munity college districts facing deficits, but other Independent unions have been able to work cooperatively with trustees and administration. Unlike Contra Costa, the district dependent upon the number of colleges and centers was set for late April. The Trustees joined in with an open attack on faculty at a recent board meeting. Santa Rosa and Allan Hancock. In contrast, a sound financial basis has allowed for resolution of stressful situations at Santa Rosa and Allan Hancock. Both faculty unions saw enough district funding available to fund salary increases in 2004-05. In the case of Allan Hancock, the end result was disappointing with the net package coming in at a level below the 2.41 percent COLA. At Santa Rosa, negotiated protections brought better results with the COLA applied retroactively for 2004-05 and an additional 0.61 percent added in July for a total increase of 3.02 percent in place for 2005-06. Rancho Santiago, Richard Williams, and Santa Barbara. The independent districts report that stressful situation included Rancho Santiago, Redwoods, and Santa Barbara. Perhaps the most perplexing situation can be found at Grossmont-Cuyamaca where, unlike Contra Costa, the district’s 50 percent law reports, questioning whether it meets the requirement that half of expenditures be dedicated to classroom instruction. Meanwhile, negotiations on salary and benefits remain contentious.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca

Perhaps the most perplexing situation can be found at Grossmont-Cuyamaca where, unlike Contra Costa, the district’s annual state budget to see where the district stands in terms of revenue. Faculty negotiators at Chabot-Las Positas are also eagerly awaiting the May Revise because his projecting a structural deficit ranging from $1 million to as high as $6 million. Chabot-Las Positas faculty have had recent success in working cooperatively with the district to solve problems and anticipate that this relationship will continue.

Santa Monica and West Valley-Mission

In contrast, Santa Monica and West Valley-Mission are districts that have not worked cooperatively with faculty to get through these stressful times. Both districts met the challenge of the mid-year cuts with the same slash and burn approach taken by Contra Costa. Both were threatened with a loss of base enrollment that ultimately results in a loss of base funding.

Santa Monica faculty launched an all out campaign in opposition to the improvement of the board’s plan to get the district’s vocational programs. She later gained statewide influence as a member of Governor Schwarzenegger’s transition team and led her colleagues in opposing policies that might infect the entire system. Her unexpected resignation to take a teaching job in play, in the end, turn out to ensure the district’s salvation as it scrambles to regain lost enrollment. Although it looks like the district’s financial forecasts for 2004-05 are working its way out of this financial heartburn. The element of instability in funding added to lean districts dependent upon the number of colleges and centers was set for late April. The Trustees joined in with an open attack on faculty at a recent board meeting.

The Santa Barbara Independent districts continue to make progress on an ambitious campaign launched last year to address a wide range of issues now that there is new administrative leadership in the district. The big news from Santa Barbara comes from within the faculty in that the Independent union successfully resisted a draconian deployment of FTEs for 2005-06, compared to the state’s other higher education systems and the nation’s community colleges.

As you declare his decision to become a community college teacher, you have to come back another day since I had to rush off to a meeting of the faculty union. What will be the working conditions for faculty in our system when this student is ready to give back to the community colleges? Can we in good faith mentor our students to take our places?

The ongoing problems stemming from the constant under-funding of the CCC system, coupled with new waves of attack on our retirement and accountability, manifest troubled times. Our Independent unions, however, have withstood assault after assault and are uniquely equipped to move into the 21st century required to keep faculty whole and our profession strong.

Although the governor’s January budget shows an overall increase of dollars to the system for 2005-06, compared to the state’s other higher education systems and the nation’s community colleges, we are a bare-bones operation. The system’s accountability measure of faculty leadership. Holding the line at a salary and benefits remain contentious.

Funding, Accountability, Benefits Challenge Faculty

by Zoe Close, CCCI President

On a Tuesday in March a student came to my office to declare his decision to become a community college teacher. You have to come back another day since I had to rush off to a meeting of the faculty union. What will be the working conditions for faculty in our system when this student is ready to give back to the community colleges? Can we in good faith mentor our students to take our places?

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While it is always difficult to generalize about what’s happening across the state among community college districts, it’s also been true that the last three or four years have been, to say the least, stressful. The collapse of California’s dot-com economy meant that the community colleges got a tight budget for 2002-03, and the situation escalated from serious to critical in January when the soon-to-be-recalled Governor Davis hit the system with mid-year cuts. Although the severity of Davis’s original plan for these cuts was muted by the legislature, and despite the fact that the reductions were more than offset by the state’s increased share under Schwarzenegger for 2004-05, the psychological damage to the community colleges remains.

Many districts continue to act as if they were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Every budgetary ripple from post-traumatic stress disorder. Every budgetary ripple is a touchstone, with the time it rolls through the system and reaches the districts. Business officers see financial disaster lurking around every local budgetary decision. This paranoia, combined with the very real impact of rapidly increasing benefit costs, creates an extremely difficult situation for faculty negotiators. They face district responses that range from benign to lethal – no one is negotiating in a truly healthy environment.

Amid the Independents, negotiators face districts that appear able to maintain a nearly business-as-usual mode while others display various levels of stress ranging from a reluctance to admit that their situation is not as bad as their paranoia suggests to those that are coping with real deficits. Response to faculty in the deficit districts ranges from being willing to talk to anything that might be a solution to a charge in the court. There are also a couple of districts that are rebounding from over-reaction to the mid-year cuts. Some districts have broken the logjam by having the time it rolls through the system and reaches the districts. Business officers see financial disaster lurking around every local budgetary decision. This paranoia, combined with the very real impact of rapidly increasing benefit costs, creates an extremely difficult situation for faculty negotiators. They face district responses that range from benign to lethal – no one is negotiating in a truly healthy environment.

“Insult added to injury” is not too strong an expression to describe the current threats to community college faculty working conditions by threatening valuable salaries and health benefits in an environment of shifting and unreliable funding, withstanding the cost-cutting anguish that has a deleterious effect on the fundamental values of our culture and, we believe, on human beings. We have believed, and still do, that a stable retirement pension was part of that responsibility to our fellow human beings. We have believed, and still do, that a stable retirement pension was part of that responsibility to our fellow human beings. We have believed, and still do, that a stable retirement pension was part of that responsibility to our fellow human beings. We have believed, and still do, that a stable retirement pension was part of that responsibility to our fellow human beings.

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