

The SCFA Sentinel



Published by the Sierra College Faculty Association

LEARNING BEGINS WITH RESPECT . . .

RESPECT DEMANDS EQUITY

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President's Report

By SCFA President Jane Haproff



Colleagues,

There is so much to report that I don't know where to begin, so I'll begin with the most exciting news and work from there.

Let me give you some background first. SCFA and FUSE have to pay for step and column increases each year from our respective buckets. The formula says that this cost will be deducted from the COLA each year, and if necessary, the District will loan each unit whatever amount they need to cover those

expenses.

As you all know, we did not receive a COLA this year, which means the District was going to have to loan the shortfall to the units' buckets. Furthermore, no one thinks it is likely we will receive a COLA next year either. Add to this, these expenses are ongoing—and I think you can see the problem.

What you may *not* be aware of is that we have some unspent growth dollars. The District proposed distributing proportionately enough growth dollars to cover the bucket with the greatest deficit, which was FUSE. What this means is that the faculty bucket has received an infusion of ongoing dollars, some of which will cover our rather small deficit this year.

We worked out in Omniparty that if the faculty agrees to ratify the proposal, we would put one percent on schedule to restore the COLA that was cut from the state budget and to help cover increased costs, we would hire two full-time faculty members, and take an amount nearly equal to what the new faculty members would cost and put it on the part-time salary matrix at the lower-paying areas where it could do the most good. So we achieve three goals: help for full-time faculty for increased medical costs, some movement toward equity on the part-time matrix, *and* more full-time faculty.

But wait, it gets better: because of Stan Spencer's insistence on using hard data to drive economic decisions, we were able to get the district to agree to convert part-time positions into five new full-time faculty positions!

It gets better still: Leo has agreed to a contractual addendum/change that adds these five positions to the Faculty Obligation Number permanently; this is in addition to the two over each year that he has already committed the District to. What this means in real terms is that next year we will hire *seven* new full-time faculty.

Please read Stan Spencer's Chief Negotiator [column](#) for all of the details on this. And, please join me in thanking Stan for the hard work he did hashing out all the details.

As I stated above, this deal has to be ratified by the faculty. I can't imagine anyone would oppose it, but it is important that you understand that our choice is to do what is outlined above, or to completely kill the Omniparty agreement and lose the ability to allocate the ongoing funds. Time restraints will not allow us to come to a different agreement this year.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Editor's Desk...

I know I shouldn't gripe about April showers that rained out over half our Spring Break—after all, California desperately needs the water—but I for one am thrilled to the tips of my size-6½ feet that the warmer and drier weather is finally here.

The dogwoods are in riotous bloom here in Nevada County, the pines are greening up and the oaks are leafing out, and the hummingbirds have returned from their winter sojourns. Before long it'll be time to plant my summer vegetable garden and enjoy a few weeks of working outside before the heat sets in and the grind of summer school begins. In the soul of this inveterate gardenophile, spring has sprung, and all's well with the world.

A couple of notes about what we have in store for you this month. Along with President Jane Haproff's regular column, our SCFA Chief Negotiator Stan Spencer has an important article explaining the contract changes that we're asking you to ratify in this month's balloting. For our part-time faculty, we're once again offering an in-depth guide to applying for unemployment during the summer months; and be sure to check out the piece on our Earth Days celebrations coming to Sierra later this month!

Finally, for those of you SCFA members who recently received your ballots for the spring election, you may have noticed that my name wasn't among those running for re-election to the SCFA Board. This was a conscious decision on my part: I've spent over 10 years serving this union both as it exists now and back in the "bad old days" when part-timers weren't allowed to be part of SCFA and had to form our own association...and quite frankly, I'd like to take a breather.

I'm hoping to stay on as Editor of The Sentinel if the Board will have me, so you'll still "see" me every month...I just won't be on the Board. It's been a fascinating, challenging, and thoroughly memorable ride—but more than anything else, it's been my genuine honor to serve the faculty of Sierra as your representative on the SCFA Executive Board.

Have a wonderful summer, and we'll be back in August!



Joan Merriam, Editor
jmerriam@sierracollege.edu

President's Report

(Continued from page 1)

The ballots for ratification are being prepared as we speak. Please watch for your election materials in your home mail near the middle of this week.

There are many issues on this ballot, including a major overhaul of the Department Chair article. We could not please everyone on this article as there were many competing interests to consider. So there might be something for everyone to hate in it. As troubling as this article may be to some of you, I hope you will join me in recognizing that it addresses in a positive way many of the issues that have surfaced over the last several years.

Just to name a few other things to look at: the District has agreed to define the maximum load for part time faculty at 65%; the release time for Academic Senate will be formalized in the contract; and the FERC process will occur more often during the year. Look carefully at your ballots, because your negotiating team has accomplished a lot this year.

Finally, let me give you an update on the .99% COLA from 2007-08 and one-time money. Payroll has worked hard to get the .99% on our April paychecks. This means full-time faculty should see it April 30, and part-time faculty will see it May 10. The one-time undistributed COLA from 2007-08 will most likely be on the May 31 check for full-time faculty and June 10 for part-time faculty, and the one-time "retroactive" COLA from this year will be distributed before the end of the fiscal year (June 30 for full-time and July 10 for part-time faculty).

It's lovely to end the year on such a good note: more money, more faculty, and let's not forget Ten Pay! Have a great summer, and come back refreshed and ready to volunteer on the hiring committees for those seven new faculty!



Negotiations News

By SCFA Chief Negotiator Stan Spencer

The timing of this column coincides with the Spring 2009 SCFA election and ratification vote. I will therefore take this opportunity to provide some additional information relative to the bargaining issues that we are asking members to ratify.

The most complex issue is the implementation of a Mutual Interest Item (MII) that was agreed to by Omniparty on March 31, 2009. Let's start with a little background information.

This year we are faced with the unusual situation of having the COLA completely eliminated from our funding, due to the state budget shortfall. The Salary and Benefit Formula is designed to use COLA dollars to fund annual increases in staffing costs that come about from the movement of existing employees on the salary schedules (for faculty, the increased cost comes from step, column, and longevity movement). Each of the three bargaining units is therefore facing a "hole in their bucket" when you combine these new costs with a complete lack of new revenues.

After considerable discussion, an agreement was reached at Omniparty to patch the bucket holes by redirecting growth revenues to each unit as ongoing funds. The formula specifies that 77.5% of growth dollars are to be spent on new personnel. Growth revenue is available this year, however, because the District has decided that some new hires should be delayed, and a substantial sum of personnel growth dollars remains unallocated. Growth dollars are ongoing funds—you get them in the year they are first allocated, and then every year after that as well. The default procedure spelled out in the formula is for growth dollars that go unspent in a given year to be allocated to the buckets as one-time funds, with the ongoing portion of the money remaining as growth funding for future hiring.

The holes in the buckets are ongoing holes. One-time money can only cover the costs for this year, and then the holes would be back again next year, most likely enlarged by next year's increases in staffing costs. This is why Omniparty agreed to the MII, which alters the default operation of the formula on a one-time basis by allocating unused growth dollars to the buckets in an ongoing manner. Putting ongoing dollars in the buckets allows this year's bucket holes to be patched permanently.

The MII redirects the majority (but not all) of the unused growth dollars to the unit buckets, with each unit getting a proportional amount based on the percentages the formula uses to divide COLA dollars. In relative terms, FUSE has a much larger bucket hole than the other units, so when the money is allocated proportionally, SCFA ends up with a significant additional amount of ongoing money. Given the current reality of state budget shortfalls, climbing unemployment rates, and general economic calamity, we do not want to be giving ourselves large raises at the college. We therefore agreed to limit schedule-wide pay increases to 1%, with the idea that this increase would merely represent a restoration of the COLA that was cut from the state budget.

SCFA further agreed at Omniparty to spend the remaining funds on the hiring of additional full-time faculty as well as addressing part-time equity by making adjustments to the part-time salary schedule.

(We also insisted that it be understood that SCFA's agreement to redirect growth dollars does not in any way mean that SCFA has endorsed the past practices of the District with respect to the reporting and allocation of growth revenue. The Formula Committee investigations into this issue will continue, and the MII will in no way prejudice the importance, validity, or results of the process.)

In subsequent negotiations with the District, we reached the following agreement for the allocation of the \$698,338 that were available after we covered our current step, column, and longevity costs:

- \$325,000 for a 1% salary augmentation across all schedules to offset COLA budget cuts;
- \$196,525 to hire five new full-time faculty through the conversion of part-time equivalent positions; and
- \$176,813 applied to the part-time salary schedule to address part-time equity.

The District agreed that the five new full-time hires will be considered permanent advances above our Faculty Obligation Number (FON), and they will therefore not be absorbed into the District's recent commitment to increase our number of full-time faculty above the FON by an additional two per year. These details are written as part of Tentative Agreement SCFA 0809-03, which will go into effect if the Mutual Interest Implementation is ratified.

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Negotiations News

(Continued from page 3)

We made the case to the District that the new faculty hires were not going to result in more class sections being offered, so the charge for the new hires needed to recognize that, absent the new hires, the District would have paid part-time faculty to teach the sections. Furthermore, the money for the hires is accounted for by the District as 2007-08 growth dollars, which means we received the money as the result of new students who enrolled last year, as opposed to connecting the funding to new students who would arrive next year (when the new hires will be teaching).

I want to commend the Sierra College management team for recognizing this reality, and agreeing to treat the new hires as conversions of part-time equivalent positions.

The cost of each new full-time position was calculated by looking at real numbers from the most recent data available. The average cost of twelve new hires from 2007-08 was calculated by taking their average starting salary (\$59,721) and adding variable and fixed benefit costs. After adjusting for this year's 0.99% raise, we reached an amount for the cost of each new full-time faculty hire of \$77,412.

A similar process was used to calculate the cost of a full-time equivalent load taught at the average hourly rate (\$62.40 per hour) from the part-time/overload salary schedule. The calculated cost was \$38,107 per yearly full-time load.

Subtracting \$38,107 from \$77,412 gave us the cost of each new full-time position created from the conversion of part-time sections: \$39,305. Multiplying \$39,305 times 5 gives the \$196,525 reported above (NOTE: I mistakenly reported this number as \$196,625 on the SCFA ratification ballot and in the ballot summary).

It is the intent of SCFA to use the money applied to part-time equity in a manner that will focus on improving the cells in the part-time salary schedule that were not improved in the most recent efforts to address equity. Generally speaking, we will try to focus on improving the low-to-middle ranges of the schedule, while honoring the commitment to bring the part-time schedule closer to conforming to the full-time schedule. The details of this application of the funds have not been worked out because we do not yet have the required data related to the amount of loading at each cell of the schedule.

Although the MII has been agreed to at Omniparty, it has to be approved by all three of the bargaining units before it can take effect. SCFA policy requires that MIIs be ratified by the membership. This ratification vote will be our only chance to approve the MII.

A vote to ratify the Mutual Interest Implementation will ratify everything described above.

If the Mutual Interest Implementation is *not* ratified, then the entire Mutual Interest Item will be null and void (for all three units). We will not cover our bucket hole, we will not get any money on schedule, we will not hire five additional new full-time faculty, and we will not apply \$176,813 of ongoing funds to the part-time schedule. If the ratification fails, we will not have time to reach an alternative agreement and bring it back for ratification.

Let's move on now to the contract modifications SCFA members are being asked to ratify.

The list of articles might at first look a little daunting. This year was somewhat unusual at the bargaining table, because without any new COLA funding, we felt limited in our ability to ask for big changes. As a matter of fact, we feel very fortunate to have the agreement relative to the Mutual Interest Item, and all of the advances it can provide us with.

Our bargaining time was therefore focused on cleaning up contract language and making it conform more closely to our current practices. For this reason, I will let the ballot summaries suffice for most of the amended articles.

There are two exceptions that I think I should address here: Health and Welfare Benefits, and the Department Chair Provision.

Health Benefits are an enormously important topic, both nationally and here at Sierra College. I am afraid that at first glance, the modified version of Article 14 will scare many of you due to the visual impact of the highlighted changes. The changes are not nearly as significant as a first impression might lead you to think. The article was restructured and reordered in the interest of improving its logical flow. References to legal requirements were removed because the legal requirements take precedence over the contract, making inclusion of the language in the contract redundant and unnecessary.

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Negotiations News

(Continued from page 4)

Also, listings of specific benefit plans were also removed because they were out-of-date and they change too often to be listed in the contract.

As for substantive changes, there are really only two. The article now recognizes the role of Omniparty in the negotiation of benefits. Our benefit packages are agreed to collectively at Omniparty, and any significant changes are then brought back to the units for ratification. Benefits are no longer negotiated individually by each unit.

The second change relates to the first. The District's contribution to benefit costs (the "cap") is now recognized as pooled money, as opposed to being applied to each employee individually. It is also stated in terms of a yearly amount per employee instead of a monthly contribution, to avoid complications that would arise from the transition to receiving our pay 10 months a year rather than 12 months a year. The change to the pooling of the District contribution is at this point something of a moot point, because plan costs have escalated to the point where an employee can no longer choose a package of benefits that is cheaper than the District contribution. The reason for pooling the funds is that it provides more flexibility to look at additional plan options at Omniparty.

The amended article that I know will make some faculty members unhappy is the Department Chair Provision. The existence of department chairs is an inherently divisive issue. Lawsuits have been filed in the past to try to stop the establishment of department chairs at community colleges in California. The fundamental underlying problem is the slippery slope that exists for department chairs between acting as a faculty member and acting as a supervisor.

There have been many problems at Sierra related to department chairs and the slippery slope. Because of the nature of the problems, faculty members come to SCFA for help, but we are unable to provide any help when the conflict is between faculty members. Furthermore, the department chairs and the deans often remain blissfully unaware that the problems exist, because the faculty members are unwilling to confront them.

We have bargained for a few significant changes to the Department Chair Provision to try to address these issues. We start by adding a paragraph that references the Government and Educational Code sections that limit the acceptable activities of department chairs.

We also have backed away partially from the recent change that made all part-time faculty eligible to vote for department chairs. Instead, we now require that part-time faculty achieve seniority status before becoming eligible to vote. This ensures that they will have at least the same amount of experience in a department as a new full-timer hired in the Fall who votes for a chair in the middle of the Spring semester.

A third change is the establishment of a conditional term limit for department chairs. A chair serving a consecutive term is ineligible to run for the position again if another eligible member of the department is willing to run. The goal is to prevent the position of department chair from becoming an entrenched entitlement. Please note that the incumbent department chair can go on being elected to the position in departments where all of the other full-time members want them to continue.

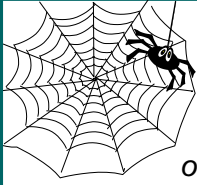
Another change is that elections will now be conducted by the Research Office instead of the AEA. Finally, department chairs will now be evaluated by members of their department in the second semester of every two-year term.

I know that these changes will upset some of the faculty—they were also not easily agreed to by some members of management. This was our best effort to try to deal with the multitude of issues that have been brought to us by our members.

I hope the work we have done meets with your approval.

In the next Negotiations News I will update the progress we have made in our analysis of the formula.

This update is also posted at: <http://sierraspotlight.blogspot.com/> where you can post any questions or comments of your own.



Web Sites

A gathering of helpful resources on, about, and for those of us in the world of Higher Education

- **COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION**

www.ccafca.org

Visit the *new* CCA website to see what's up with SCFA's parent union, and to stay on top of the issues that impact community college faculty. Includes information on upcoming conferences and workshops geared for faculty, an interactive map of CCA chapters, local chapter contracts, and more!

- **SUMMER READING THAT MAY IMPROVE YOUR FALL TEACHING**

<http://chronicle.com/review/brainstorm/nemko/summer-reading-that-may-improve-your-fall-teaching>

This summer reading list features titles on improving teaching and learning at the college and university level, most from a national association of faculty developers. From the Chronicle Review of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

- **INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY**

<http://www.earthsite.org>

This site features background of Earth Day, which was initiated on March 21, 1970. Includes an Earth Day charter and guide for earth trustees by Earth Day founder John McConnell, and related material.

- **CELEBRATE EARTH DAY**

<http://www.epa.gov/earthday/>

This Earth Day Web site from the Environmental Protection Agency features a list of Earth Day events and volunteer opportunities and tips for reducing environmental impacts at home, in your community, at school, at work, and while shopping.



Earth Days 2009 is Here!

Yes, it's time once again to celebrate our Mother Earth...and Sierra is doing it in style, as always, with our own version of Earth Days 2009 on April 22 and 23.

This year's theme is "Homegrown," and will include activities based upon our local community and environment.

ON THE ROCKLIN CAMPUS

Some of the great activities you'll find on the Rocklin campus are a climbing wall, a recycled and natural art contest, music, demonstrations of composting, gardening, and recycling, environmentally-focused vendors and organizations, and a fashion show featuring Haute Trash.

We'll have tons of food and goodies for sale, as well as T-shirts, sustainable water bottles, and organic totes. Finally, the renowned actor Lee Stetson will perform the one-man play, *John Muir: Among the Animals*, on Friday, April 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Dietrich Theatre.

AT NCC

Participants in NCC's 4th annual Earth Day Celebration can enjoy healthy organic food from Amy & Amber's Organic Baked Goodies, Top Dog, and Lazy Dog Ice Cream. You'll also find booths from ecologically-conscious local businesses, plus demonstrations and displays about climate change, population growth, sustainable food practices and many other environmental and social issues.

We'll also have live music from local artists like 2 hot 3 fast, Thomas Spellman, Earth Rhythms, Chris Olander, and Alishia & the South Yuba String Band, plus dance performances, juggling, storytelling, and face painting.

Companion Campus Connections



NEVADA COUNTY CAMPUS

The snows have melted, the ground is drying out, and contractors are busy putting the finishing touches on the interiors and the landscaping around our new classroom buildings. Every week, we get closer and closer to the day when they'll be open...maybe even by the time summer school opens in July!

In the meantime, we're facing some more major changes...not the least of which is the retirement of our long-time Dean, Neal Allbee, who will be replaced by former Dean of Business & Technology, Stephanie Guevara-Ortiz.

Neal, we'll miss you more than words can say...and Stephanie, we welcome you with open arms!

To celebrate his retirement—along with that of Lin Schiffner, Karen Parker, and Mary Wolleson—we're having a special Retirement Party on May 14 at 6:30PM at Tofanelli's in Grass Valley. Watch for details in your email "In" box!

TAHOE-TRUCKEE CAMPUS

While the snow is still on the ground here in the high Sierras, it won't be long before the locals are spending their days beachside rather than on the ski runs. We're all looking forward to spring—especially since we had a reasonably good winter water-wise. Come June, our rivers should be running close to full-tilt, and the lakes will be ready for summer swimmers and anglers.



We'll be offering a somewhat limited schedule of classes for the summer sessions here at the Truckee campus. The first session begins May 18, and features classes in business, human development, math, and government. For the second session, which runs from July 6 to August 14, we'll offer classes in applied art & design, English, humanities, and photography.

Finally, an invitation: why not take a leisurely drive up to the mountains this summer, and visit our beautiful new campus? For directions, just go to <http://www.sierracollege.edu/AboutUs/campuses/tt/>

ASSC Faculty of the Year

We'd like to offer a hearty **CONGRATULATIONS!** to the Associate Students of Sierra College Faculty of the Year honorees. This year, ASSC has added two categories to their awards: Outstanding Presence on Campus and Student Senate Appreciation.

FACULTY OF THE YEAR

JENNIFER KATTMAN (<i>Full-time: Rocklin</i>)	Sociology
SYREETA HARADA (<i>Part-time: Rocklin</i>)	Political Science
JOHN-MICHAEL KEATING (<i>Full-time: NCC</i>)	Art
JOE CAVANAUGH (<i>Part-time: NCC</i>)	Personal Development/Psychology

OUTSTANDING PRESENCE ON CAMPUS

JASON ROBERTS	English	MATT ARCHER	Anthropology
SHAWNA MARTINEZ	Biology	KERI MUMA	Biology

STUDENT SENATE APPRECIATION

PAUL COOPER



Part-time Unemployment: It's Your *Right!*

Once again, it's time for our semi-annual reminder to part-time faculty that you have a legal **and moral** right to claim unemployment during summer break and between semesters.

A *moral* right?
Absolutely.

Some say that part-timers receiving unemployment are "freeloaders" or are "milking the system."

Yet part-timers pay for unemployment insurance by way of lower salaries...few if any benefits...and virtually no job security.

Further, the law explicitly states that if you're a part-timer, unemployment compensation is your *right*. You *earned* it. You're no more a "freeloader" than is the person who claims Veteran's benefits, or someone who collects on an insurance policy after an auto accident.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's talk about *how* to file your claim.

✓ First, familiarize yourself with the process. Pick up

the EDD brochure, "For Your Benefit" in your faculty mailroom, or go to the EDD website at <https://eapply4ui.edd.ca.gov/>

✓ Next, file your claim by phone or online **IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOUR LAST FINAL**. Don't put it off until the next Monday, because there's a one-week waiting period between filing a claim and when your claim begins; if you miss the deadline for that week, your claim won't begin until the beginning of the *next* week

✓ During the phone interview, you may need to explain that community colleges operate on a different basis than K-12 (who are *not* entitled to unemployment). Be prepared to clarify that there is a law entitling part-time faculty to unemployment (the *Cervisi v. CA Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board* case, commonly known as the Cervisi decision).

Other interview tips:

* Have the college's address and phone number handy

* Never say you quit or were discharged; say that your assignment *expired* or *terminated*

* Answer "No" when asked if you have reasonable assurance of future employment

If you're denied benefits, **APPEAL THE DECISION**. The law is on your side, SCFA is on your side, and we'll gladly help you through the appeal process.

Remember: part-time faculty are entitled **by law** to file for unemployment: we are "at will" employees, who have absolutely no guarantee of continued employment from one semester to the next.

Even if your Fall class is full or your name is printed in the schedule, the law says part-timers have **no** "reasonable assurance" of continued employment from term to term because that employment is subject to funding, enrollment, and/or program changes.

For more hints and tips, go to the website of the California Part-time Faculty Association at www.cpfa.org or the CCA website at www.cca4me.org/part_time/unemployment.html.

Finding Faculty: a How-to Primer

With our new phone system, it's easy to find yourself lost and confused and wishing for the "good ole days" when every desk had a faculty directory with everyone's name and office phone number.

Well, there's an EASY way out of the maze...in fact, there are *two* ways!

- Perhaps the easiest is to simply dial the main college number (916-624-3333), then press 9. That will connect you with the voice recognition system, where all you need to do is say the name of the person or department you want to reach. (From on campus, dial 1222 and simply say the name.)
- You can also print out a copy of the phone directory: just go to the college main page, go down to the very bottom and click on "Contact Us." About halfway down that page there's a link that will take you to a .pdf file of the directory. To make it even simpler, here's the link: <http://www.sierracollege.edu/AboutUs/campuses/PhoneList12-19.pdf>





I Wonder Why . . .

...Sierra's Powers That Be decided to return to the irrational practice of holding NCC's graduation on Thursday, and Rocklin's on Friday? Yeah, we know the justification that's been floated around: holding a Saturday graduation at Rocklin costs the district extra money for setup, traffic enforcement, personnel, yada, yada, yada.

But what about the NCC students, not to mention faculty, who have *classes* Thursday night and thus can't attend commencement—even when it's their *own* graduation?

We need to consider what kind of message this sends about the importance of graduation to our NCC students. Perhaps more to the point, what it says about the importance of NCC to the district as a whole.

It's too late for 2009, but not for next year. There must be a better solution...so why not explore some alternatives? Like, for instance, scheduling Friday morning graduation on one campus, and Friday afternoon or evening on the other. I'm sure there are more possibilities...but we need to resist the temptation to just take the easy way out and slough it off with an indifferent, "Nah, it can't be done."

Sure it can. *Anything* can be done, provided we have the collective will to do it.

Paycheck Problems

Are you still getting your paychecks in the mail? Are you frustrated with how long they take to reach you sometimes?

Then why not take the *easy* way out, and request automatic payroll deposit? Your checks will get deposited to your account almost on the day they're cut... you'll save yourself a trip to the bank...and you'll never again have to deal with a check that's lost in the mail.

Just contact Payroll at 916-660-7607, ext. 7607, 7613, or 7613.

The **SCFA Sentinel** is published by the **SIERRA COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION** in Rocklin, California. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and letters; please contact SCFA Editor Joan Merriam, c/o Sierra College Nevada County Campus, 250 Sierra College Drive, Grass Valley 95945

◆ SIERRA COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION: 2008-09 ◆

PRESIDENT Jane Haproff Ext. 8056 jhaproff@sierracollege.edu
VICE-PRESIDENT Jim Weir 530-272-2203 jweir43@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS: FULL-TIME REPRESENTATIVES

Laurel Gardner Ext. 8017 lgardner@sierracollege.edu Nancy Martinis Ext. 7410 nmartinis@sierracollege.edu
Steve Linthicum Ext. 6231 slinthicum@sierracollege.edu Stan Spencer Ext. 8035 sspencer@sierracollege.edu

BOARD MEMBERS: PART-TIME REPRESENTATIVES

Wayne Barbee Ext. 3513 dwwbarbee@sbcglobal.net Paul Cooper Ext. 3556 pcooper@sierracollege.edu
Judith Kreft 530-273-4949 jkreft@sierracollege.edu Joan Merriam Ext. 3907 jmerriam@sierracollege.edu

DISPUTE RESOLUTION OFFICERS: Steve Linthicum - Star Kreft

NEGOTIATING TEAM: Chief Negotiator: Stan Spencer Team Members: Wayne Barbee - Nancy Martinis

SECRETARY: Paul Cooper

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: Joan Merriam

WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR: Nancy Martinis

TREASURER (NON-BOARD MEMBER): Kim Stevens

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