

## Cuesta College Federation of Teachers



# Newsletter

Advocacy • Activism • Professionalism



**AFT local 04909**

The **Committee on Political Education (COPE)** is a vital part of the faculty union. The COPE Chair's role is to raise awareness of political issues affecting education, facilitate communication amongst faculty, and help support the campaigns of candidates that CCFT endorses. CCFT hasn't had a COPE Chair in over 10 years! Learn more about COPE in our parent organization, [CFT](#).

## Meet the New CCFT COPE Chair!



**Galadriel Bree Highhouse** is a part-time instructor who has taught US History, World Comparative History, and Western Civilization History at Cuesta College and CMC for eight years. Born and raised in San Luis Obispo county and a graduate of Morro Bay High School, she earned a BA from UC Santa Cruz and MA in History from Cal Poly. She is the current Academic Senate Secretary and has participated in the JEDI Academy. Politically active, she believes that educating people about political issues is important. She looks forward to representing faculty as the COPE Chair for CCFT!

### Fun Facts

- Her master's thesis title was: "Madonna Inn: A Hotel in Context."
- She welcomed her first child the term prior to completing her MA thesis.
- She lives with her son and significant other in Los Osos with two dogs, Belle and Gobi, a turtle, Yoda, and a goldfish, Monstro.
- Galadriel worked as an Interpretive Guide at Hearst Castle for 5 years.

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The COPE fund helps ensure that public officials hear your voice on issues that are important to you, and it is one of the most effective ways to elect candidates who support our schools and profession. The COPE funds, not CCFT dues, are used for political action such as contributions to an endorsed candidate's campaign. COPE is funded entirely by voluntary contributions, so consider making a donation. Any amount makes a big difference!

Complete an automatic [payroll deduction form](#) to contribute to the COPE fund.

## CCFT Endorses Adrienne Garcia-Specht

FOR CUESTA BOARD OF TRUSTEES, DISTRICT 4



Cuesta College's **Board of Trustees** (BOT) ensures that Cuesta is achieving its mission and meeting the needs of the community. The BOT is made up of five elected officials who represent the five county districts and one student trustee. This election directly impacts all faculty at the college.

*"I am honored by CCFT's endorsement, and I look forward to working together to improve working conditions and student success at Cuesta College. Thank you for your support and for all that you do for Cuesta and its students."*

**Adrienne Garcia-Specht** was born and raised on the Central Coast. The daughter of immigrants who taught her the importance of education, she graduated from Arroyo Grande High School in 2007, and earned a bachelor's degree in English and Political Science in 2010 and then a master's degree in English from Syracuse University in 2013. She has over a decade of professional experience in higher education including as faculty member at Allan Hancock College and Cuesta College. She is currently a financial aid counselor at Cal Poly, where she helps students navigate the challenges of paying for higher education. She serves on the steering committee for the Central Coast Coalition for Undocumented Student Success (CCC-USS). She is dedicated to improving educational opportunities for historically marginalized student populations, and she values the role of the faculty union on campus.

### How You Can Help

District 4 includes Arroyo Grande, Nipomo, Oceano, and portions of Edna Valley. District 4 residents, make sure to vote! If you don't live in District 4, you can still help!

- Sign up to volunteer on her [website](#) (e.g., display yard signs, call voters, knock on doors).
- Make a [donation](#) to support her campaign.
- Talk about your support to community members.
- Visit her website: [vote4adrienne.org](http://vote4adrienne.org).



# Negotiation Survey

The current faculty contract, or Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), is valid through spring 2023, and negotiations start soon for the next CBA. In order to gather input on negotiation priorities, a survey just went out asking faculty to rate several items in terms of importance. Here is some background information on the survey topics that have been frequently discussed at CCFT Council of Representatives (CoR) meetings.



**PT pay parity:** PT faculty per unit pay is currently 82% of the FT rate. An increase in compensation applied to the PT pay scale would reduce this gap.

**Increasing PT salary schedule steps:** PT faculty are paid on the same lecture/lab schedules as FT overload, and currently there are 14 steps on this pay scale. Faculty advance in steps based on length of service and units taught. Adding steps to the salary schedule would allow PT faculty further advancement opportunities, which would better align with the FT faculty salary schedule.

**PT faculty stipends for committees:** In order to compensate PT faculty for their work and encourage their participation in the governance process at Cuesta, CCFT can advocate for district-paid stipends for committee work.

**Longevity considerations:** Another PT faculty concern is assignment and load stability from semester to semester. The language in Article 5.12 could be clarified to better consider length of service when offering PT faculty teaching assignments.



**Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)** budgeted by the state is NOT automatically awarded to faculty. CCFT has to negotiate to get that COLA and we have done so successfully. Last year, the COLA Cuesta faculty received was significant at 6.5% (6% was applied to salary increase and .5% was applied to fringe benefits). Many districts receive zero COLA. COLA can be applied to an increase in salary only, or split between salary and fringe benefits.

**Lab/lecture parity:** A lab hour counts as .75 of 1 lecture hour, so lab faculty must teach 20 hours per week for the equivalent faculty load of 15 hours. CCFT can work to establish 1:1 lab/lecture load or move towards that by reducing the gap. Read more about this topic and how it affects faculty across disciplines in this [CCFT Newsletter](#).

**Faculty Stipends** are paid to PT faculty program leads in areas where there are no FT faculty members and to both PT and FT faculty in certain disciplines such as the Performing Arts, Athletic Coaching, and CMC for additional duties and assignments. CCFT can negotiate an increase in these stipends. See [Appendix B-9](#) on Extra Duty Compensation for current rates.

**Fringe benefit:** Some compensation can go towards the district's monthly contributions to health plans, which would reduce faculty's monthly out of pocket costs. The district offers health plans to FT and to PT faculty loaded more than 50% (current district contributions for health plans). Another possible change is lowering the load threshold for health plan eligibility for PT faculty.

**Retirement health benefits** can bridge the gap to Medicare eligibility.

**Separation incentives**, or "Golden Handshake" are usually initiated by districts but can also be negotiated. They can include payment for faculty resignation or retirement, either a set value or % of salary paid over a specified time period.



# CCFT Future Teacher Scholarship Recipient

CONGRATULATIONS MARCOS GARCIA!

Originally from Venice Beach California, **Marcos Garcia** describes his upbringing as riddled with poverty, gang violence, and drug activity. Now living in Paso Robles, he returned to college in his 30s, and is in his third year at Cuesta. His long-term goal is to earn a MA degree in Counseling, and he is completing the Teacher Pathway at Cuesta so that he is able to teach at schools along the way to his ultimate career objective.

Being a positive role model for his children is important to Marcos, and he intends to make a difference in his community and demonstrate to other students that even if they come from a difficult background, they can change their lives around if they have a passion. Marcos has experienced many barriers in his educational journey, and he emphasizes that it's important for students to be aware of valuable resources, like the CCFT Scholarship.



**Marcos Garcia and CCFT Treasurer Elizabeth Lobo at Scholarship Ceremony 8/22**

*"I would like to thank you for your generosity in awarding me with the CCFT Future Teacher Scholarship award. As the scholarship states; promoting success, and excellence is one of my goals as a Cuesta student and leader. This scholarship will make a huge impact in my life. Being a middle aged individual on a single family income with a 15 year old son and an 11 year old daughter can be financially straining on my household. This scholarship will help me and my spouse offset any incoming school costs."*

## CCFT Updates

**Grievance officers** for fall 2022: Greg Baxley and Heather Tucker. If you are facing a disciplinary action, student complaint, or any other sticky situation, contact them. You can also contact your division's member of the CoR if you need alternative representation.

**Lower Dues!** CCFT has reduced your monthly member dues by 6%, down to 1.2%.

**New Hybrid Peer Evaluation Form.** If you teach in a hybrid modality, there is a new evaluation form that combines DE and f2f criteria.