



UPDATE

May 4, 2007

• A Publication of the All Faculty Association at Santa Rosa Junior College •

2006-07: A Disappointing Year for Salary Negotiations

by Janet McCulloch, AFA President

On May 9, 2006, the members of the All Faculty Association ratified the Tentative Agreement for the first year of the 2005-07 Contract and, on June 7, 2006, the AFA Negotiations Team went straight back to work negotiating the agreement for the second year of the Contract. After a total of 25 sessions and 301 hours of negotiator time just for meetings, we have not been able to reach agreement with the District. Last Wednesday, April 25, the AFA Executive Council unanimously voted to reject the District's THIRD offer which included items such as salary, benefits, and non-credit workload tied to funding provided through SB 361. Clearly the District's inability to agree

with our definition of fair compensation has led to a difficult situation.

When the AFA Executive Council rejected the District offer, they directed the Negotiations Team to craft a counter-proposal and we are hopeful that we can come to an agreement with the District within the next few weeks; however, we do not believe that we can complete the process prior to the end of the semester. THIS IS EXTREMELY TROUBLING AND DISAPPOINTING SINCE WE HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED SUCH DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONSUMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH SO LITTLE TO SHOW FOR IT.

(cont. on page 2)

S-L-O-W 2006-07 Negotiations

by Deborah Sweitzer, AFA Chief Negotiator

AFA started 2006-07 negotiations with the District last June. To date we have accomplished three Memoranda of Understanding: one regarding faculty loading for medium enrollment lecture classes, one regarding implementation of salary placement for all Doctorate degrees, and one extending the "Pilot" Flex Program for an additional year. This is not much to show for eleven months of negotiations.

We started with an ambitious list of items — portions of 15 articles were "sunshined" for review and updating or revision. Currently we are focusing on only six items:

- Rank Ten methodology;
- Salary for 2006-07;

- Salary/benefits for 2007-08, including adjunct faculty medical benefits;
- Step placement credit for new hires;
- Implementing SB 361 for non-credit instruction; and
- Establishing a Medical Benefit Premium Reserve Account.

We are "close" to agreement on only two of these issues. The AFA Negotiations Team is discouraged by this lack of progress, and is beginning to wonder whether the District is committed to negotiating in good faith. It is now May 2007 – ten months AFTER the beginning of the academic year for which we are negotiating, and other than

(cont. on page 3)

Disappointing Year *(cont. from page 1)*

While it is true that the District's Negotiations Team members are new, either to the District or the negotiating process, it would seem that the District did not truly understand the importance of concluding negotiations by the beginning of April. It is also true that the late passage of SB 361 on September 29, 2006 made it difficult, yet not impossible, for the District to build a budget. When it was finally clear how much new equalization funding would be coming to the District (approximately nine million dollars in on-going funds), what we will now call the "Roster Fiasco" convinced the District that they could not commit to a monetary settlement until they could ascertain the possible effect on NEXT year's budget. Some of this is out of the control of the faculty, yet AFA continued to bargain in good faith believing that the District would eventually present a suitable offer that would address the serious inequities in our pay and benefits relative to the rest of the community college system. TO DATE, THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED. We did agree to work toward amending the Rank Ten methodology, but we never agreed to give it up entirely. The AFA Negotiations Team wonders if the District is really looking for a "Pretend Rank Ten" rather than actually acknowledging that, in order to attract and retain high quality faculty to a county where housing prices and the cost of living are outrageous, we need to be paid at "Real Rank Ten" in comparison to other districts.

AFA has always been able to reach a Tentative Agreement in the early part of April so that we had sufficient time to educate the faculty about the important points in the agreement, and we have repeatedly reminded the District team of this important fact. Although it is always possible to mail ballots to the homes of faculty members, the summer is not a good time for adequate discussion to take place before the vote. It is also the case that many faculty are on vacation and

would not be able to vote within the required two-week period.

The AFA Constitution and By-laws outline the process by which we hold the election and ratify the Contract:

Article VI. General Meetings

Section 2. The Executive Council shall call a general meeting of the **All Faculty Association** within 15 working days of the conclusion of negotiations for the purpose of discussing the tentative agreements reached with the District.

Article VII. Ratification of Contract

Section 1. Ratification shall be accomplished by ballot, mailed or distributed to each **All Faculty Association** member. Ballots shall be distributed at the time of the General Meeting, and shall be due for counting within ten (10) working days after the General Meeting following negotiations.

As the semester winds down, AFA continues to hope that we will reach some agreement with the District. This last year and the previous two years have been discouraging and demoralizing for our faculty and especially for the AFA Negotiations Team. It is clear that the District relies on AFA to solve many of its problems but doesn't always value the work that we do on behalf of the District and our faculty. When we experienced financial difficulties as a result of the State budget crisis, all of the faculty wholeheartedly agreed to forego one year of salary increases to insure the financial stability of the District. We hoped and believed that when funding was restored, as it clearly has been this budget year, we would be rewarded for our commitment to the District and to our students. That belief is being sorely tested. We are not asking for anything except the respect we deserve.

S-L-O-W Negotiations *(cont. from page 1)*

the continuation of paid health benefits until December 2007 (a result of the PRIOR year's negotiation) there is no settlement for the current year. Last year a Tentative Agreement was reached in April – late for implementing the provisions of the settlement requiring issuing a retroactive salary increase. This year both sides pledged to complete negotiations in a timelier manner; but, AFA is beginning to believe that will not happen. Until recently, the District always seemed to have some reason why they couldn't discuss money matters and each item presented in negotiations required weeks of District time outside of negotiations before we got a response. Delaying tactic? Possibly. The AFA Negotiations Team is disappointed and frustrated.

The District is claiming that, even with the unprecedented budget increases for 2006-07 (approximately \$11 MILLION of new money in continuing and one-time funds), there is little money available for negotiations. AFA acknowledges that at the beginning of the year, SRJC feared a potential major decrease in funding due to false, no-show enrollments. But, faculty have successfully increased enrollment to make up for the poor reporting practices instituted by the District—and there may even be some growth—due to the efforts of faculty. There should be ample funds for negotiating raises, and other improvements to faculty terms and conditions of employment. The State expects employees to get a raise approximately equal to the COLA (this year—5.92%). That is why, after all, it is called a Cost-of-Living Adjustment—we all have to pay more for the things we need to survive. Yet, the District says that the new money is needed for other things . . .

Of critical importance to negotiations is establishing the terms upon which salary increases will be based. AFA and the District agreed to explore alternative Rank Ten methodologies but, so far, there has been no agreement, although this

is one issue that seems to be nearing a point of agreement. In the absence of an agreement, the terms of reference already in the Contract will apply to negotiations for this year. Included in those terms of reference is language establishing AFA's interest in negotiating for a portion of the new money—both on-going and one-time. AFA had hoped to reinstate some of the instructional support faculty lost in past budget crisis years, to address the problem of low starting salaries for newly hired faculty who find it difficult to afford housing in expensive Sonoma County, to maintain adequate benefits, and to continue to improve equity for our adjunct faculty. But given the lack of progress, we fear that we may be headed for impasse.

AFA and the District have always been able to work out our differences in the past. One thing that is different this year from previous years is the team negotiating for the District and their lack of experience in the District, and possibly lack of appreciation for what SRJC faculty have done to assist the District in the past, particularly during the lean years. There is still time to turn negotiations around, even if we need to continue negotiating after the semester is over. AFA is willing to work with the District. The question is: Is the District willing to work with AFA?

**The AFA Negotiations Team
is meeting with the
District Negotiations Team
on Friday, May 4.**

**Check your
SRJC Outlook
e-mail on
Monday, May 7
for any important
negotiations news.**



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**All Faculty Association
General Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 16
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Doyle Library
First Floor
Room #4245**

All faculty are invited
to come and share your concerns.

**Survey of AFA Members
Due by Friday, May 11**

If you are an AFA member, you should have recently received a survey soliciting your feedback regarding a variety of issues related to the academic calendar, PDA and Flex. Surveys were mailed to home addresses of adjunct faculty members of AFA and delivered to campus mail boxes of regular faculty members of AFA.

Remember to fill out the survey and return it to the AFA box in the Bailey Hall mail room by the deadline, which is 5:00 p.m., Friday, May 11. If you have questions or need more information, contact the AFA office at 527-4731 or afa@santarosa.edu.