

THE INSIDER

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WORKING FOR, AND PROTECTING, FACULTY RIGHTS SINCE 1978

STATE BUDGET HIGHS AND FTES LOWS IN A YEAR OF NEGOTIATION BY JILLIAN DALY, YFA PRESIDENT

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The YFA's contract reopening proposal for this year's negotiation was accepted by the District Board at the March 8th meeting up at Columbia College and will undergo a public hearing next month. This is the first step in a slow four-month legal process of proposals and counter-proposals for the opening of negotiation. The District and YFA, however, have agreed to begin meeting in April in order to discuss contractual language changes that both parties are amenable to. Talks on salary and benefits will take place later.

Both District and YFA come to the table during a time of mixed budget news. Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed 2006-07 State Budget in January was good news for community colleges, a large increase in funds over the 2005-06 State Budget (approx. \$606.5 million above last year's budget). The proposed budget for next year includes \$148.8 million for 3% Enrollment Growth funds, \$246.6 million for a COLA of 5.18%, \$20.8 million for Categorical Program growth and COLA of 5.18%, and a large augmentation of Equalization funding (\$130 million as compared to last year's \$30 million). Equalization funds help to create funding equity across the California community colleges as some districts receive less funding per student due to factors such as differences in tax levels. A few union leaders have noted the "phantom" nature of the increased Enrollment Growth funds in this year's budget because few community colleges are experiencing growth, but there is talk of language being added to the May Revise that would call for reallocation of unspent growth funds. In all, the State Budget is very encouraging for community colleges.

The news for YCCD's budget, however, is far from good. We are still struggling to make FTES base enrollment from our 2003-04 year. Last year, MJC fell 476.5 FTES short of base, while Columbia College fell short 58.23 FTES. This year MJC has generated more FTES than last year, an encouraging sign, but it is still short of the 2003-04 base number and will have to make up the amount of FTES it borrowed from last year. Our sister college, Columbia, has generated less FTES this year than it did last year. As of the week of March 15th, YCCD is down approximately 900 FTES from base. MJC is currently down 5% in FTES; Columbia College is down 10%.

On March 16th, MJC Interim President, Bill Scroggins, invited faculty and staff leaders to his Cabinet meeting in order to discuss scenarios for declaring a decline of base to the State. Due to YCCD's large FTES deficit, Scroggins implied that "the handwriting is on the wall" and so declaring a decline is inevitable. Vice Chancellor of Fiscal Services, Teresa Scott, backed this up by saying that YCCD is 95% sure that they will have to declare a decline of base to the State. Both college presidents have been asked to propose scenarios for their own decline plan.

Why hasn't YCCD been able to increase FTES despite our best efforts through increased faculty hiring, increased advertising, and an increase in sections offered? (continued on page 2)

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

BY BRIAN SANDERS, YFA CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

The YFA Negotiations Team has been meeting for several months now. We've composed and reviewed the results of the faculty surveys - both full-time and adjunct. We've worked through five drafts of our reopening proposal, each with full input from the team and others on the Executive Board. So we're excited to report that we've submitted our Reopening Proposal to the Chancellor.

The Reopening Proposal is four pages long and, if I may say so, very thorough, thoughtful, and comprehensive. In a nutshell, we're proposing a three-year contract, continuation of fully-paid benefits, COLA applied to the salary schedules to make sure we're above median salaries in the state, and a thorough reorganization of the YFA contract. Once the Proposal is made public at the board meeting, we'll have it posted on the YFA website: www.yosemite.edu/yfa. (continued on page 5)

Just when you
thought
you knew
all the answers,
they changed
all the questions!
Anonymous

BUDGET HIGHS AND LOWS (CONT'D)

New statistics from the MJC IAC Enrollment Management Task Force seemed to indicate a variety of reasons. The increase in student fees has resulted in 65% of our students at MJC taking less than 12 units a semester—while MJC's enrollment numbers have increased slightly, these numbers have not translated into a similar increase in FTES.

The increased employment rate in our area means that people work rather than take courses at our community colleges. The compressed calendar hasn't resulted in the "big boost" in FTES as once thought. In fact, students now cannot take the same number of labs and courses they could on the traditional calendar, and the longer summer has never resulted in the trimester goal under our original compressed calendar scheme. Some administrators note that sloppy scheduling might also be an effect. Up in the Foothills, while population is increasing, the growth is largely from retirees, and Columbia College has not been successful in tapping into that consumer. In the MJC President's Cabinet meeting last Thursday, MJC's Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Linda Hoile, stated that the District has tapped out on its consumers, and there just aren't a lot more out there.

So, what does it mean for faculty if MJC and Columbia College declare a decline of base? The scenario being floated at MJC is to spread the decline over a two-year period—declaring a 3% decline for 2006-07, and if worse comes to worse, the other 2% decline in 2007-08. In 2008-09, when the Measure E buildings begin to open, we can begin to receive growth funds based on our new base (5% less of 14,893.18 FTES). Columbia College will have to decide on its own declaration scenarios, but a district source stated that since the Foothills won't expect FTES growth for some time, it would be best if Columbia College declared the full 10% now and take the hit. Why is the district thinking about declaring **now** rather than waiting to see if we can bail ourselves out of the 900 FTES hole we seem buried in? Because the State Budget includes one of the highest COLA's we've seen in years and a huge increase in Equalization funds—the two funding areas we negotiate over—and this infusion of increased State funding should offset some of the financial hit YCCD will take when we declare ourselves in decline. Declaration must take place by April 30th of next month.

The next few years, therefore, will pose challenges for us. If YCCD declares a decline of base, we will all be asked to teach the same number of students but with fewer financial resources. Bill Scroggins has said that protecting jobs during our decline years will be his number one priority. If we declare a decline, we will likely have a hiring freeze for the next two years. In the meantime, program review will soon take place to determine programs and projects in decline. Dr. Scroggins further noted that during the decline years, budget funding will have to become very creative, with priority funding going to project and programs that "improve efficiency and effectiveness"—in other words, those programs that fill classrooms—and to services mandated by the State or by Accreditation. Budget cuts in some areas are inevitable. Thus far little has been said as to how much budget cutting will occur in Central Services.

The problematic budget reality for YCCD, combined with a rosy budget from the State, will certainly color negotiation as District and YFA come to the table next month. Some, in fact, have questioned the timing of the district's announcement to explore decline scenarios as past history has shown that each time the YFA contract has been up for negotiation the district has begun a "the sky is falling" campaign. Navigating this perception and our FTES reality will be a challenge as talks begin in a few weeks. As most of you know, in our last round of negotiation, YFA and District agreed to create a Total Compensation Task Force to gather data from a group of cohorts in order to determine how YCCD compares in salary and healthcare costs. That data will hopefully be gathered by the end of April. Based on the Task Force results, YFA has proposed that the faculty salary schedule be comparably above the median to ensure we remain at or above median as other districts finalize their negotiations this year. We have further proposed that this year's COLA, as well as any State COLA in 2007-08 and 2008-09, be added to the faculty salary schedules. Furthermore, YFA, while acknowledging that health benefit costs are a part of our total compensation package and that comparisons still need to be obtained, has proposed that our medical benefits be maintained at their current levels and be fully funded by the district. These are the three main proposals in a detailed four-page YFA contract reopening proposal, and discussion at the table is bound to be interesting under the latest YCCD budget concerns. Expect more updates as events unfold, and be sure to visit the new YFA website (www.yosemite.edu/yfa) in order to view YFA's entire 2006-2009 Reopening Proposal.

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V.P.-Columbia	Erik Andal	X5200
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MJC East	Mike Smedshammer	X6490
MJC West	Alan Layne	X6335
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College Council	Michael Akard	X6890
Faculty Consultant	Steve Stroud	X6259

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	John Kropp	X6598

NEWS FOR THE NEW—SOME UNION BASICS TO CONSIDER (ADAPTED FROM FA NEWS/FOOTHILL-DEANZA FACULTY ASSOCIATION)

With the spate of hiring that occurred at the end of the Spring semester, there are many faculty who may be new to the idea of a Faculty Union. New faculty may be feeling slightly overwhelmed attempting to keep a few steps ahead of their students as they work on classroom preparations, grading, and all those other activities that consume so much of a faculty person's time. In order to assist new faculty, this short article will address a few Union Basics which might be helpful.

Which issues are union issues?

The YFA Faculty Association is your exclusive collective bargaining agent for working conditions (load, schedule, assignments, leaves, sabbaticals, evaluations, etc.), compensation (salary, health benefits, etc.), and job status (retirement, reduced workload, lay-off procedures, etc.). In short, your association deals almost exclusively with faculty-administration issues.

Can I make my own private deals with my dean?

That may depend on how one defines private deal, but certainly, as those arrangements fall under the above listed issues, you may not. "Direct dealing" is an unfair labor practice with potentially serious consequences for all parties involved. YFA bargains *collectively* for *all* unit members.

Which issues are not union issues?

Broadly speaking, anything outside the faculty-administration arena. Therefore, issues between faculty and students, faculty and other faculty, or faculty and professional or outside organizations are not within the purview of YFA contractual activities or obligations. The Academic Senate is in a "primary reliance" relationship with the District on matters relating to textbooks, curriculum, matriculation, quality of teaching and other professional and academic issues.

Where can I go if I have a contractual question or concern?

The gray column to the left identifies the officers and division representatives currently serving you in their capacity as elected leaders of the YFA Association. You may discuss your issue with your Division Representative. Your college Vice President/Grievance Officer is the person to seek out if you have concerns around the evaluation process or unfair labor practices on the part of your Dean or the administration. The President of the organization is also available to listen to your concerns, but may hand off the issue to one of the appropriate officers already mentioned.

Can I call upon the grievance officer if I do not have a problem with my administrator? What if I just want information.

Grievance Officers are there to help you with any contractual question or problem. They are contract experts, and they are there to answer questions, so feel free to ask. Use your division representative to carry your bargaining issues and ideas back to the YFA Executive and Representative Councils, the elected representative bodies that make decisions for the Association.

What if I don't like the decisions the Executive Council or the Association, in general, are making?

YFA invites everyone to run for a seat on either of these bodies when vacancies occur. If actively running for a position is not available, all representative council meetings are open to the constituency. You are welcome to attend meetings and voice your concerns. While the elected bodies of the Executive and Rep Councils focus on day-to-day decisions for the Association, such as deciding whether to take a grievance to arbitration and providing direction to the negotiating team, really big decisions, like ratifying a new contract, or taking a job action, are properly put to a general vote of the entire bargaining unit.

WHY PROPOSE DECREASING THE NUMBER OF STEPS?

BY BRIAN K. SANDERS, YFA CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

One of the items we've included in our Reopening Proposal to the district is that we reduce the *number of steps* on our pay scale to the median. That is, we've selected a comparison cohort of districts, each has a pay schedule, and each pay schedule has a highest step. Some districts get to the maximum step in 15 years, others (like ours) do so in as much as 30 years. Our proposal is to reduce our number of steps to the median number for our cohort.

Some people ask, "Isn't it better to keep on getting more raises for longer so you don't get stuck at one salary?"

Certainly that would be true if these step increases were to keep coming forever! But they don't. In (almost) every district, there *is* a highest step, and at that point you get "stuck." (Must be a bummer to get stuck at \$126,510 in the MiraCosta District!)

The reality is: if your top step is respectable, the fewer the steps to get there, the better – more in your pocket sooner.

How about a quick history lesson? During the 2001-2002 negotiations cycle, Dean West did some pioneering work for YFA by comparing our salaries with those in other districts. He found that our salaries were significantly behind the state median for each step. See Figure 1.

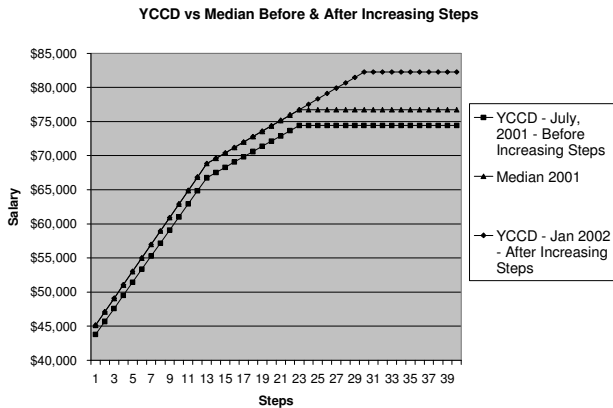


Figure 1

YFA argued that we should not only be brought up to the median, but that there were many faculty members who had spent their entire careers with atrociously low salaries, so we all ought to have salaries well *above* median. Unfortunately, the district was either unable or unwilling to fund that much of a salary increase. According

to former YFA President Lew Mayhew, it was former Chancellor Fisher who came up with the idea of adding additional steps to the salary schedule and allowing those people in steps 24 through 30 to rise above median, to close out their careers and finalize their STRS retirement figures with salaries above median. The resulting salary with steps 24-30 rising up above median and maxing out schedule was adopted in January, 2002, and is shown as the top line in Figure 1. According to Lew, the district agreed to *maintain* that structure: steps 1-23 at median, at 30.

Since that time, YCCD salaries have not kept pace with our colleagues elsewhere in the state. In fact, the median salaries statewide have risen so much that only our highest step, the highest one added in 2002, is even *at* median, let alone significantly above it. See Figure 2.

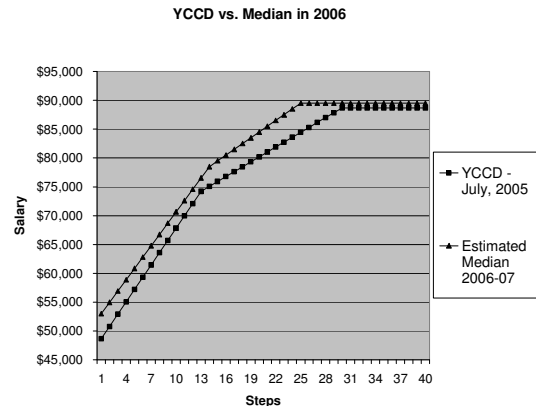


Figure 2

With all the changes in YFA and YCCD leadership, the "institutional memory" of our agreement to keep our highest steps above median seems to have faded to mere legend. The YFA Negotiations Team would certainly *accept* an offer from the district to reinvigorate that memory, bringing our total compensation package to the median for steps 1-23 and then letting steps 24-30 rise up above the median. However, we feel this is pretty unlikely. Yet the district *does* seem amenable to the idea of bringing us all up to median. In Figure 2, you can see that the *estimated median* maxes out at about 25 steps. So bringing us to median would mean reducing our number of steps to the median number of steps of our cohort.

"But will it benefit me?"

"*You bet!*" Figure 3 shows what our salary schedule would look like *now* if we had reduced to 25 steps *last* year. As you can see, our maximum salary would be the same, but you (continued on page 6)

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE (CONT'D)

Here's the basic timeline of negotiations:

- March Board Meeting – YFA Reopening Proposal is accepted by the board
- April Board Meeting – There is a public hearing on our Proposal.
- May Board Meeting – The district submits their response to our Proposal, which is also their reopening proposal.
- June Board Meeting – There is a public hearing on the district's reopening proposal.

THEN negotiations are open.

We're working with Diane Wirth, Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, to attempt to compress this schedule if possible. In particular, our hope is to begin preliminary negotiations in April. We'd like to have a few negotiations sessions this term so that we can deal with as many "easy" items as possible. We're convinced there are several items in our Proposal that will be easily agreed upon, so we'd like to "knock those out of the way" early on. Once summer hits, however, we plan to take a break from negotiations. This will also allow the district to conclude a comprehensive reclassification study for our colleagues in the classified ranks. In a meeting last month, Chancellor Williams, Diane Wirth, Jillian Daly, and I agreed that the goal is to be completed by December, 2006.

Based on our agreement from last year, the Total Compensation & Medical Benefits Task Forces have been meeting through fall and early spring to draft a benefits survey that has been sent to 22 of the 72 districts in the state. Based on information gathered from these districts, we'll be able to more effectively determine where YCCD stands in comparison with others in the state. The information we do have shows that even with last year's salary increases, our *salaries* are still significantly below the median in the state. What we don't know is how our overall *total compensation* compares across the state. We're hoping to have that data within the month.

If you'd like further information about negotiations, please feel free to chat with one of the members of the negotiating team, especially concerning their area of expertise listed:

- Cecelia Hudelson-Putnam – Contract Issues
- Gene Womble – Columbia College & Vocational Education Issues
- Linda Kropp – Budget and Financial Issues
- Michael Smedhammer – Contract Issues
- Brian Sanders – Chief Negotiator – Salary and Benefits Analysis

MEASURE E: ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS SELECTED

BY BRIAN SINCLAIR, YFA REP TO MEASURE E COORDINATING COMMITTEE

On November 21st and 22nd the Architectural/Planning Selection Committee met to interview finalists contending for inclusion in the pool of architectural and planning firms to be used in the construction of Measure E projects. The committee was made up of 4 MJC representatives – Mark Anglin, Amy Bethel, George Retamoza, and Brian Sinclair; 4 Columbia College representatives - Connie Mical, Doralyn Foletti, Micha Miller, and Kathy Sullivan; Board of Trustees Member Paul Neumann; YCCD Representative Maria Baker; and Kitchell Representative Mark Newton.

Prior to interviews, committee members each read through the application packages submitted by the 50 applicants who originally responded to the Request for Qualifications. A numerical rating system was used to select the top 20 firms. 5 selection criteria were used.

1. Experience and performance history of firm with similar projects,
2. Experience and results of proposed personnel,
3. Technical capabilities and track record of their use,
4. Demonstrated ability to provide sustainable architecture,
5. Overall responsiveness of firm's Statement of Qualifications.

Interviews took 2 full days beginning on Monday, November 21st at Columbia College, and continued through Tuesday, November 22nd at Modesto Junior College. 13 of the original 50 applicants were selected for inclusion in the final group firms that will help us design a picture of the future at YCCD.

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DECREASING THE NUMBER OF STEPS (CONT'D)

would just arrive there sooner. Each step from 14 through 25, would be bigger, as would the steps from 26 to 29, meaning more earnings sooner. In fact, as the diagram shows at the bottom, the cumulative difference of these salaries would be a \$36,230 increase in career earnings.

The YFA Negotiations Team feels this is worth pursuing and is a reasonable request of the district.

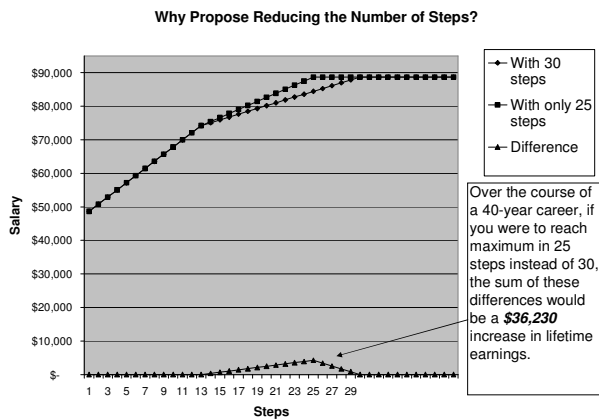


Figure 3