

SCFA

Sierra College Faculty Association

Meeting
September 10, 2009
4:30 – 6:30, Fireside Room

Board Members Present: Jane Haproff, Paul Cooper, Steve Linthicum, Nancy Martinis, Stan Spencer, Darla Jones, Lynn Medeiros, Andre Sims. Absent: Jim Weir, Wayne Barbee

Guests Present: Many faculty attended.

I. 4:30-5:15: Closed session for negotiations

II. Reports

Treasurer Cooper: There were recent expenditures (including the faculty breakfast on August 28 and the SCFA retreat on August 18) that totaled \$9587.54. Deposits from April through August totaled \$16,083.67. SCFA has \$13,160.73 in its primary checking account, and with savings SCFA has a balance of \$111,491.65 in all of its accounts.

Chief Negotiator Spencer: Dr. Chavez has stated at Strategic Council that with the current budget, Sierra College still has \$1.5 million of lost income to make up; however, this is just the most recent number because the numbers reported are in flux. The currently reported cuts represent a straight percentage reduction from last year's allocation from the Chancellor's office. There is an enormous amount of uncertainty; however, it appears that the District may be presenting the financial situation as more dire than it is. The District is reporting an obligation of \$2.3 million for new staff, but this comes with \$3 million in new growth money. This \$2.3 million will not be used to hire new people; something else will happen, such as Omniparty agreeing to put it toward step, column, and longevity costs, which are normally handled by COLA. So the \$2.3 million is not a new expense, but new money that will be used in part to help pay off the hole we're in. Haproff agreed that there will be cuts; we will have to discuss what they will be.

Spencer also clarified that there has been a fundamental misunderstanding regarding cutting contracts of those who have more than 175 days down to 175 days. No negotiations have happened about this issue. The negotiators take their directions from the Executive (E) board of SCFA, and the first meeting since Chavez put forward this suggestion occurred today.

III. Public Comments/Concerns

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The rest of the meeting consisted of public comments. Here in a much condensed version are the topics discussed:

- A. One attendee asked for clarification concerning “rollover money from last year” that could cover the cuts for this year. Haproff stated that the cuts would happen next year. She also emphasized that SCFA is not interested in negotiating a reduction in faculty’s ability to earn money, in other words, limiting the number of overloads faculty can teach. Haproff explained that the E-board directed the negotiating team to state to the District that SCFA has no interest in changing the contract language in Articles 12, 13, 15, and 17, but that SCFA will talk about how the suggested changes may harm the rest of the campus. There is a difference between entering into negotiations and discussing impacts. SCFA is seeking legal advice about this matter.
- B. A counseling faculty member stated that all faculty should be concerned by the proposed reductions in the number of days that counseling faculty, coaches, and coordinators work, not just the 61 members whose paychecks could be reduced.
- C. Several counselors emphasized how taxing the counseling job is, especially with the loss of the part-time counselors. Counselors help all kinds of students in all kinds of ways. The rest of the faculty may not understand how the counselors’ work loads have already been impacted and that they cannot teach overloads anyway.
- D. Several counselors expressed concern that there is a general lack of understanding about counselors’ roles on campus and that when one segment of the college is hurt, the general morale of the college is damaged as well. A number of counselors have felt surprised that they have had to justify and validate their work.
- E. Linthicum pointed out that according to Dr. Chavez’s report in July, four items impact faculty only. He suggested that the cuts be shared more equally across all bargaining units. Fall semester there are 11% fewer sections offered, but cuts in some other groups haven’t been to this extent.
- F. Another counselor stated that the cuts to counseling appear as a “divide and conquer” strategy used by the district against the faculty as a whole.
- G. A member of Academic Senate concurred that the list of targeted areas to cut didn’t share the pain across all levels of the campus. From a Senate perspective, the impact of the cuts on students will be heavy. The Senate has discussed writing a letter to all faculty asking them to bring forward their ideas. The deans have brainstormed a short list, and the faculty needs to respond.

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- H. A number of attendees reinforced the idea that past divisiveness among faculty should be avoided at this point. Instead the college staff should be looked at as a “team” or a “family.”
- I. Another attendee brought up a concern about full-time faculty teaching a number of overloads, especially online. Haproff responded that the issue of limiting faculty overloads is a Senate issue, but there has been a suggestion to limit overloads for full-time faculty. The rationale is that giving the classes that full-timers have been teaching to part-timers would save the college money. However, such a redistribution of classes would amount to a furlough for faculty who have become accustomed to teaching those overloads. Another attendee stated that the Senate standing committee for distance learning (DLIT) is looking at how to curb the problem of full-timers teaching excessive numbers of online courses as overloads.
- J. A coach brought up the concern that some have been hired on 212-day contracts and are required to be with student-athletes on some weekends and wouldn’t be able to get additional work due to having to be with their athletes.
- K. Haproff clarified that the 61 faculty members who have contracts beyond 175 days represent a number of situations; for example, some were hired on 199-day contracts and others on 175-day contracts but were asked to take on extra days. At the last board of trustees meeting, the board voted that all contracts are subject to examination for reduction.
- L. A question was asked about whether tenured faculty could receive a “pink slip” or have their teaching contract not renewed. Haproff said that according to Ron Martinez, tenured faculty can be laid off in a fiscal crisis when there is a lack of work or lack of money. And the board of trustees can declare a lack of money even with a substantial reserve.
- M. Linthicum stated that the faculty contract expires on June 30, 2012. He also explained that the March 15 deadline in the contract for any revisions by the District to individual contracts applies only to non-tenured faculty and coordinators. He wants to remind management that faculty generates income as opposed to consuming it.
- N. Another counselor pointed out that counselors can’t do overloads and that some money from the Chancellor’s office had to be returned because some part-time help that had been funded by the Chancellor’s office had to be laid off due to the perception that one part of counseling was getting help that others don’t.

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IV. Check Out 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Laurel Gardner
SCFA Secretary

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