

# Cuesta College Federation of Teachers



# Newsletter

Advocacy • Activism • Professionalism



AFT local 04909

## Meet the Outgoing and Incoming Treasurers

**Elizabeth Lobo** completed her BS in Biology with a Chemistry minor at University of San Francisco, where she also played volleyball as a walk-on. She completed her PhD in Molecular Immunology at Irell and Manella Graduate School at City of Hope. She is a long-time local who attended Old Mission School and Mission College Prep. She is blessed with a loving husband, two amazing teenage daughters, a precious son, a fluffy dog, too many chickens, a huge sulcata tortoise, a surly ball python, a sweet crested gecko, a fabulous group of colleagues in the Biology Division, and a teenage Girl Scout troop who miss her. She enjoys rec league volleyball, long walks, fishing, cooking, sleep, and traveling.



*"I have enjoyed serving as your Treasurer and am sorry to step down, but my too-busy life demands it. I know Neil will do a great job and am happy to prepare him to take on the role starting June 1." - Elizabeth*



**Neil Higgins** has been teaching at Cuesta since 2004, and he loves working in the Business Department. His teaching has been inspired and influenced by many wonderful colleagues over the years. He is a graduate of UC-Davis, with a degree in Managerial & Agricultural Economics. He moved to San Luis Obispo in 1990 to attend graduate school at Cal Poly and earned his MBA in 1992. His work experience includes years in the tech industry and three stints as a business owner. In his free time he enjoys cooking with his wife and hiking with his dog. You may also find him on one of the many county golf courses.

*"I want to thank Elizabeth who has done an amazing job for the last 6 years. I have a lot to learn, but I know Elizabeth will do an excellent job preparing for the role. This summer, I will be attending the CFT Treasurer Training, an in-depth dive into the rules and laws that govern the role of the union's Treasurer." - Neil*

### CCFT Treasurer Role

An important officer position on the CCFT Executive Board (EB), the treasurer is responsible for the many financial duties of the union. In addition to reporting information at meetings, developing the annual budget, providing quarterly reports, filing IRS documents, and managing income and expenditures, the treasurer:

- maintains the membership database and pays affiliate dues.
- arranges annual financial review committees.
- writes grants for staff funding and legal defense.
- maintains and regularly reports the COPE funds and activity.
- ensures that signatories are kept up to date.

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# The 16- Week Calendar

## SHOULD CUESTA ADOPT THE COMPRESSED CALENDAR?

More than half of the California Community Colleges have already adopted an academic calendar that is shorter than an 18-week semester. The idea of a shortened semester has been discussed for many years, and the renewed interest is due to Cal Poly adopting a 16-week semester in fall 2026. Moving to a 16-week calendar means that most classes will see an increase in the daily meeting times, so our instructional days will be longer to account for fewer class meeting days. A CCFT subgroup has been investigating 16-week calendar options. Since the calendar is a negotiable item, faculty will need to vote on whether to adopt a compressed calendar. Consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of making this shift before voting.



### PRO



### CON

Community Colleges with a 16-week semester report an approximate 2% increase in student success.

Faculty in Math and Science report needing to significantly revise curriculum.

The 16-week semester aligns with CSU calendars, facilitating the transition of transfer students.

In some sequential courses, students may miss content/practice in the first course that could affect learning in the subsequent course.

Faculty have appreciated the increased flexibility and additional time to prepare for classes, process grades, and transition before the start of the subsequent term.

Courses with labs will meet fewer times each semester, often reducing the number of experiments and other lab activities that can be offered.

Students have more time to work outside of the semester, possibly reducing the need to work during the academic year.

If you teach face-to-face, the instructional day will be longer. If you teach DE, you will need to cover the same material in less time.

There is likely less burn out and possible better retention in a shorter term.

Students spend more time in class and have more assigned work to do each week.

These are some of the many implications and considerations of adopting a shortened semester calendar. Please visit the [Canvas 16-Week Calendar FAQ page](#) for more in-depth information and example calendars. The elections committee will be preparing an online vote at the start of fall 2024. The vote will be on whether to move forward with the adoption of a 16-week calendar. The specific calendar dates will be decided by the district and Board of Trustees.

# Faculty Leave

When faculty need to cancel class, they should notify their students as well as their Division Chair and Division Assistant. Faculty also need to complete a leave form. Here are some important highlights and reminders:



## SICK LEAVE

- Full-time faculty are credited with 10 days of sick leave for each academic year. Part-time faculty receive a pro rata amount based on teaching load.
- Sick leave that has not been used is cumulative from year to year.
- 8 hours of sick leave are deducted for each day faculty miss contractual obligations. However, if a faculty member misses only part of the day, they can receive up to 4 hours for off-campus sick day work activities.
- A doctor's note is required for more than 3 consecutive days of sick leave.

## PERSONAL NECESSITY

- Up to seven days of leave per year is allocated for various personal reasons outlined in article 6.7 such as accident, illness, or death of family member or court appearances.
- Up to three days per year for personal business are included in this type of leave.
- Unlike sick leave, personal necessity leave requires preapproval of your dean.

## OTHER LEAVE

- There are provisions for other types of leave such as industrial accident, bereavement, jury duty, and leave of absence without pay. See articles 6.9-6.14 for details.
- Family Care and Medical Leave require consultation with Human Resources regarding eligibility and procedures.

## MORE INFORMATION

- Detailed leave provisions are outlined in [Article 6: Leaves of Absence](#) in our CBA.
- Read the [leave document](#) for a more detailed summary and an example of how to complete a leave form.
- You can check your current leave balance and history on the employee dashboard on MyCuesta.
- Don't forget to submit your [leave form](#).



Scan Me

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 237

**115 FT & 122 PT Faculty**

Not already a CCFT member? Read about the [numerous benefits](#) of becoming a member and complete the [membership form](#) today!

# Union Business Update

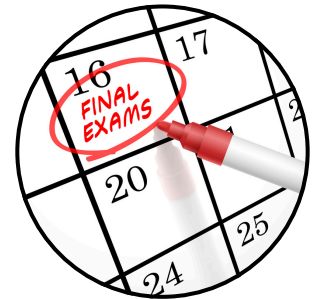
## COMPLETED WORK THIS SEMESTER

- The part-time faculty evaluator MOU has been expanded to include the following divisions: Student Development and Success, Applied Behavioral Sciences, Biology, and Counseling. A small stipend is awarded to part-time faculty who conduct peer evaluations. This practice has been widely supported, and part-time evaluators will be discussed in future contract negotiations.
- The North County Coordinator evaluation form is being revised to reflect the new job description and responsibilities.
- The new lab rates have been approved and are published on Cuesta and CCFT websites. Lab loads are now based on 18 hours/week instead of 20 hours/week, which is progress toward pay parity. The new lab rate is 11.1% higher than the previous rate. The 2/3 lab rate will also increase as a consequence.

## Reminders



- Faculty are expected to hold final exams during the designated week (May 13–May 17 in spring 2024) at their scheduled time. Not adhering to the schedule can cause problems for students and other faculty members.
- When filing a student incident report, it is recommended that you let your Division Chair know. Chairs are not automatically notified when you file one, and it is a good idea to keep them in the information loop.
- Please follow the procedures outlined in the CBA regarding faculty evaluations to make sure the process is fair and to avoid grievances.



The Benefits Committee is a standing committee responsible for reviewing and selecting health insurance packages. Our current health insurance is provided by Self-Insured Schools of California (SISC), which has more than twenty different healthcare plans. We receive a selection of plans from SISC, and if we wanted to adopt a new plan, it would likely mean an increase in out of pocket expenses for faculty; however, the coverage might be better. Consider whether you are satisfied with the current health care plan options or if you would like more information about different plans for the future. Watch out for a survey about health care preferences in the fall semester.



## Faculty Leader Spotlight

### MEET THE MATH DIVISION CHAIR

Bill has been teaching Math courses at Cuesta for 15 years, and he is now completing his second year of service as Math Division Chair. His previous leadership experience on various college committees such as Planning & Budget allowed him to work with various administrators and faculty from other disciplines and become familiar with college processes. Following Denise Chellsen's 4-year term as chair, Bill felt an obligation to support fellow faculty members in his division. Fortunately, Denise was able to mentor him for a year prior to him taking on the role.

As Math Division Chair, Bill enjoys collaborating with colleagues to solve current issues. In his discipline, the greatest challenge has been the implementation of AB 1705, which requires the elimination of all pre-transfer level Math classes. He works with his colleagues to mitigate the negative impact this has on students, and he has been impressed by their dedication and ability to step up and do their best to adapt teaching practices to the legislation requirements.

Aside from the additional financial compensation that comes with the position, Bill likes working with other chairs at Cuesta as well as Math faculty and leaders at other colleges. For faculty considering becoming a chair now or in the future, Bill advises that there is "a steep learning curve, but you get a lot of support from other chairs, and once you are past the initial stage, the work settles down a bit." Overall, Bill appreciates the opportunity to serve in this capacity at the college and to provide leadership for and support his incredible colleagues in the Math Division.



*Bill Demarest (and his dog Barley)*

### DIVISION CHAIR POSITION

Division Chairs are full-time tenured faculty members who serve as academic and organizational leaders in their disciplines and are essential to shared governance at Cuesta. In addition to being a liaison to the Cluster Dean, the Division Chair provides oversight of all division activities and operations. Some of the many responsibilities include representing their division across the college, providing instructional leadership, developing schedules, managing faculty evaluations in their area, overseeing the annual program review processes and monitoring the division budget.

Chairs are elected by full-time and part-time faculty members and classified staff in their division to serve four-year terms. Chairs receive 40% reassigned time and extra compensation as indicated in the salary schedule, and they work an additional 19.5 days over the year. This semester, the EB affirmed that only tenured faculty can run or be appointed as Division Chair as stated in the CBA.