

AFA Report to the Board of Trustees, 11/8/22, AFA President, Sean Martin

NOTE: Due of the length of this report, in conjunction with the five-minute time limit for reports at Board Meetings, the content of the report was delivered live in paraphrase. The full report has been posted on the AFA website for review by unit members and Trustees alike.

CCCI Meeting: October 20-22 in San Diego, FACCC Legislative Presentation and discussion:

California Community College Independents (or CCCI) is an organization comprised of 13 independent faculty unions from across the state. We meet twice per year to share resources and information in order to improve representation for our local members.

As in most CCCI sessions, we met this fall with our partners in the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (or FACCC). CCCI and FACCC regularly partner on matters that impact students and faculty at the state level, both in the Chancellor's office and the legislature. The main focus of our discussion with FACCC concerned our various wins and losses in the legislative arena, plans for future actions, as well as the continued harmful intrusion of external organizations such as California Competes, the California Acceleration Project, the Campaign for College Opportunity, the Lumina Foundation and others who have gained an outsized and damaging influence over the fate of CCCs. In particular, these groups have worked through well-funded propaganda and lobbying efforts to misrepresent CCCs as failures in need of external reform while demonizing the faculty and their role in system governance. The reforms these entities have imposed on our system fail to represent expert input from faculty and are often costly

and disruptive of district processes without showing any meaningful benefits for students. They are dismissive of the legal and democratic standing of local boards and often undermine districts' capacity to serve their communities. AFA, along with our partners in CCCI and FACCC are seeking ways to restore the faculty to its proper role in ensuring students and communities continue to have access to a world class education at California's Community Colleges.

CCCI meeting with the Public Policy Institute of California to discuss their findings on the implementation of AB705 and the implications of AB1705:

In that meeting, we learned that the results of these measures have been more complicated and nuanced than is generally reported (e.g. by the Chancellor's office). Though the data confirms that more students are completing transfer level Math and English courses, it is also the case that more students are failing compared to the period prior to implementation. But more to the point, there are many gaps in the data that raise further questions about the wisdom of prohibiting access to remedial courses. For example, the data does not take adequate account to of students who drop a class before Census. There is little information regarding those who may be deterred from enrolling in the first place because they don't believe they're ready for transfer level class. There is also the concern about those seeking non-transfer certificates, e.g. in IT or CE, who are now forced to enroll in a transfer level class that is not directly relevant to their educational goals. In the end, the data seems to show little benefit to the students these laws are intended to serve. But more concerning, it seems highly likely that the statistical improvements to completion rates attributed to these laws are as much a result of excluding underserved

populations from the denominator rather than any improvement in equity or learning opportunity.

CCCI and FACCC successfully lobbied for additional funds to provide academic support for transfer level courses in Math and English. \$65 million was allocated for this purpose, but this is likely insufficient, one-time money. Without adequate academic support, we expect many of those students for whom these bills were designed will fall through the cracks. Further, the effects of these bills cascade throughout the college, impacting learning well beyond Math, English and ESL. When we consider recent reports on the significant learning losses incurred during the pandemic, we can only expect that this will pose challenges that require more resources to ensure the goals of these measures are met. Otherwise, we expect these measures will have a downward impact on enrollment along with our ability to serve our community.

AFA shares the district's goal of seeking greater enrollment through expansion of our non-credit courses:

We see this as a promising approach, especially aiming at matriculation of underserved communities into transfer and other programs. But, it's important to note that this effort will require a closer look at how our non-credit courses are supported by the district. Many faculty members have raised concerns about the lack of fair compensation and other resources needed to ensure these courses serve the needs the district hopes to achieve. In particular, the workload and compensation for these courses should be reviewed.

AFA has an interest in participating in the upcoming search for a new President/Superintendent:

We're seeking a seat at the table and Request the Board to develop hiring committee be composed similarly to when President Chong was hired. That committee had two AFA Seats, which we believe is both justified and essential to ensure our new President is well versed in the numerous labor issues that are likely to arise during their tenure.

College Council and Shared/Participatory Governance:

AFA continues to support the effort at College Council to reform our shared/participatory governance structure. Among our interests is the reduction of workload and costs to the district. We also have an interest in clarifying the scope of committee charges. In particular, we are asking for support from the district to eliminate bypassing by keeping discussion of matters within the scope of representation out of shared/participatory governance as required by EERA. To this end, we're asking that the district share widely the recorded Town Hall session on purview featuring representatives from all constituent groups and paid for with PRT funds. We share the perspective of District's Legal Counsel on these matters and call upon the district to provide training to district administrators and managers serving on shared governance committees on how to prevent violations of labor law. We consider it a legal obligation of the district to do so and will remain vigilant in ensuring the legal rights of the faculty are honored.

Enrollment and the impact on Associate Faculty:

I'll begin by expressing thanks to the District for their choice to use specified state funds to hire additional full-time faculty. As you are likely aware, the State is currently engaged in an audit of CCCs, examining how funding for additional full-time faculty has been used.

Unlike SRJC, many districts chose to use those funds for other purposes (e.g. enhancing their reserves). For this, AFA thanks and appreciates the Board for its wise decision to employ these funds in the manner intended. The downside of the increase in full-time faculty at SRJC is the reduction of available assignments for Associate Faculty members.

I'll also grant that some of the conditions driving our current enrollment issues are at least partly out of the District's hands. Conditions related to the pandemic and broader economy are impacting enrollment at higher education institutions nationwide. Though we believe the district can do more to increase enrollment, we recognize that we are living through unprecedented conditions.

All that said, we feel it is important to acknowledge that dozens of Associate Faculty members will receive no assignment in the Spring 2023 semester. To put it more bluntly, there is a silent and ongoing process of layoffs happening at the college. I've spoken with numerous faculty members, some of whom have been working in the district for decades, who expect to be unemployed at the end of the Fall 2022 semester. As I've noted in numerous venues across the district, many of our Associate Faculty Members work exclusively at SRJC. They have dedicated their careers to SRJC. However, given the contingent nature of employment for part-time faculty, it is a tragic reality that their coming absence will go largely unnoted by district leaders.

The current situation continues a downward trend of Associate assignments at SRJC in recent semesters. We have already lost a good many Associate Faculty members and this is a problem for the district. Currently, we're experiencing a period of enrollment retraction, where there are fewer assignments to offer Associate Faculty. But there will likely be times when we will need Associate Faculty to meet student demand. During the pandemic, when many Regular faculty chose to go

on full or partial leave rather than convert their courses to remote instruction, Associate faculty stepped in to serve our students. Then, when the district called for a return to campus, Associate faculty were often assigned to teach in person when other faculty preferred to remain off campus. That is, Associate Faculty have been there to support students through difficult times. Their service to the district should not go unnoticed.

And to be clear, it is by no means certain that Associate Faculty will, upon losing their positions at SRJC, be available in future times of need. In addition to the insecurity caused by the ebb and flow of opportunity, finding and retaining Associate Faculty is made difficult by our geographic circumstances. The cost of living in Sonoma County is prohibitive for a person living on an Associate salary. Associate Faculty are more likely to have outstanding student loans and other financial burdens than Regular Faculty. They sometimes rely on assignments strung together at multiple institutions and so need to live in an area where the cost of travel between those institutions (in both time and money) is feasible. Few will move to Sonoma County to accept an Associate position, as the commute to other institutions is prohibitive. Thus, it is unlikely that, when faculty members who live in Sonoma County lose work, that others will be available to take up the slack when the district has a need.

It is important that the Trustees and the broader community are aware of the challenges our Associate Colleagues are facing. Associate Faculty Members have been there for SRJC when we needed them. We must find ways to ensure that their service is honored and that solutions to their tenuous working conditions are addressed.

Thank you for your time and attention.