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California State University Employees Union/SEIU 2579

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Funding Stability Vital to Us

By Ray Finnell, CSU Bakersfield



A staggering \$26 billion deficit was forecast prior to last November's gubernatorial election. Gov. Jerry Brown's strategy for solving the state's budget woes, announced early this year and refined in May, tackled the deficit from multiple fronts. At press time, two of those

fronts—spending cuts and reallocation of funding for state-administered programs to local agencies—had been resolved for the most part as Brown had wanted. But in the end, he did not achieve tax extensions, which would have prevented the deep cuts with which we now must deal.

Trying to find agreement on spending cuts caused discord among lawmakers and taxpayers alike during the governor's first months in office, but in mid-March both houses of the legislature finally agreed on packages to reduce expenditures by about \$13 billion. The final agreement includes a \$650 million cut from the CSU's 2011-12 allocation of state general funds. Another \$100 million reduction could be taken mid-year if the state's revenues don't reach projections. This will be the largest reduction to the system ever, and, in late March, the CSU Board of Trustees announced a reduction in enrollment of about 10,000 students. In July, as expected, the trustees implemented yet another tuition increase of 12% as a method of trying to manage the additional \$150 million cut. All parties hope the mid-year cuts are avoided by increased revenues to the state.

Other state programs, which many see as more important than education, face massive reductions as well. No programs are guaranteed to be exempt, even those that have historically skirted reductions. Brown and several state employee labor unions have been able to work out contract compromises in efforts to avoid layoffs.

Increasing state allocations to local governments for management of certain programs currently administered from Sacramento is expected to save funds through more efficient management and reduction of state overhead. Local leaders generally approve the scheme, but unions that represent state workers disagree.

Pivotal to Brown's plan was the extension of temporary taxes that expired on June 30. Conservative lawmakers held out for all-cuts legislation that takes even more funding from higher education and other programs. When all was said and done, no major sources of new or extended revenue went into the legislation. Compromise gave way to Republican stonewalling, and higher education will suffer. One option that was rejected along the way was a spending cap (harmful to the CSU's future) along with tax extensions (positive for the CSU).

The Republican threat of pension reform ultimately didn't survive Democrats' defense, either. Nonetheless, attacks may surface in various forms later, with pressure coming from numerous public corners.

While Gov. Brown felt he had to make cuts across the board, he also wanted to increase revenues. The critical component in his plan for more funding was a special election that would have given voters the option of extending temporary sales, vehicle registration, and income taxes. Brown and proponents anticipated these measures would have erased a high percentage of the remaining deficit. Opponents didn't want any more taxes. The extensions would have cost Californians an average of about 71 cents per day.

If the election had taken place prior to June 30, when the taxes expired, these would have technically been "continuing" taxes. It's likely that opponents stalled on the election in an effort to delay it past June 30 and manipulate

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President's Message

From the desk of Pat Gantt,
CSUEU President

The state budget process has taken a few new twists this year. While the legislature apparently approved a budget on time, it did

not meet the expectations of Governor Brown. The majority-vote budget did not include the tax extensions that could have made up half of the deficit as outlined in the governor's January budget proposal. The failure to find four Republican votes left the Democrats to craft a budget that may not have been completely balanced and that relied on some gimmicks, much like Schwarzenegger budgets of years past.

So, as of this writing, there is no state budget, but part of the cuts have already been enacted by the legislature and governor. The CSU system will be cut at least \$500 million. There could be more cuts, depending on which budget the legislature passes and the governor signs.

The legislators also will not be paid until they pass a balanced budget as determined by Proposition 25 and the state controller. Now that is a new twist!

We also have the governor's idea of an election for voters to approve tax extensions, but even to hold that election and have the question answered by voters requires a two-thirds majority vote (read four Republican votes). One of the hurdles in getting to the election point is determining the end

Channel Islands Layoff Notices Questionable



Forced Time Base Reductions Masquerade as Layoffs

By Debbie Blair, CSU San Marcos

Following a period of layoff calm in the CSU system since the layoffs on nine campuses last year and two notices at CSU Stanislaus rescinded in March, CSU Channel Islands (CI) management invoked Article 24 with notices to nine employees in early April. Those who were impacted include every employee in the Instructional Support Technician and Equipment Technician classifications on the CI campus.

At a campus rally in April, Instructional Support Technician Kimberly Gardner said that she was blindsided and shocked when she found out she was being laid off. She knew that there would be cuts and tough times to come but did not see this coming.

"After all," Gardner told the crowd, "we were told the campus would strive to avoid cuts in academic areas, and we work in academic departments."

According to VP for Representation Russell Kilday-Hicks, these notices are of a new, more complicated variety, supposedly necessary due to lack of funds and lack of work. Each of the employees was offered a time-base reduction from 12 month to 11/12 employment.

"A mitigation agreement was reached," Kilday-Hicks reported, "but everyone involved was left with a bad taste, especially the workers. Our frustration was that management was unwilling to accept any of the mitigation efforts that usually apply to layoffs."

If there is a lack of funds, the contract requires that any savings that can be found be applied, especially savings created when other employees voluntarily reduce their time base, until the budget crisis is over. Gardner said that she and others could have worked collectively to resolve budget issues in their respective departments to avoid layoffs, but they weren't given the opportunity to do so. CSUEU compiled numerous cost-saving ideas, which the layoff bargaining team presented to

administrators, but management was not to be moved.

Other work can be found for these employees to address the lack of work justification for layoff. The bargaining team, made up of both local and statewide union leaders as well as most of the affected employees, was turned back on mitigation efforts in both areas.

"Unfortunately, the offer being presented to the nine impacted employees is a choice—either agree to a time base reduction or find work elsewhere," said CI chapter President Jennifer Schweisinger. "Although this tactic does mitigate permanent layoffs, it equates to an 8.33 percent pay cut for these employees."

Chapter leaders reached out to the university community, drawing letters of support from faculty and over 700 signatures on a petition.

"CSUEU has always had a collaborative working relationship with Channel Islands' administrators," Schweisinger continued, "so the lack of compromise was disappointing. While the lack of funds argument might be plausible in the short term due to the budget crisis, it's clear that the lack of work argument falls flat."

Each of the employees has carefully documented his or her workload and can substantiate the significance of their positions. The work of the Instructional Support Technicians and Equipment Technicians is vital to the prepping of lab and art classes, and collaboration with students and faculty keeps the academic departments functioning.

"In this case," Kilday-Hicks said, "management decided to take advantage of the opportunity that the budget crisis provides to reduce the time base for all the employees in this classification group, regardless of whether there was enough work for them or not. Management acknowledged that there may be enough

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date to which the taxes extend—or expire, if rejected by the voters. Some in the legislature wanted the taxes extended to cover the fiscal year, so schools, universities and other programs could plan for a full year without mid-year cuts.

It is unclear what else may happen with the state budget and what else may impact decisions and support for it. It is clear that the economy is rebounding, but not at a brisk pace. Legislative districts are being redrawn, and some legislators will find themselves in new districts and with whole new constituencies to serve and please if they are elected. So, there will really not be many old legislative friends, and there will be plenty of new people wanting to befriend some voters.

Meanwhile, back in the media, conservative pundits and anti-tax groups continue to press the pension panic button. Most of the problems and abuses with the state pension system did not occur in the state miscellaneous group into which CSU employees fall. Spiking and other abuses mainly happened in cities, counties or special districts around sophisticated compensation packages that impacted pension calculations and costs. The average retired state worker receives only about a \$24,000 annual pension and has contributed to and earned it!

So, what can I say? Tell your legislators to pass a budget that does not cut the CSU any deeper. Tell your family, friends and neighbors that California is at a point where it needs to decide about its future, reinvest in itself, and recapture the California Dream.

In union,

Pat Gantt

An End to *Slacktivism*

CSUEU's VP for Member Engagement calls for action



By Joseph Dobzynski, Jr., VP for Member Engagement

Activism—a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action, especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue

Slacktivism—The act of participating in obviously pointless activities as an expedient alternative to actually expending effort to fix a problem

Our union has seen an unprecedented increase in activism in recent months. The attack on collective bargaining rights and the scapegoating of public workers have spurred more of our members on to do something other than attend the annual holiday gala at their local chapter. Since last year, I've had the pleasure of attending multiple CSUEU rallies and actions throughout the state, including the Sacramento Capitol Rally on February 26, at which CSUEU made a fiery entrance by marching past tea party counter-protestors who jeered us with name calling and distorted "facts" about our represented employees. Activism is getting people together to take action for a cause, as opposed to slacktivism, which is about doing the least bit possible to feel good about oneself.

Consider the following differences:

- **A slacktivist will merely change their Facebook status to promote a particular cause. An activist will use social networking to distribute information and videos that show themselves and others whom they've organized in action.**
- **A slacktivist will debate endlessly over e-mail and in person about the particular merits of one course of action or ideal over another. An activist will eventually make a decision and take a course of action, even if there is some risk.**
- **A slacktivist will donate money to a political or activist campaign and feel they have done enough. An activist will not only donate money but also give their time and talents to the cause for action.**
- **A slacktivist will sign an online petition and encourage other folks to do so. Activists will get thousands of paper signatures and present the petition to their legislators to show their commitment.**
- **A slacktivist will evaluate the latest political advertisement for its effectiveness. An activist knows that money is better spent on getting people into the streets.**

Unfortunately, advances in communication technology have made slacktivism the norm for most people, even those who really care about a cause. It isn't that these new forms of activism aren't good ideas, but they lower the bar for action and are not enough. Slacktivism creates a passive and easy commitment, but real activism takes dedicated commitment and sacrifice. We need an end to slacktivism. Gone are the days when we can feel that we accomplished something significant just by signing an online petition or donating money to the latest movement that promises real change. We need to stop having endless debate over whose issue is more important if we are going to make real change by pursuing all of them. Action takes people and money. CSUEU is facing the unprecedented triple threats of a disastrous state budget, layoffs at Channel Islands, the Office of the Chancellor, and potentially across the state, and full contract bargaining in a terrible economic climate that's fueled by anti-union corporations and political parties. If we don't stand up and take action, we will find ourselves losing our collective bargaining rights and in turn see an increase in our health premiums, a slashing of our pensions, plunging salaries, and hiring and promotion practices based on nepotism and favoritism. Get off your couch. Shut down your computers. Contact your local chapter and *Get Involved!*

Stanislaus Layoff Notices Rescinded

Stanislaus Chapter President Frank Borrelli wasn't entirely surprised when two employees at his campus received layoff notices in January. Administrators had been waving the layoff flag for several months late last year as CSUEU tried to work with them to avoid every employee's worst nightmare. Borrelli, his chapter officers, and others from CSUEU were originally told that upwards of 15 permanent positions would be eliminated. Then, after much pressure on administration by chapter leaders, CSU Stanislaus President Hamid Shirvani announced at a budget forum, among crowds of chapter members wearing black CSUEU shirts, "We will not lay off permanent employees and will look to find another solution."

However, he did mention that there would be "possibly a couple of cuts for lack of work." Weeks later, the other shoe finally dropped. Administrators used lack of work as the reason for laying off the two employees. "The notices were frivolous," said Borrelli. "They clearly weren't justified, since there's plenty of work in their classifications in the affected department."



CSU Stanislaus Chapter President, Frank Borrelli

tactics to augment the bargaining team's work. "Our efforts first time around didn't quite overcome their resolve to handle the situation this way," he said. The fallback position involved a groundswell of support for the two affected employees from others across the state. "With help from VP for Member Engagement Joseph Dobzynski, Jr. and the chapter Organizing Committee, we mounted an e-mail campaign," said Borrelli. "The goal was to flood administrators' mailboxes with messages urging them to reconsider."

Meanwhile, the chapter representation team was in action. Having identified several contract violations, they put pressure on the Stanislaus administration group by filing several grievances. "We pressured them on all sorts of issues that became important in the layoff situation," Borrelli stated. While the e-mail messages and grievances may have helped, they didn't win the day. So Borrelli, Dobzynski, and the chapter Organizing Committee launched another campaign.

We need all hands on deck if we are to survive.

Joseph Dobzynski, Jr., VP for Member Engagement

ment." The Stanislaus action followed a lull since last year's slew of layoffs at nine other CSU campuses. Channel Islands administrators followed Stanislaus by laying off nine employees in April. New CSUEU Labor Relations Representative Tom Dimitre and chapter leaders went to work representing the employees, weighing their options and developing strategies, along with CSUEU President Pat Gantt and the CSUEU layoff bargaining team. VP for Representation Russell Kilday-Hicks and colleagues reprised a now-familiar routine, setting up mitigation bargaining dates for the CSUEU layoff bargaining team to meet CSU representatives face to face. "No two situations are exactly the same," stated Kilday-Hicks. "This one had some quirks that gave us a little more leverage than usual." Administrators were adamant, however, so Borrelli and his team developed some different

"We called for members from other campuses and unions to show up at a bargaining session in March," Borrelli said. "We wanted so many CSUEU people there that administration would sit up and take notice." The group made plans for several hundred visitors to the campus on a weekday early in the month. "Signs, shirts, buttons, noisemakers, bullhorns--you name it. We wanted to make an unforgettable impression," he added. Responses from off-campus groups numbered very high, so Borrelli was left with a logistical dilemma. As part of the CSUEU Organizing Plan checklist (developed by Dobzynski and the statewide Organizing Committee), he talked to the campus police a few days ahead of the rally and hinted that many protesters would attend. A couple of days later, the administration blinked. Borrelli was notified they had found a

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CSUEU Bargaining 101

By Russell Kilday-Hicks, Vice President for Representation

Against the backdrop of a massive state budget deficit and the vilification of state employees nationwide, we are in full-contract bargaining with the CSU. Our master contract for Bargaining Units (BUs) 2, 5, 7, and 9 expired at the end of June and continues in effect until a new contract is signed. (The BU 12 contract is up next year and BU 13 in 2013.) There are a few basic truths I would like members to better understand regarding the bargaining process and everyone's role in the outcome, starting with the differences between mitigation bargaining and full contract bargaining. There are different types of bargaining, and they require different approaches. Layoff and policy bargaining both differ from contract bargaining. In "mitigation" bargaining, management has made a decision (most recently, layoffs), and we show up to try and lessen, or mitigate, damage to the employees who are affected by that decision. The decision to lay off employees is management's to make, as are many other business decisions; the goal of bargaining is to preserve and defend the rights we currently have, as outlined in the contract. There are also bargaining situations that are created over policy. Again, these are business decisions that management has a right to make, but they're obligated to bargain with the union over

the impact of these changes to the employees we represent. If campus administrators want to change or implement a new policy, they're required to give the union "notice" (that is, they must officially tell union headquarters in Sacramento). The team on our side of the table is made up of both local and statewide union leaders. In full contract bargaining, the structure and process are significantly different. First, our bargaining team (BT) members are elected. During our statewide election cycle, the elected campus bargaining unit representatives meet and elect a chair and vice chair of each bargaining unit. These leaders sit on the BT. At-large bargaining unit council members, who act as backup for the chair and vice chair, are also elected by campus bargaining unit reps. The BT is chaired by our VP for representation and led by our statewide president. Unlike mitigation bargaining situations, where management has already made a decision prompting the negotiation, in full contract bargaining both sides come to the contract bargaining table as relative equals. Either side can bring up for discussion any piece of the contract. The initial steps for this—that is, naming the articles with which the union or management wants at least to open the discussions—is called the "sunshine" process. Once the sunshine period has passed, actual

bargaining can begin. Initially, the parties decide on when and where to meet in the coming months. Traditionally, three- or four-day blocks of dates are set up on the campuses to reduce travel time and expense and to allow local participants to give testimony on the issues under discussion. Depending on the size of the room, observers may be allowed when bargaining is taking place, that is, when the two sides are presenting proposals or counter-proposals. However, the BT meets in closed session (caucuses) to plan strategy and prepare proposals. With full contract bargaining, both sides first state their respective needs, then try to reach agreement, which often involves making many compromises. If a "tentative agreement," or TA, is reached, both parties need to get the agreement ratified. Union members, by bargaining unit, vote to approve or reject the TA. The CSU Board of Trustees votes on management's side. At the end of the day, it's common for both sides to feel good about some gains and not so good about what they may have had to agree with to get there. Both sides usually come to the table with contract "fixes" in mind to clarify confusing language that has been generating grievances. Sometimes one side or the other can misbehave and "bargain in bad faith" (e.g., misrepresent positions or practice what's known as regressive bargaining, where offers get progressively worse than previous ones).

If this happens, either side can appeal to the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) for relief. The CSU has the power to impose contract terms upon their employees if we can't come to agreement (this is how we lost salary steps in 1996). It is important that the BT doesn't go into bargaining alone. In addition to having held many meetings with statewide leaders to discuss goals and strategies, including an all-Bargaining Unit Council meeting, a six-hour session with the CSUEU Board of Directors, a meeting with statewide staff, etc., we are making the effort now to engage our statewide and chapter leaders in the process from the start. We're doing everything possible to keep members informed and to give them avenues to support the team's efforts as we proceed. The ratification process is not the time to start engaging the members. This is why it's important that we bargain on the campuses. CSU managers would like to stay in their comfort zone in Long Beach. We need to be where members can watch what is going on more closely and take part in creating a better outcome. There are few guarantees in bargaining, but CSUEU sets goals high and strives to achieve them. We can rightly be proud of the work we do. To ask management and the taxpayers of California for fair compensation, meaningful work, respect, support, and a future is only asking for our due as public servants.

Shadow an Employee: Evelyn Taylor, University Archivist

A typical day for an employee in a not-so-usual position

By Jennifer Schweisinger, CSU Channel Islands

Evelyn Taylor never planned to be a university archivist. After growing up in Arizona, she completed her BA in History at Grand Canyon College in Phoenix and, soon thereafter, moved to California. She worked for ten years as a legal secretary and paralegal before deciding on a career change. Heeding her mother's recommendation, Evelyn enrolled at CSU Northridge to complete an MA in history, with an archival emphasis. She was drawn to this specialty, she says, because she loves "old things." She's been happily employed as a Unit 7 Library Assistant (University Archivist) at CSU Channel Islands since 2000.

The day before I shadowed Evelyn, she was occupied in welcoming researchers from other institutions and in talking with prospective donors to the university archive collections. On the day I arrived, she was busy helping students obtain archival materials, managing interns and student assistants, completing intake work of new materials, and adding those materials to a tracking database.

It is apparent from the moment I begin watching Evelyn interact with students that this aspect of her job brings her the most satisfaction. She lights up in their presence and truly enjoys providing guidance and mentoring. I ask Evelyn about this at the end of her shift, and she answers that the most important aspect of her

job is providing excellent customer service to all users of the university archives.

"The university is a service industry, and my job is to provide the best customer service possible," she replies. "The highlight of my day is working with the students. Isn't that why we are here, to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful at whatever they decide to do?"

After assisting the students in their research needs, Evelyn turns her attention to assigning her interns and student assistants their next archival tasks. She is currently instructing them in "processing work," which includes the handling, examining, and logging in of archival materials and their content. Some of the materials they process today are for the Camarillo State Hospital collection (the facilities at CSU Channel Islands functioned as a state mental hospital from 1936-1997) and the newest collection, the papers of former State Superintendent of Education Jack O'Connell.

Once she has given guidance to the student, Evelyn sits down at her desk to read e-mail messages from researchers and to answer yet more questions from students who will be coming in soon to utilize the collections. Evelyn takes



Evelyn Taylor and her shadow for a day,
Jennifer Schweisinger

the remaining hours of her day to prep for an archives seminar she is to present in the coming weeks.

"When you mention the word 'archive,' people automatically think of a dark, dusty, uncomfortable location in a spooky basement where few tread. As you can see here, that is just not so. I am not simply shuffling papers every hour; much of my day is an interactive experience with students, faculty, and the general public, to which I always look forward," Evelyn proclaims with pride.

This is merely the end of Evelyn's CSU workday. She now begins her second job, that of writer. Evelyn is a gifted writer and author of two soon-to-be published books: *PATCO and Reagan: An American Tragedy* and *Conducting Oral Histories: A Student's Guide to a Successful Interviewing Experience*.

I ask her how she possibly has the time to work an eight-hour day at the university and write two books. Her answer is simple: "I love to learn, I love the university environment, and I love

to apply my knowledge to help others."

This may explain why she went back to college, yet again, and recently graduated with an MA in Library Sciences from San Jose State University.

In her spare time, Evelyn loves going to movies, attending concerts, spending time with her boyfriend and their four cats, enjoying the outdoors, and, of course, reading. She also is a huge Harry Potter fan and endured the July heat and humidity in Florida to visit the Harry Potter Theme Park for its opening!

Evelyn especially loves summertime and the happy anticipation of attending county fairs. The crowd, the smells, the exhibits, the food, the kids running around...all remind her and impress upon her that life is a gift. As a breast cancer survivor, she has learned to appreciate even the simplest of things.

So, the next time you enter your university library, say hello to the university archivist. They are the hard-working folks who preserve the history of our local communities, our state, our nation, and especially, our universities. Evelyn is very proud to be a CSU employee and a union member. She has served as CSUEU Chapter Secretary at Channel Islands since 2002 and believes that now is a critical time for "reasonable and rational" union involvement.

2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13: Bargaining Unit News

Items of statewide interest

BU 2

The Bargaining Unit 2 Council has recently said some good-byes and hellos to council members. Over the last few months, Vicki Baingul, Corina Corpiet, and Lori Williams left the council for various reasons. Chair Tessy Reese and the other BUC members wish good luck to all who have moved on. Reese and the BU2 team give a big welcome to new members Susan Whitney, Pat Clanton and Rojean Dominguez.

The council is watching various issues, including athletic trainers' overtime and Health Center policies. There has been a problem at some campuses in tracking athletic trainers' overtime hours. At some Health Centers, the CSU may not have properly provided notice to the union on policies that affect wages, hours and conditions of employment. Reese and other members of the council are investigating and will prepare action if they can confirm contract violations.

The council is gathering information to see if there is interest in developing a Statewide Occupational Work Group to help address classification-specific issues and concerns. Stay tuned for future developments.

BU 5

Chair Sharon Cunningham and the Bargaining Unit 5 council are working hard in their continuing campaign against the contracting out of Unit 5 jobs. Cunningham's biggest concern is the high rate of job loss throughout the CSU system, which is due not only to outsourcing to private contractors but also to the loss of jurisdiction: student assistants and foundation employees are now doing work once done by Unit 5 employees. The council's most recent victory comes from the Los Angeles campus, where it succeeded in rolling back contracting. Cunningham extends thanks to all of the dedicated L.A. activists who helped to make this happen.

Vice Chair Rick Barry has stepped down, and Mike Chavez, from CSU Stanislaus has filled the position. Unfortunately, Mike was injured in an accident shortly after stepping up. Jose Rico of San Jose State is filling for Mike during his recovery.

Full contract negotiations are underway and Sharon, along with the rest of the members of the bargaining team, has been busy traveling to various campuses to negotiate our contract.

BU 7

This has been a very busy period for Chair Mike Brandt and the Bargaining Unit 7 Council.

An ongoing problem in Unit 7 is employees being improperly classified. With the advent of new technologies, more and more staff duties are continually in flux. Brandt cannot stress how important it is for every Unit 7 member to be properly classified and to have an up-to-date job description on file.

Bullying in the workplace has become the biggest issue for not only this bargaining unit but for the other units as well. Mike and his team are working hard to address this problem, as it seems to be affecting a growing number of campuses. A big shout out to Sacramento State chapter President Kim Harrington for all the work she has done to inform members about this issue.

In recent months, Council members have been devoting their strengths to contract negotiations. They are now deciding how to revise the duties of BU 7 at-large representatives in support of bargaining and representation to make best use of members' strengths and wealth of experience.

BU 9

In recent months, Bargaining Unit 9's primary focus has been to support the contract campaign. Unit 9 Council members have been providing support on contract issues affecting Unit 9 employees.

Since the last UE was published, Neil Jacklin of CSU Stanislaus was appointed to the council. Chair Rich McGee and the other members of the council welcome Neil.

Moving library assistants into Unit 9 has been an ongoing project since 1998. Two years ago, we bargained this change extensively with the CSU, but the CSU refused to offer any economic gains to the employees who were being reclassified and given new job descriptions. Though the economic climate has not changed, CSUEU finally reached an implementation agreement with the CSU in May. Details are available in the Bargaining section of the CSUEU web site, www.csueu.org.

McGee urges all activists to watch and monitor Unit 9 job postings, keeping an ear open for any talk of layoffs by any manager. If you hear of any, notify your LRR and chief steward.

BU 12

Unit 12 represents more than 80 early childhood teachers, family advocates, and support staff who work for the Head Start program in the City and County of San Francisco. The federal grant for the program is administered by San Francisco State. The diverse, dedicated staff negotiated their first contract under CSUEU in 2009, and their contract, bargained separately from other units, will expire next year on May 31.

Effective June 1, 2011, a 1.84 percent cost of living raise for Unit 12 employees became permanent. This raise had been provisionally incorporated into Head Start workers' wages last year but was set to end if the Head Start budget were cut by Congress. The Obama administration supported Head Start and made the increase permanent.

Members are looking forward to a steward training and introduction to bargaining in early August.

BU 13

Since the Bargaining Unit 13 contract was enacted last fall, Bargaining Unit 13's ESL teachers at CSU Los Angeles have been trained by CSUEU leaders to become union stewards. Chief Steward Denise Minin says they are grateful to all those who provided the training. The unit's members are eager for more union training.

One issue that caused problems for Unit 13 is that of unemployment insurance (UI), for which they had been eligible prior to being organized under CSUEU; they'd routinely received UI between academic sessions. This had been an important source of income. The members are now paid on a 12-month basis and therefore aren't eligible to collect UI. Due to a misunderstanding between CSULA and the employees, the benefits income amounts that individual members reported varied from those that CSULA reported to the state Employment Development Department. Unfortunately, EDD fined some of the employees. Despite CSUEU's success at Unit 13 bargaining, its power did not extend to preventing unemployment insurance issues of this type.

On a positive note, though, the members have received salary increases as part of their collective bargaining agreement. This is the first increase that many of them have received in many years, and it reverses a salary reduction trend seen over the last several years. Overall, regular employment, increased salaries, and union protections have made the transition worthwhile.

Minin reports that relations with a new ESL program director are going very well; he clearly supports their work. Job security, for the first time in many years, is now a reality as a result of the contract and the director's support. The group, says Minin, is relieved and optimistic about their future.

CSUEU Committee Reports

Governance and operations at work

CLASSIFICATION

With the budget situation and with Channel Islands, Stanislaus, Fresno and the Office of the Chancellor in layoff, job merging and position description workshops have become even more crucial. The Classification Committee has a good foundation in classification criteria and is prepared to assist any chapter should it need help in reviewing classification issues. Committee members are ready to assist with intake interviews should the need arise.

In an effort to save expenses and reach a larger number of members, the committee is investigating webinar software such as Elluminate Live for use in presentations and workshops. They could then post the proceedings on the Web. The committee has done prior presentations with Elluminate Live with great success.

Currently the committee is working on a new presentation, "Use of a Lead," which will help distinguish the duties of lead employees from those of non-leads and MPPs.

COMMUNICATIONS

The committee has had a busy few months. Committee members drafted a communications handbook, revised the Activist web site Terms of Use, created a Facebook page (available via an icon at the bottom of www.csueu.org) and are working with the Policy File Committee on CSUEU endorsement of web sites, including vetting criteria. The CSUEU Board of Directors, at its June meeting, adopted the handbook, Activist Terms of Use, and Policy File changes.

The committee also has been supporting budget, legislative, and contract bargaining campaigns in partnership with the Organizing and Legislative Committees and the bargaining team. Committee members are also working on another labor poster to follow up on the popular

Cesar Chavez poster last March.

The committee and staff members are creating a content template for chapters to use for web page design. A campaign to increase the involvement of new activists in the labor movement is in the discussion and planning stage.

As always, the committee is busy writing articles and publishing *University Employee*.

FINANCE

According to CSUEU Finance Committee Chair Loretta Seva'aetasi, CSUEU is able to meet its financial obligations and has just passed its annual audit, conducted by Hood & Strong, with flying colors.

Expenses for CSUEU may be higher this year due to contract bargaining, a possible special election and related campaign this fall, and the 2011 Defense Campaign (see the Organizing Committee report below). Much is at stake for state employees throughout the country after Wisconsin and the state budget crisis.

We are working with CSEA affiliates ACSS and CSEA Retirees, Inc., on an agreement to build a member information database to suit our respective needs. "We are close to finalizing this important database build, which will go a long way toward streamlining operations for all three affiliates," said Seva'aetasi.

LEGISLATIVE

Chair Natalia Bremer and Legislative Committee members have been closely following a number of legislative matters of importance to public higher education. Most urgently, they are keeping a close watch on the state and CSU budgets. The committee is also watching for potential attacks on public employees' pension plans and collective bargaining rights.

The committee spearheaded another successful

CSUEU "Lobby Day" on April 12, with CSUEU members from all over the state traveling to the Capitol to meet with legislators. The opportunity to remain visible to our elected officials and remind them how their decisions affect higher education was of primary importance.

ORGANIZING

The CSUEU Organizing Committee is active and, most importantly, is working on the 2011 Defense Campaign. The campaign encompasses a three-tiered approach through communications, political action and member organizing to support contract bargaining and to defend the CSU against budget cuts. The committee has been focusing on coordinating statewide and regional bargaining actions and on providing organizing training and support to all chapters.

The committee is maintaining constant communication with chapters through monthly teleconference calls, a monthly blog, and an updated organizing webpage. The committee and staff members also held two successful regional trainings to support the Defense Campaign in recent months.

The group welcomed two new members in late December: Lori Williams of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Mike Geck of CSU San Marcos. Lori, former chair of the Finance Committee, will help the committee understand the financial implications of organizing actions, and Mike returns to the committee after an eight-month hiatus to coordinate regional actions and trainings in southern California.

Committee members recently elected Janet Gonzales from Long Beach as vice-chair. In this capacity, she'll manage the committee's administrative and logistical concerns.

POLICY FILE

Chair Steve Mottaz and other members of the Policy File Committee have been working on several refinements of governance documents in their ongoing drive to keep up with and anticipate changes in how the organization operates.

One long-term task is to work with chapters on revising their By-Laws to align with CSUEU's By-Laws. The statewide By-Laws were revised after CSUEU incorporated under nonprofit status six years ago. Maintaining the corporate status calls for organization-wide adherence to

nonprofit requirements, which the committee monitors.

The committee's recommendations for tightening definitions of bargaining unit chairs and vice-chairs was adopted at the February board meeting, as was its recommendation that all statewide officers must be certified stewards. The board also adopted the committee's recommended refinements of language pertaining to internal disputes and charges against stewards. Lastly, the board agreed to accept committee reports as official minutes of committee meetings and to adopt several improvements to communications governance (see COMMUNICATIONS report, above).

REPRESENTATION

The Representation Committee spent months preparing for contract bargaining and now is in the midst of working for a better agreement with the CSU. VP for Representation Russell Kilday-Hicks notes that bargaining is never easy and reports that current sessions are further hampered by the economic climate. An additional complication was encountered this spring, when the CSU at first agreed to bargaining on several campuses, then reversed their agreement. The issue has since been resolved, with some sessions being held on larger campuses.

Also this spring, bargaining team members visited campuses across the state to gather members' input on contract negotiations, supplementing responses to phone, electronic, and paper surveys. Members' opinions are vital in guiding the team's focus; the team will refer to them throughout bargaining.

Layoff bargaining has occupied some of the committee's time as well. With the state budget disaster and campuses in layoff, committee members will be involved in more layoff mitigation bargaining.

Kilday-Hicks recently led steward training for CSUEU's new Bargaining Unit 13, ESL instructors at CSU Los Angeles. Further steward training is on hold for now to save costs, since all stewards will need to be recertified if and when a new contract becomes effective.

Amid the above tasks, committee members deal with grievances on a daily basis.

CSUEU Board Approves Special Interest Group Language

At the CSUEU Board of Directors meeting in Oakland the weekend of June 25-26, the directors approved new language on Saturday allowing for sanctioned interest groups to form and use the union's name.

The first proposal, which came unexpectedly on Sunday morning by VP for Representation Russell Kilday-Hicks, was for the Lavender Caucus group. The board, it turns out, wasn't quite ready to approve its first group, even though the language they just passed left them open for petitions. "I just wanted to move the process along, not knowing it would cause a problem," said Kilday-Hicks. "At our last board meeting the idea for a Lavender Caucus already came before the board when one of our activists spoke passionately requesting that a committee be created, and a number of members statewide have been discussing the idea for many months," Kilday-Hicks said.

Approval for the group was postponed until the next board meeting in November to allow the Policy File Committee to figure out if all "special interest groups" or SIGs should be required to have any particular structure or reporting responsibilities to the board to be allowed to use the union's name in their activities and organizing.

"It's so new they [the board] didn't have a chance to think it through," said board member Andrew Coile, who made the motion to approve the caucus. He added, "As a gay man and a union leader I know there is a need for this group, and looking at the averages we have about one thousand to 1,500 potential members at a minimum."

The Policy File Committee, chaired by Steve Mottaz, is tasked with making suggestions to the board on what, if any, structure the SIGs will be required to have. For example, the board could ask that an approved group have at least one meeting a year or have a purpose statement.

CSUEU President Pat Gantt said these groups are common in the labor movement, especially when a union adopts a social-justice organizing model, which is what CSUEU has been moving towards. SEIU has a Lavender Caucus and the AFL/CIO has a national network of Pride at Work groups.

"As chair of CSEA's Human Rights Committee, I felt a responsibility to promote the formation of this particular group," said Kilday-Hicks. "I encourage other interest groups to form to get more members involved in their union's activities and bring the union and all it stands for into other social justice activities that they may already be involved with," he concluded.

No funding comes with recognition, but board members could approve requests for support in the future if they saw that it was in the best interest of the union. If you are interested in joining the Lavender Caucus, contact Jillian Dacosta at jdacosta@gmail.com.

CSUEU Activists Take to the Streets for You!



CSUEU ACTIVISTS MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD



Since late spring, chapters across the state—including more than 110 members at San Jose State, seen here—have staged spirited marches and rallies in support of the CSUEU bargaining team as it negotiates a new contract with CSU.



On February 26, CSUEU Board of Directors members joined more than 1000 people at the Sacramento Capitol to show strong support for unions in Wisconsin



A highlight of Lobby Day on April 12 was a Senate floor visit with Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, who expressed his support of CSU funding and his appreciation of the important work done by CSU staff.



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A petition for a ballot measure that would essentially end union expenditures on political action is open for signatures now. CSUEU urges voters to not sign the petition and to call (877) 440-9585 to report where signature gathering is taking place. Details can be found on the CSUEU home page at www.csueu.org.

Channel Islands

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work to keep them at 12/12, but their intent is to reduce their workload and change the positions to permanent 11/12.”

He added, “We know these are hard times, but these employees still have a right to 12-month positions. We wanted management to acknowledge this and to set a path to return these people to their original 12-month time base.”

As of press time, the nine affected employees were still working. They each received letters in

mid-June asking them either to accept the layoffs and leave the university or to accept the permanent 11-month time base for their current positions. At that time, they had 14 days to make a decision. Schweisinger reports that one of the employees has already accepted employment elsewhere; the other eight were still deciding what they wanted to do.

We all wish them the best and support them in this incredibly tough decision.

Stanislaus Layoffs

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way to rescind the layoff notices.

“This is indicative of what we can accomplish when enough people get involved,” said Borrelli. “We treated this as a system-wide layoff, not an individual campus layoff.”

Dobzynski added, “Our members are now facing threats that we cannot bargain or grieve away. We can no longer rely on our chapter executive boards and representation teams alone to sup-

port CSUEU. We need all hands on deck if we are going to survive.”

Borrelli concurs: “There is certainly power in numbers. That’s what made the difference in this situation.”

Update: Borrelli and company may need to revive their tactics, as 11 Stanislaus employees were notified of layoff in mid-July. Two others at CSU Fresno were also notified.

Funding Stability

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the situation to their advantage by chanting the “No new taxes” mantra.

Supporters of state programs are counting on a special election this fall and on voter approval of those extended taxes. Brown, despite waning support for expanded tax revenue, may still push for the election.

Finding new revenue sources is key to the CSU’s budget situation. The CSU system’s funding has already been decreased by \$650 million. The budget as enacted calls for another \$100 million cut if state coffers don’t swell by an additional \$4 billion by December.

CSU’s programs are already suffering due to all the cutbacks of recent years. Furloughs and layoffs have had a profound impact on the services we provide. How the CSU intends to handle the new crisis remains to be seen, but the situation cannot be good for students, the ultimate consumers of our products. CSUEU will keep a close eye on how campuses deal with a bad budget and hope things will improve soon.

This is no way to run what used to be regarded as the pinnacle of state university systems. Increased revenue from one source or another must be secured, and soon. Legislation that locks stability into our funding base is a must.

Partisan politics and refusal to compromise have seriously damaged California’s education. The governor and legislators, and ultimately their employers, the taxpayers, must figure out a way to keep priorities in perspective. Voters need to not only voice support for education, but to put a penny or two on the dollar toward it and put pressure on legislators and governors who don’t do what the state needs. Yes, the state is in dire straits. But this, too, will pass, and we risk magnifying the long-term damage by merely trying to take care of short-term needs. The population isn’t stagnant and to expect agencies to do today’s work on funding from a decade ago isn’t realistic or wise. Expecting us to create tomorrow’s leaders without adequate support does an extreme disservice to them, their children, and ourselves.

That’s why it is absolutely vital for each one of us, numbed as we may be to fiscal problems we’ve endured over several years, to support adequate taxes for state services. We have to sell our neighbors, friends, and relatives on the idea, too. Polls this spring show that the public supports paying for high-quality services. Higher education needs it, students deserve it, we depend on it.

It is time to ask ourselves: what kind of state do you want to live in?

Grassroots Focus:

Sarah Portales, San Jose State University

By Steve Sloan, San Jose State University

Sarah G. Portales is single mom and a day shift custodial lead at San Jose State University. Most SJSU custodians work at night; those who work days face a steady stream of crisis response pressures.

It is not easy to be a custodian. They handle leaks, floods, spills, broken glass, overflowing toilets, dirty windows, sinks, and locked doors.

If someone throws up on campus, custodians get the call. And, Sarah said, “Students throw up a lot at the end and beginning of school, when they’re stressed and nervous.”

Comparing the situation for custodians at SJSU now to when she was hired in 1994, Sarah said, “It’s gotten better. The union has helped. The union has let members know their rights and has provided people the ability to express themselves.”

Since starting at SJSU, Sarah has become active in the union. She is currently the treasurer for CSUEU Chapter 307. Sarah said, “Being a custodian, you feel lucky and fortunate to have a job in this economy. But it’s a struggle. Everything has gone up, but our salaries have not. To survive, 80 percent of the university’s custodians have had to hold down second full-time or part-time jobs, share housing and/or rent rooms. Some custodians have side businesses, selling everything from tamales to earrings. Some have turned to payday loans in desperation. Even custodial managers have second jobs.”



Sarah G. Portales
Photo by Steve Sloan

Sarah added, “Now they may want to take away pay or increase the costs of benefits? I have already rented out a room of my home. That’s really hard when you have children.”

According to Sarah, many custodians have lost homes or are about to. Sarah noted that rents in Santa Clara County start at \$1,800 a month for two- or three-bedroom units.

Even though employee contributions to medical insurance haven’t been increased, many custodians are foregoing medical care because of high co-payments. Co-pays already take money away from Sarah’s family’s grocery budget.

“I have medications, and my son has allergies,” she

said. “We need better medical benefits, but our pay keeps getting chopped up and chopped up.”

Sometimes generic alternatives are not available, pushing medicine co-payments higher.

“Recently they had a wellness fair at San Jose State,” Sarah said, explaining that the fair focused on healthy food options. “But good food is expensive. Dollar stores are popular among custodians, but nutrition-wise they are not good,” said Sarah, pointing out that many custodians are stressed out because their income does not cover basic needs. As gas prices rise, many custodians have to use public transit, which may be quite a hardship on those who work night shifts.

Sarah said she is trying to give her son a good education. But she also is very busy. She has to clean houses on the side and is always looking for part-time work. She has had to turn to payday lenders on occasion, but then she gets trapped into paying their high interest rates.

“It is hard for custodians to move up,” she continued. “They are not given opportunities.”

Custodians are now able to use fee-waiver benefits for their kids, but, due to time constraints, are seldom able to use them themselves. They often have to work at night and take multiple day jobs. In addition, many have language issues that make it hard for them to take classes. The best resource for helping custodians move up, according to Sarah, is the Partners in Reading program at the city library, which has helped many custodians improve their language skills and has proven to be a valuable step on the road to citizenship.

Custodians often have to operate dangerous equipment or use dangerous chemicals. All safety training at SJSU is in English, which is a second language for many. “I do my best to translate for them,” said Sarah.

Despite the challenges and low pay compared to the cost of living, CSU custodians get by. With the help of friends, family, and their union, Sarah and other CSU custodians are building better lives for themselves and their families.