

CFA bargaining update:

STRAFACI CONTINUES ADMINISTRATION'S DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

November 28, 2006

As most of the faculty read in *CFA Headlines* on Tuesday <www.calfac.org/headlines.html> mediation between CFA and the CSU administration's bargaining teams continued on Monday, Nov. 20.

CSU faculty received an email on Tuesday or Wednesday from Sam Strafaci at the Chancellor's Office reporting on the mediation session. (On some campuses the e-mail came to you over the campus president's name.) Strafaci's report is just the latest installment in the administration's continuing disinformation campaign that includes a couple of reoccurring themes: 1. The Administration claims it has already made a very generous salary proposal. 2. The Administration claims CFA's counter proposal is unaffordable. 3. The Administration claims that higher pay for faculty will come out of your own campus budgets.

Most faculty need little help to evaluate information received from the administration, especially Strafaci. They *must* consider the source. The bottom line is this simple: if the administration's salary offer *really was* 27% over four years, the contract would settle in a heartbeat. Instead, of improving their offer, the administration keeps trying to convince faculty that an offer of 14% over 4 years is actually 27%. CFA believes more than 14% is needed and will continue to fight for more because we know that is what our members expect from us.

For those of you who appreciate the details, below we dissect Strafaci's latest email "report."

overview of economic issues in the contract talks

Strafaci says CFA is "unwilling to alter its economic demands" and has again refused to accept the CSU's salary proposal.

He is wrong on the first part, right on the second. In fact, CFA has flexibility and we are willing to alter our economic demands, we're just not willing to "accept the CSU proposal on salaries." We prefer the idea of NEGOTIATING the faculty's compensation rather than simply accepting what is offered.

In the middle of a discussion during the last mediation session about the economic issues that remained to be settled, Strafaci suddenly presented the Bargaining Team with a thick stack of proposals in order to share with everyone what he saw as the CSU administration's formal position on all outstanding issues. As he writes in his email message, CFA had seen "*almost all*" of the proposals already during previous bargaining sessions.

In this perfect example of just how misleading Strafaci can be, he casually mentions "*almost all* of which has been provided to CFA in prior bargaining sessions." This is Sam's way of *not* telling you that his summary eliminated several key provisions previously agreed to by both sides – even after numerous guarantees from the administration that they were not planning to renege on these agreements.

the value of the proposals

A centerpiece of the CSU's administration's disinformation campaign is an inflated value of their salary offer. In Strafacci's email, it is reported as "a 24.87% increase in faculty salaries over a 36-month period" that "will actually be 27% once the following annual increases in the CSU proposal are compounded."

You may have already seen these figures debunked in previous CFA bargaining reports that are now posted on the [CFA website](http://www.calfac.org/bargaining.html). [www.calfac.org/bargaining.html] Had the administration's offer really been 24.87 for all faculty, CFA would be delighted. In reality, most faculty members would get far less. The bargaining team believes a more honest way to describe the value of the CSU's offer remains unchanged: the majority of faculty members would receive a 14.87% General Salary Increase over four years.

It breaks down this way:

- Funding for 1% of the General Salary Increases in years 2, 3, and 4 contingent on the governor and legislature approving extra state funding above the compact → deduct 3% over the life of the contract.
- Discretionary "merit" pay with no appeal process and which only some faculty would get → deduct 3% over the life of the contract
- If SSIs are awarded annually to those qualified faculty who have earned them, deduct 1% from everyone's GSI raise, even though they don't actually cost the system new money → deduct yet another 4% plus over the life of the contract
- A requirement that CFA sign an agreement not to criticize the CSU budget proposal, and to support all elements of the proposal including student fee increases → finally, deduct your support for students/access, any concern you have for the future of the CSU and public support for higher education.

What most faculty could count on in the administration salary offer:

2006-07	3.0% GSI
2007-08	3.53% GSI
2008-09	3.84% GSI
<u>2009-10</u>	<u>4.5% GSI</u>
	14.87% GSI over 4 years → 3.72% GSI per year

The other key piece of the disinformation campaign is a claim that the CFA proposal is excessively expensive. By Strafacci's estimate, CFA's proposal is valued at about 30.45% over four years and demands more than the CSU offer in each year.

CFA's latest proposal includes, in addition to GSI's, about \$7 million per year to fund an equity program that will address salary inversion (also known as the "experience penalty"; about \$7 million per year to fund a post-promotion increase program to relieve salary compression for senior faculty; and in years 2, 3, and 4, 2.65% SSIs (step increases) for everyone who provided service in the prior year.

The actual cost of CFA's proposal, is much closer to 25.25% over four years – which is almost identical to what the administration says it is offering. Unfortunately, creative accounting methods are another feature of the disinformation campaign and the CSU's unusual way of calculating helps Strafacci apply an inflated cost to just about everything—especially the Service Step Increases.

faculty raise contingent on governor and legislature

None of the contingencies in the administration's salary offer have changed since September. Indeed, the generous-sounding compensation package that Strafaci describes in his report are dependent the CSU receiving "an additional 1% augmentation for Compensation."

The CSU record in asking for extra money is particularly poor; it is the faculty and students who lobby the legislature for more CSU funding, while Reed and company sit on the sidelines, content to receive the minimal funding they agreed to when they made the Compact deal in 2004.

If they were serious about this additional funding, they would have already received support from the governor and legislative leadership - then it would be worth something. As it stands, this is nothing anyone can count on.

sticking the campuses with the chancellor's deals

If Strafaci wasn't able to convince you that their salary proposal is fair and ours is too high, he hopes to appeal to your concern about conditions on your campus.

Adopting one of the more recent themes of the disinformation campaign, Strafaci's report attempts to elicit either sympathy for the administration's proposals, or maybe fear that CFA's proposals will cripple the campuses. He suggests that the CSU's salary offer must be "subsidized" from campus operating budgets – and therefore will already be reducing the funds that campuses use to pay "many unfunded faculty-related expenses" like sabbatical leaves and start-up funds for new faculty.

There are at least two fundamental problems behind the disagreement over faculty salaries: first, the administration *never* goes out on a limb and fights for higher CSU funding in the legislature; and second, as a result they want faculty to pay for their lack of political courage with lower salaries—while they take care of themselves with 19% salary and benefit increases, not to mention "transition" schemes that allow them to continue to receive pay without working.

Yes, faculty care about campus budgets, but we are through subsidizing a system that can find \$600 million for CMS without ever asking for an extra dime from the legislature.

Instead, the chancellor should go to the legislature and ask for the funding the CSU really needs to provide quality instruction. And then he should actually spend the money on instruction; CFA stands willing to join this endeavor.

discretionary "merit" pay

When Strafaci reminds us that the CSU's proposal includes 3% of guaranteed funding for the "merit" program they are insisting on having – "even if the CSU's budget is cut", he just helps prove our point that if the administration wants to do something, like raise their own pay, fund CMS, or reintroduce merit pay (and in this case with complete administration discretion), they can find the money in a hurry.

inversion and compression

There have been some interesting discussions about alternatives to the administration's initial proposals on discretionary "merit" pay. The CFA bargaining team is cautiously encouraged by the flexibility shown by Vice Chancellor Jackie McClain in taking a creative approach. Strafaci's report describes some of the ways a funding pool might be distributed, as discussed prior to the declaration of impasse. However, his observation

that “the historical disagreement about merit pay matters should no longer be an obstacle...” is more an expression of wishful thinking than CFA position. CFA’s willingness to finalize any discussions along these lines was then and still is dependent on higher guaranteed raises for all the faculty.

grievance procedures & disciplinary appeals process

Now that Senate Bill 1212 is law, tenured and probationary faculty will be able to serve on committees that hear faculty contract grievance and discipline cases. As Strafaci explained in his report “under SB 1212, aspects of procedures previously discussed by the parties can only be implemented through an agreement with the CFA.” Agreement about the how to implement SB 1212 has not yet been reached. Consistent with its intent to misinform, Strafaci’s description of the impact that SB 1212 will have omits the fact that faculty will enjoy greatly expanded grievance rights and new options for grievance processing.

faculty early retirement program

Strafaci’s report that CFA is opposed reducing the FERP program to four years in the last year of the contract is correct.

One reason the CFA refuses to reduce the FERP is because the program actually saves the CSU money. By contrast, the retirement perks for the top executives, which Reed defends, cost the CSU millions in return for no discernable work.

FERP allows experienced teachers to keep teaching while passing the reins to younger faculty. The administration demand to cut FERP to four years (from the present five) is a fall-back position. The CSU started bargaining with the demand introduced by Business Roundtable lobbyist and CSU Trustee, Bill Hauck, to eliminate FERP entirely. Is reducing the program by one year the first step in that direction?

parking fees

The CSU’s latest proposal would increase the parking fees paid by faculty during years 2, 3, and 4 of the contract. It is true that CFA opposes this proposal. The sticking point is that while at some campuses the proposed parking fee increases are minor—a few dollars a month—at others, they would rise \$100 or more. Considering the size of the CSU’s salary offer, some faculty members could actually see their raises returned to the university in parking fees!

In addition, faculty have no control over parking fee hikes that might be imposed during the life of the contract which could further erode faculty pay. Meanwhile, the administration refuses to share financial information regarding parking funds.

With this part of the administration’s campaign, the CSU is trying to use a divide-and-conquer tactic to break the solidarity they fear between faculty and students and between CFA and other unions.

lecturer issues

Strafaci’s partial disclosure about his latest proposal regarding lecturer rights notes that it “reiterates that the employment rights of temporary faculty are protected and in some cases expanded.” While it’s nice to hear Strafaci become such an advocate of the rights CFA fought so hard to win for Lecturers, he has nonetheless brought new changes to mediation after giving assurances that the administration was not planning to move backwards or withdraw support for positions they took earlier this year. In particular, CFA continues to defend three-year appointments to protect job stability for Lecturers.

In addition, SSIs are key to lecturer compensation. In the words of a Cal Poly Pomona lecturer:

"One saving grace is the CSU lecturers' eligibility for Range Elevations. Of course, range elevations can only be applied for when lecturers reach the topmost available Salary Step in each Range. Each year without a SSI is one year longer to wait for a range elevation. Without funding for SSIs, lecturers will never reach the top SSI step; basically, the Range Elevation Program will be rescinded, de facto. A pay raise without separate SSI funding is unacceptable."

For continuing information on mediation and the contract fight, go to the CFA website at www.calfac.org.