

Thoughts on Bargaining from Members of 'The Team' (Insider's Guide to Collective Bargaining, May 2005)

MANZAR FOROOHAR
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Professor, History

When I joined the bargaining team I thought that if we had strong, rational arguments there would be no problem getting proposals through. Sometimes you sit for hours waiting, and arguing and giving them all the rationale behind an idea, but in the end the chief negotiator says no.

At that point it's not what proposals you have that determines the outcome of the negotiations. It depends on the organization of the faculty on the campuses.

If you have an activist membership that is ready to fight for the future of the CSU, then you can get a good deal at the table. Without that it doesn't matter how strong our bargaining team is or how good our proposals are.

TOM MCCOY
CSU East Bay
Professor, former chair, Communication

I'm especially interested in the union's representation rights and I'm concerned about the huge backlog of grievances. I also am interested in getting some compensation increase for the faculty.

We have a formidable foe in the CSU administration and that is a shame. You would think the chancellor would be trying to advance faculty interests and not ignoring them.

He seems to be more concerned about campus presidents' salaries and maintaining the police force than maintaining and hiring faculty members. The CSU is falling apart and the chancellor is in denial.

ELENA DORABJI
San Jose State
Lecturer, Political Science

The most important thing I've have learned is that progress happens not so much because of what we do at the table, but because of what we do politically.

The fact is that, in the last successor contract talks, we went from making no headway and talking about taking a strike vote to having all that political pressure on the administration to bargain in good faith from the governor's office.

It happened because faculty members had been dogging the chancellor literally every week. Meanwhile CFA was building alliances with our representatives in state government. In the end we got this fabulous contract.

HANK REICHMAN
CSU East Bay
Professor, former chair, History

The strangest thing about bargaining is how slowly it moves. The last bargaining session was like watching grass grow, interrupted occasionally by trips to the dentist.

There is a lot of discussion in the CFA bargaining team about every proposal we make and every proposal that is made to us. This is a lot of work. It may seem that the contract comes together at the end in some haphazard manner, but on our side we spend a lot of time thinking about virtually every word that goes in there.

I think the faculty should be aware that the contract is aimed as much as anything to unite all the faculty—tenure-track, probationary, lecturers, librarians, counselors, coaches—and I hope that my colleagues recognize that.

*Prepared by the California Faculty Association
400 Capitol Mall, Suite 1950
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-441-4848
www.calfac.org*