo.com>; Ben Harder (UCR) <blharder@earthlink.net>; Alan Karras (UCB) <alk616@aol.com>; Karen Sawislak (executive director) <ksawislak@cft.org>.

### Librarians at the table

Unit 17, the librarians’ bargaining unit, will be negotiating several articles of our contract in re-opener bargaining with the University. Each side had the opportunity to open (that is, renegotiate) two articles of the contract, plus the salary article.

The union opened Article 3 (Professional Activities and Development), Article 20 (Vacation) and Article 12 (Salary). The University opened Article 2 (Nondiscrimination), Article 30 (Duration of Agreement) and Article 12 (Salary). Bargaining will begin in mid-May. Updates will be distributed by email to members of the bargaining unit.

The team includes Anne Barnhart (UCSB) <abucsblib@yahoo.com>; Greg Careaga (UCSC) <gcareaga@cats.ucsc.edu>; Lincoln Cushing (UCB) <lcushing@library.berkeley.edu>; Ken Firestein (UCD) <kenfirestein@yahoo.com>; Miki Goral (UCLA) <miki@vzavenue.net>; Lise Snyder (UCLA) <lsnyder@library.ucla.edu>; Heather Tunender (UCI) <tunender@gmail.com>; Michael Yonezawa (UCR) <mmoneyzawa@yahoo.com>.



*UC-AFT has a new executive director, Karen Sawislak.* Karen came to UC-AFT from Leonard Carder, the union’s law firm. She received her J.D. from Boalt Hall in 2002; at Boalt she studied employment and labor law. Prior to undertaking legal training, she worked as a history professor at Stanford, fighting a lengthy tenure battle there, during which she also participated in EEOC and U.S. Dept. of Labor investigations of hiring and promotions practices at Stanford. Karen teaches U.S. labor history at Berkeley in the summer session, so she is also a Unit 18 lecturer. Karen is pictured above with the newly-elected executive board (left to right): Vice President for Legislation Kevin Roddy; Executive Director Karen Sawislak; President Bob Samuels; Secretary-Treasurer Miki Goral; Vice President for Organization Mike Rotkin; and Vice President for Grievances Alan Karras.

# Why large lecture classes undermine higher education

by Bob Samuels, President

While parents and taxpayers have often complained when public school class sizes expand, very few people have voiced concern about the continuous increase in class sizes at American universities. In fact, it is now common for the majority of lower-division undergraduate classes in American universities to hold over three hundred students, and many schools pack students into lecture halls holding more than a thousand learners. As a member of a union that represents faculty at a research university, I believe we should be concerned about this trend in class size expansion.

From a pedagogical perspective, the use of large lecture classes often turns students into passive consumers of fragmented bytes of knowledge. Moreover, large lecture classes tend to grade their students through the use of standardized, multiple-choice exams, and this type of testing can work to narrow the subject matter and reduce learning to a memorizing and guessing game. Making matters worse, in large lecture classes, it is often hard if not impossible for students to ask questions and examine in a critical fashion the knowledge that the teacher is presenting.

Not only does this use of large lecture halls threaten to undermine the ability to teach undergraduates important writing, thinking, and communication skills, but it also shows how universities have moved to a corporate conception of education where the most important factor in deciding on classroom and teacher allocation is the cost and efficiency of the system. For example, universities have found that one of the easiest ways to save money and help students graduate on time is to rely on large lecture classes that may or may not be doing an effective job of educating students. This use of giant lecture classes also contributes to the horrible job market for recent, and not so recent, PhDs looking for academic jobs in

higher education. The simple fact is that universities have chosen to put their money into technology, research, graduate studies, fund-raising, advertising, student recreational resources, and administration instead of concentrating on putting qualified faculty in small, interactive classrooms.

## We can do better

When I discuss this issue with my students, they readily admit that their education is getting short-changed, but my students usually defend this system by adding that they are getting a relatively inexpensive education, and so they must accept an inferior product. But does this have to be the case? After all, the UC system now has an endowment of over \$5 billion and it continues to pour billions into non-instructional services. Isn't it time for someone to

question this trend in higher education, and is it not the role of all of us as educators to fight for a better educational environment?

Another reason we have to be concerned about this expansion of class size is that the UC system and other public universities are augmenting the workload of their non-tenured faculty by simply increasing the number of students each faculty member has to teach. Thus, even if our contract limits lecturers to teaching nine courses, we still do not have an effective way of limiting class size. What we need to fight for is the same protections that tenured faculty have against class size expansion. We hope that our future bargaining efforts help to reward lecturers who teach large classes, and we hope to work with Senate faculty to control the growing use of large lecture classes.

## *New Video from the CFT*

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# Enforcing our lecturers' contract

By Mike Rotkin, Vice President for Organization

Fortunately, lecturers at UC now have a contract (or Memorandum of Understanding – MOU) that provides many new protections and enforcement mechanisms through grievance and third-party arbitration. However, union contracts are never self-enforcing. A contract is only as good as the activists at the local and state level who are willing to back it up.

Since signing our MOU almost two years ago, UC-AFT has been engaged in formal and informal grievances on every campus, a process which has helped us to implement the new MOU. In some cases, we have won decisive and clear victories for our members. In others, the victories are more ambiguous and the struggle over the meaning of the contract continues. In these struggles and victories, we have sent the University administration an important and unambiguous message: we will fight to defend our contract. Those of us in union leadership believe that we will see fewer violations of the MOU as the University administration now realizes we intend to defend the rights we have won at the bargaining table.

## Success at Riverside

For example, at UC Riverside last year, campus administration attempted to not rehire almost all of the pre-sixth-year lecturers in writing, and then compensate for the lost teaching by dramatically increasing class size for those who were left. In a protracted struggle that involved campus activists and statewide leadership, we succeeded in getting most of the lecturers rehired, class sizes reduced, and an agreement to avoid such practices in the future. Lecturers who had been forced to teach oversized classes while the grievances were being fought were given extra pay for the additional work they were forced to do.

At UC San Diego, we won grievances in which the campus administration finally accepted our interpretation

of appropriate retroactive pay packages and appointment levels for post-sixth-year lecturers transferring to the new “continuing lecturer” status. As a result of grievances affecting at least four campuses (UCLA, UCI, UCR, and UCSD), lower-paid lecturers, who had received higher pay because of new minimum salaries required by the MOU, also received merit increases on top of these minimum pay levels.

On several campuses, grievances and informal work on the part of union stewards, field representatives, and other union leaders has resulted in avoiding threatened layoffs or reductions in time, and in some cases resulted in increased appointment levels.

With respect to the process for resolving workload issues in writing and languages, we have seen a very uneven process that varies widely from campus to campus. UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara are successfully implementing the agreements reached by their original workload committees. At UC Riverside, at least at this time, we are seeing a positive level of cooperation in identifying and designing solutions to workload problems not seen in the past. UC Davis and UC San Diego are redoing their initial workload reports and we remain hopeful that we can avoid reopening bargaining on workload.

Other campuses are having mixed success in their attempts to implement meaningful workload protections for lecturers. In the languages at Santa Cruz, for example, the administration is using concerns about budget problems to block the serious discussion of workload reform required by the MOU. On the campuses where there are no meaningful reforms, we will be reopening workload either this year or next.

In general, we are finding that Labor Relations on most campuses and at the Office of the President (UCOP) are much more willing than in the past to work

constructively to resolve problems in the early stages of the grievance process, or even before formal grievances are filed. We have been particularly impressed with the willingness of Labor Relations at UCOP to explain the implications of

the new MOU to their campus counterparts when compliance has been lacking. However, we have been very dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the new Step Three in the grievance process, which had been intended to give Labor Relations at UCOP an opportunity to resolve

grievances before arbitration. It appears that Labor Relations at UCOP may lack the necessary authority to direct campus compliance with the MOU, even when it agrees with the union's interpretation of particular sections of the contract.

## Calling all stewards!

Unfortunately, too much of the contract enforcement work of our union is being carried out by a very small number of local and statewide activists. In particular, Karen Sawislak, our new executive director, and Alan Karras, our vice president for grievances, are owed a great debt of gratitude for their extensive work on local grievances and campus workload issues.

If we are going to be successful as a union in enforcing the protections provided in our contract, we are going to need to develop a much broader base of member activists to help carry on this work. Of course, the statewide organization will need to help train and support these activists as they learn to understand and implement the new MOU and its provisions, but we simply need to spread the work around more effectively so we don't burn out the people who are doing most of the work.

If you're interested in learning to work on grievances, please contact your UC-AFT local.

*Union contracts are never self-enforcing. A contract is only as good as the activists who are willing to back it up.*



*We're part of a larger movement*

## The structure of UC-AFT

By Miki Goral, Secretary-Treasurer

How does UC-AFT fit into the labor movement in the United States? Many of our members are only aware of the local to which they belong on their own campus. However, each local is part of a larger network affiliated with a county central labor council, the statewide California Federation of Teachers (CFT), the statewide California Labor Federation, and the national American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Each of these entities plays a role in giving us a collective voice beyond our employer (the University of California).

The central labor councils bring together representatives from unions in a geographic area (such as Los Angeles county, San Diego-Imperial counties, Monterey Bay, etc.) to provide mutual support in addressing issues of concern that transcend local bargaining and contract issues. The CFT brings together representatives from all AFT locals in California, who represent workers from pre-school, K-12, classified employees (support staff and paraprofessionals), and higher education (including community colleges and UC). The UC-AFT president sits on the CFT Executive Council.

CFT publishes *Cal Teacher*, which reports on CFT activities, positions on educational issues facing California, and successes and challenges facing CFT locals. CFT holds an annual convention where resolutions are passed that direct the policies for the next year. CFT has lobbyists in Sacramento who represent the organization before the Legislature, arranging for our members to testify on relevant legislation in order to present a perspective in addition to the official University position.

AFT represents its members on the national level, lobbying Congress on legislation affecting educators, such as the Higher Education Act. AFT maintains a website filled with content of interest to the higher education community: [www.aft.org/higher\\_ed](http://www.aft.org/higher_ed)

CFT provides support to UC-AFT in several ways. Its field representatives may offer assistance in grievance handling. It reimburses one-third of our legal expenses (as does AFT), and provides funding for UC-AFT staff who are assigned to each campus. It lobbies for legislation that protects the rights of its members.



Vanessa Tai, photo

*Service workers and their supporters walking the picket line at UCB, during an April 14 systemwide one-day strike. Less than a week later, the service workers had a contract. A union coalition, which included UC-AFT, provided solidarity during the action.*

As with all organizations, the strength and vitality of UC-AFT, CFT, and AFT depends on the involvement and commitment of their members. Anyone who has questions about how to become more involved should contact a UC-AFT officer or field staffer. Contact information may found at [www.cft.org/councils/uc](http://www.cft.org/councils/uc) and on page 3.

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