



Cuesta College Federation of Teachers

Newsletter

Advocacy • Activism • Professionalism



AFT local 04909

MEET THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES CO-CHAIRS

The Council of Representatives (CoR) is one of the decision-making bodies of CCFT and is the liaison between the membership and the Executive Board (EB). The Co-chairs are elected for two-year terms, and they are responsible for determining meeting agendas in consultation with the CCFT President, facilitating the meetings, and serving on the EB. For the current year, we have two amazing part-time faculty members fulfilling this role for CCFT.

JEN SHELLHORN



Jen has been teaching Geology and Earth Science since fall 2019. She joined the CoR in 2021 and became Co-Chair in 2023. She has worked on the negotiations team and served as the CCFT representative on various committees including district hiring and curriculum. Jen advocates for PT faculty and ensures that members feel heard at meetings. Getting involved with CCFT has provided her with opportunities to voice how we can make working conditions better for faculty. Jen says, *"When faculty are valued and appreciated, it directly impacts students. Your voice matters! And if you're inspired by making effective changes to working conditions, there's probably space for you on the CoR or in one of CCFT's standing committees."*

JUDE ROCK



English faculty member at Cuesta for 18 years, Jude has been attending CoR meetings since 2022, becoming a rep for her division in 2024. She is motivated to have a CCFT leadership role to improve the PT/FT pay gap. Parity is important because PT and FT have the same qualifications and teach the same courses, so they should earn equivalent pay. PT faculty also lack job security. Jude hopes to use her position as co-chair to advocate for all faculty, creating the best possible working conditions and compensation agreements. At a time when higher education faces increasing threats and its value is being questioned, she wants to contribute to the resistance in a constructive and meaningful way.

IN THIS ISSUE

***CoR Co-chairs *CCFT Committees *Fall Negotiations *ESL *Social Events**

JOIN A CCFT COMMITTEE!

Part-time and full-time faculty members are welcome to participate in CCFT subcommittees. It's a great way to learn more about union activities and offer valuable input.



PART-TIME COMMITTEE

Recently formed by Part-Time Committee and COPE Chair, Galadriel Bree Highhouse, this committee is responsible for gathering information about the interests of temporary faculty members and reporting those interests to the CoR and EB. Bimonthly meetings (most likely the 2nd Thursday) will be held to discuss relevant issues and current negotiation topics. Full-time faculty are also welcome to participate. Stipends may apply to some positions. If interested, contact Galadriel at galadrielbree_highho@cuesta.edu.

GRIEVANCE OFFICER AND COMMITTEE

The Grievance Officer helps all faculty with complaints and investigations related to students, management, and the contract. This officer also works with the EB to resolve disputes, educate the membership about their rights, maintain records of grievances, and assist in making decisions regarding disputes. This is an important position for CCFT, and successful mediation helps us to keep our legal costs low, which benefits all members. Tom Patchell has served as the Grievance Officer for many years. In the past, there have been two faculty members who share this position. Additionally, the Grievance Committee is an ad hoc committee that can be formed to help with work related to grievances.

CCFT is looking for faculty members who are interested in either being a Co-Grievance Officer or a member of the Grievance Committee. This is an advisory group whose responsibilities would include researching and preparing for meetings. Tom will provide training and highlight relevant parts of the contract to review. If you are interested in joining, please reach out to Tom at tpatchel@cuesta.edu.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

This spring 2026, we will likely have an election to ratify changes to articles in the CBA related to the 16 week semester. CCFT is hoping to complete the negotiations by December or January. We also have two officer positions that will be open, and there will be an election for one (or both) of the positions if there is more than one nomination.



Rachael Barnett, Kerry Bailey, and Niki Santisteven have agreed to serve on the Elections Committee again! This committee appointment was approved by the CoR at the October 23, 2025 meeting.



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

The new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) 2025-2027 was ratified in spring 2025. It incorporates all of last year's tentative agreements, salary schedules, and appendices. Despite having just completed the new contract, negotiations are ongoing, and fall reopeners were presented and approved at the 10/1/2025 Board of Trustees Meeting. This month, CCFT Negotiations team is meeting with the district to work on these items.

CCFT AND THE DISTRICT JOINTLY REOPENED:	CCFT REQUESTED TO REOPEN:
Article 5: <i>Work Hours, Work Year, and Workload:</i> Weekly work hours based on a 16-week academic calendar Article 7: <i>Evaluation Procedures and Tenure Review Process:</i> Update the calendar and timelines for evaluations based on a 16-week calendar Appendix G: <i>Faculty Evaluations Timeline:</i> Update timelines for evaluations based on a 16-week academic calendar	Article 4: <i>Compensation:</i> One-time, off schedule payment to faculty to offset the time necessary for adjusting curriculum, course materials, and Canvas shells, along with scheduling courses in the new time blocks based on a 16-week academic calendar Article 5: <i>Work Hours, Work Year, and Workload:</i> FLEX obligation based on a 16-week academic calendar

PART-TIME (PT) OFFICE HOURS



PT Faculty are now paid to hold office hours depending on their teaching load as long as their load is more than 5%.

- Faculty loaded between 5-39% are paid for 9 office hours/semester.
- Faculty loaded 40% and above are paid for 18 office hours/semester.

There is no contractual obligation for when faculty hold the hours. They can offer more during finals week or during times when students have larger projects.

Office-hour Pool: The district has set aside money to pay PT faculty for extra office hours. CCFT is currently working with district to develop a system and criteria for approving extra office hours for PT faculty (0.5-1 hour/week). Possible criteria include the number of students (e.g., previous semester fill rate or enrollment caps for certain classes), willingness to hold the extra office hours in the Student Success Center, and possibly prioritizing classes for which there is no tutor in that subject area. CCFT reps have been gathering input from PT faculty in their divisions to inform the negotiation team.



CCFT is hosting two CalSTRS Retirement workshops at different times on 12/5/2025 both in room 2609 on the San Luis Obispo Campus. [Register here.](#)

All faculty (10:00am-12:00pm): The first session will cover benefits, calculations, and other STRS options.

PT faculty (12:30-2:30pm): The second session will focus on PT faculty benefits such as the Defined Benefit Program and a tax-advantaged plan through Pension2.

FALL NEGOTIATIONS

CCFT Supports Equitable Learning & Teaching Conditions for ESL Program

Cuesta's ESL Program

Almost 18% of San Luis Obispo County's population speak a language other than English at home. Though 92% Hispanic, ESL students come from various countries and add diversity to Cuesta. Many have not previously had access to higher education in their home countries or in the US. These English language learners need to improve their language skills to engage in our community. Cuesta's ESL program offers a comprehensive curriculum from beginner to advanced levels to meet this need. The program

provides an access point and gives students the opportunity to improve their lives both personally and professionally as well as to pursue their academic goals. ESL enrollments have more than tripled since the pandemic with an increasing need all over the county. 25% of NCC enrollments and 78% of SCC enrollments in fall 2025 are ESL students.



ACADEMIC SENATE OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

"Local academic senates and bargaining units should collaborate to ensure that equitable working conditions for noncredit faculty are used to provide equitable services to noncredit students in an effort to ensure quality and effective programs and services." (Position Paper 2019)

Credit & Noncredit Merge

In 2015, under the direction of Cuesta's administration, credit and noncredit ESL programs merged with the condition that noncredit ESL faculty were to be treated as credit faculty in terms of workload and compensation, which was supported by CCFT and formalized in an MOU agreement. ESL is one of seven programs that lead to Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) certificates. This is also known as "enhanced noncredit" and means the academic rigor is aligned to credit ESL, preparing students to be successful in college-level credit coursework and for better employment opportunities. Homework, assessments, and grades are essential components of noncredit ESL courses. Cuesta also requires an MA degree for ESL faculty. Although there is a range of instructional hours assigned to noncredit faculty across the state, several community colleges have teaching loads that are comparable to that of credit faculty. In fact, some colleges have moved towards parity in recent years, which allows ESL faculty to build and maintain strong programs that better serve students especially with the implementation of AB 705 and 1705. The district affirmed workload parity for noncredit ESL when the programs merged in 2015, again in April 2020, and again in January 2025 in the most recent CBA 2025-2027.

Moving to noncredit instruction was a **student-centered decision**. It removed barriers (e.g., tuition, time limits, course repeatability) and made the program and the college more accessible for many English language learners.



ESL 797 Students from Colombia, Iran, Japan, and Guinea visit Cuesta's library fall 2025

Why Renegotiate?

In fall 2024, the college's Faculty Prioritization Committee ranked ESL #1 in terms of faculty hiring need. Before hiring, the district wanted to renegotiate the workload for ESL because the program is noncredit. The district agreed to hire a full-time temporary faculty member for 2025-2026 and requested that the department research programs at other colleges. Once an agreement is reached between CCFT and the district, a full-time ESL tenure track faculty member will be recruited for 2026-2027. With only one full-time ESL faculty member, 16 part-time ESL and an additional 9 part-time faculty members in the division, the need for a full-time position is critical to sustaining a program that has enrollments of 1,250 per year. The ESL program supports the district's mission of serving Hispanic students, promoting equity and inclusion, and increasing diversity in the Cuesta community. In order to maintain a quality program, be consistent with our core values, and offer equitable instruction, equitable workload must be protected.

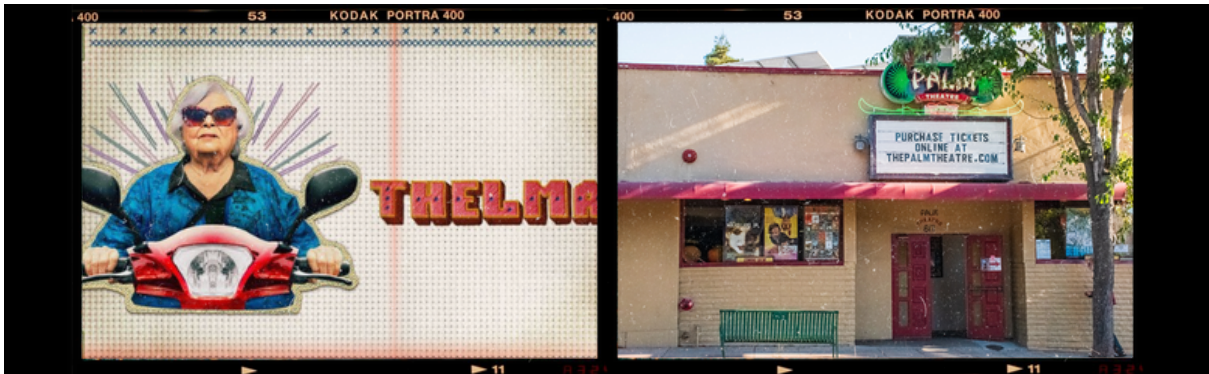
CCFT SOCIAL EVENTS

CCFT has hosted social events this semester in order to increase the sense of community and connection amongst faculty across the college. Check out the ongoing CCFTea gatherings and upcoming movie night!

The CCFT Executive Board and Council of Representatives are excited to host the first ever CCFT movie night. We are featuring the film **THELMA** at the Palm Theater in downtown SLO on **Tuesday Nov 18 starting at 7:00 pm**. Each CCFT member and one guest can enter free of charge. In addition, movie goers will be offered one medium popcorn and one medium drink.



Keep an eye out for an email for the next CCFTea gathering!



TRAILER

Synopsis: Thelma is a 93-year-old grandmother who is scammed by a con artist. With help from a friend, she soon embarks on a treacherous journey across Los Angeles to reclaim what was taken from her. It's also about gathering together and building community as faculty, colleagues, friends, and co-workers.

Online review: Thelma is heartfelt, funny, familiar, yet strangely subversive. The cast are fantastic, it's a strong script and the director is amazing. This movie is an utter delight!

Not a CCFT member? Join now!
[MEMBERSHIP FORM](#)

