

Cuesta College Federation of Teachers



Newsletter

Advocacy • Activism • Professionalism



AFT local 04909

A Message from CCFT Grievance Officer

Grievance Officer for CCFT may be one of the most unique positions here at Cuesta College. When people ask me what it is, I usually say my job is to enforce the contract and ensure that faculty get treated fairly by the college's administration, and when there is trouble, they get fair representation and resources from our faculty union. When problems arise, we faculty are not alone (the general idea of a union)! The job requires keenly developed interpersonal skills and combines legal knowledge with psychology and the acumen of a detective.

During my eight-or-so years in the office, I have done much more than file grievances (that has been a rare occurrence). I have been a mediator in conflict resolutions in a few different division disputes, investigated odd happenings concerning faculty, prepped and accompanied faculty to interviews with internal and external investigators, and I often get calls just asking for advice in sensitive matters and intense situations. Sometimes faculty just want somebody to listen to whatever is going on with them. One of the best things about it has been getting to know faculty and divisions all over campus. So, to steal a line from a local small business, *it's better to know me and not need me, than to need me and not know me*. Keep doing the good work, and remember, you are a part of something bigger, and we watch out for each other, so the entire college can better serve our students.

-**Thomas Patchell**, Your Friendly CCFT Grievance Officer

GO UNION!

IN THIS ISSUE

Grievance Officer

Member Benefits

CFT Convention

PT Health Care & Unemployment

Leadership & Committees

Treasurer Report

COLA

Crossword Puzzle



- If you are being treated unfairly by a dean or administrator, call Tom or another CCFT officer even if it's just to get information and discuss options.
- Difficult situations can often be solved by good communication, and you and your union can learn a lot from sharing information.
- If a student exhibits unusual or troubling behavior, it's a good idea to file a Student Incident and Well-being Report; it's non-disciplinary and creates a record. It's also often helpful to students who have previously unknown difficulties.

Interested in being trained as a Grievance Officer?
Please contact Tom at tpatchel@cuesta.edu!



What are the benefits of CCFT Membership?

CCFT represents full-time and part-time faculty at Cuesta College. We negotiate on behalf of **all** faculty for better working conditions and compensation. Being a member of CCFT provides many benefits. Joining CCFT today adds to our strength and allows you to be part of a great organization.

Benefits	CCFT Members	Non-members
Contract bargained on your behalf	✓	✓
Feedback on bargaining items via survey and email	✓	✓
Participation in discussions of union operations and strategies at member meetings	✓	
Financial and emotional support from CCFT colleagues in times of crisis	✓	
Occupational liability Insurance (\$1,000,000 free through CCFT & AFT)	✓	
Accidental Death insurance (free through AFT)	✓	
CFT scholarships for family members	✓	
Opportunity to be appointed as CCFT representative on college-wide hiring committees (stipends available for PT faculty)	✓	
Workshops for student loan forgiveness and unemployment insurance	✓	
Free legal consultation with an AFT attorney	✓	
Access to expertise and guidance from CFT and union leaders around the state	✓	
Voting for your contract and union officers	✓	



CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 243

123 FT & 120 PT Faculty

Joining CCFT has enormous benefits! Your membership provides the means for union leaders to be there for you and others when they are needed the most. If you are not yet a member, you can complete the [membership form](#) today!

CFT Convention

The CFT Convention has returned to an in-person gathering post-COVID! The biennial convention is the union's highest governance body, where delegates can give input on matters that affect all members. This year, the convention was held March 17-19, and Greg Baxley and Tom Patchell attended as our CCFT delegates. They appreciated meeting with union leaders across the state who are dedicated to improving working and learning conditions. Here are some highlights:



photos from cft.org

- The delegates debated and passed resolutions promoting:
 - Programs and funding for mental health care (students and employees)
 - Sick leave/retirement education and advocacy for PT faculty
 - Protection of water resources and reducing the carbon footprint of CFT
 - Health Education Equity in the Implementation of AB 928
 - Free high-speed internet for all CA students
- CFT purposefully did not push the legislation to increase the PT faculty teaching load cap (currently 67%) and will wait for outcomes of the PT faculty health care program.

PT Health Care

CUESTA IMPLEMENTS BENEFIT FOR PT FACULTY

In late 2022, the state approved a \$200 million annual budget to support PT faculty Health Insurance. Most districts throughout the state are stonewalling this; some won't even negotiate and others are making excuses to delay implementation. Cuesta is one of only 10 districts that has agreed to implement the new health benefit program for PT faculty. Since January 2, 2023, PT faculty have been able to enroll in a SISC plan.



Health insurance at the single payer rate is fully compensated, and dual and family plans are available with some out-of-pocket costs. PT faculty are eligible for health insurance if they have an average load of 40% in the past two semesters, and this load can be from multiple districts. They can drop below 40% for one semester and still retain their eligibility.

Unemployment for PT



PT instructors are eligible for unemployment over summer break if they are not teaching. Technically, it is not a break because PT faculty don't have a guarantee of a class load from semester to semester (indicated in both Ed. Code and CBA). Applications can now be done online. CFT can offer workshops and their [website](#) includes helpful information. ALL denials SHOULD be appealed since we expect 100% of them to be reversed! There is a new online process available that makes denial appeals easier. See the [CCFT website](#).

CCFT Leadership

EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS

The CCFT Elections Committee reviewed the nominations for the open officer positions. Because there were no other nominations received, the Elections Committee officially declared the election ratified by acclamation. These EB officers will serve a three-year term from July 2023-2026:

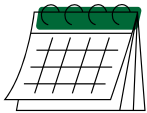
CCFT Vice-President - Michael Mogull

CCFT Treasurer - Elizabeth Lobo

CCFT Part-Time Committee Chair - Galadriel Highhouse



Thank you to departing EB officers **Heather Tucker** (VP & Lead Negotiator) and **Nancy Steinmaus** (PT Faculty Chair) for your hard work and service!



Calendar Negotiations Committee

The president-appointed special taskforce researching the compressed calendar recommended that the district convert to a 16-week calendar in 2026 to remain competitive and better align to other colleges and universities. In order to be implemented by this time, a proposal must be submitted to the Chancellor's Office by spring 2024. It will require research as well as education for faculty, staff, administration, and students. The academic calendar is a negotiable item, so the membership will need to vote on it.

To complete this work, CCFT has created a Calendar Negotiations Committee that will comprise of 2-3 members for fall 2023 and possible renewal for spring 2024. Ideally, the faculty members will represent part-time, full-time, instructional, and student service faculty. Committee members will receive a \$2,000 stipend per semester. Watch for forthcoming information about how to submit a letter of interest for this committee!

Treasurer Report

The CCFT budget is healthy and our legal fees remain low. This has allowed us to use the funds to help students and faculty in additional ways.

- CCFT will be adding \$20,000 to the CCFT Future Teacher Scholarship.
- The scholarship payout for this year was increased to \$1,500 (from \$1,000).
- All CCFT members will have a **dues free** May (in addition to the dues free December!)

Did you know that Union members can apply for educational scholarships for their children? Learn about these opportunities at the [CFT website](#).

We Love COLA!



The state estimates that the 2023-24 Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) for community colleges will be 8.1%-8.4%. The District has proposed a 5% salary increase. This year, their revenue was up 17.5%, so they have plenty of ongoing money to spend 8% for the well-being of their employees.

On May 3, approximately fifty CCFT and CCCUE members met outside of 5400 for the Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting to show support for the union's effort to secure a COLA increase while enjoying colas and pizza. Several members spoke to the BOT during public comment emphasizing the importance of using the state budgeted COLA as intended to increase faculty and staff salaries. As part of the compensation package, CCFT is committed to improving PT/FT and lab/lecture parity based on the priorities of the membership. Faculty will be updated on negotiations soon.



Thank you for supporting the union efforts towards fair compensation!

Newsletter Puzzle

The information for the crossword puzzle comes from this newsletter as well as the past issues on the CCFT website. **The first two faculty members to send in the correct answers will receive a Starbucks Gift card!** Email answers to akayser@cuesta.edu

Across

- 2. Type of CCFT Scholarship
- 5. Earth and Ocean guide
- 7. VP starting 7/23
- 8. Percent load PT need for health benefit
- 10. 2021 Leadership Award winner
- 11. PT summer "break"

Down

- 1. Trains teen runners
- 3. # of CCFT student scholarships
- 4. Member benefit
- 6. \$500 for PT to serve on this
- 9. A COPE Chair pet
- 12. A dues free time for members