CFA is building power, creating the future

We are in a unique position this spring — the proposed state budget includes an unprecedented 8 percent increase in funding for the CSU. We also have a governor who understands the financial struggle our students face, as well as the needs of the faculty, and who is willing to take action to protect public higher education.

That’s because of all of us, and our collective work as the union.

CFA President Jennifer Eagan reflects on our recent wins in a column about the power of faculty activism and our positive uses of that power.

Eagan writes:

“There is another way to think about power. Power can be cultivated to correct injustices, to gain resources for those who need and deserve it, and to protect the public good.

As faculty, we know why we use the power we have—for our students, for our colleagues, and for the conditions that make what we do as educators possible. From the perspective of the union, we often think of protecting all of these things through our rights in the collective bargaining agreement, but that’s not the only venue where we exercise positive power. We work to secure racial and social justice, and to address the conditions that affect all members of our CSU community.

CFA has been building positive power to effect real change in the CSU since 1983. That is not to say these exercises of positive power have been easy or that we always prevail, but we have attempted to craft a future that serves faculty, students, and the cause of justice for the entire state of California.

We often think of each term, academic year, and political season as discrete events, but from the perspective of the union, the steps to building positive power take years and each step builds upon the last.”
Universities coming to terms (or not) with their racist histories

Universities across the country, and especially in the South, are coming to terms with their histories of racism and relationship to slavery, a reckoning that is highlighted in recent Chronicle of Higher Education series.

While some universities have buildings on campus that were built with the labor of enslaved peoples, such as the University of Mississippi, others relied on the trade of enslaved peoples to keep doors open, as was the case at Georgetown University. As both historians and the ancestors of enslaved peoples force universities to take a hard look inward, new questions regarding the universities’ responsibilities have begun to arise.

Consider Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), a designation for colleges and universities that opened before 1964 to serve African-American communities when white institutions refused them access. Today, many of the white institutions that in the past refused access to Black students (de jure or de facto) now see the value of diversity. And that, in turn, is having an impact on enrollment at HBCUs. Author Marc Perry notes in the article “one legacy of desegregation is that Tougaloo (an HBCU in Mississippi)—with an endowment of $13 million—struggles to compete for students against wealthier, predominantly white universities that are now keen to diversify.”

In the CSU, while campuses are more recent and weren’t built with the labor of enslaved peoples, there are still historically racist undertones that influenced certain aspects of the academy, including mascots and monuments. For example, Long Beach State is retiring its controversial Prospector Pete statue. The 1967 statue of the gold miner glorifies the Gold Rush, and ignores the genocide of indigenous people during that era.

CFA called out Long Beach State, along with San Diego State and Cal State East Bay, for their racialized mascots in a resolution passed by the CFA Assembly in April 2018. We condemn San Diego State’s usage of the moniker “The Aztecs” and its portrayal of “an Aztec as its mascot as well as usage of spears or weapons that connote violence and barbaric representations of Indigenous cultures,” the resolution states. CFA also condemns the current East Bay moniker The Pioneers and the mascot “Pioneer Pete” as it white-washes a violent history of Indigenous genocide in California. Click here to read the resolution.

Click here to read the series in the Chronicle of Higher Education.
Lecturers: It pays to apply for Range Elevation

It’s the time of the academic year when deadlines are approaching for Lecturer Range Elevation applications.

Range Elevation is the formal process where Lecturers and temporary Librarians can increase their salary by moving from one salary range to the next. And generally, those who are eligible and apply tend to receive range elevation pay. During the 2017-18 year, there was a 95 percent success rate for those who applied!

We are in the second year of the negotiated MOU where CFA won Range Elevation for long-serving Lecturers. Contractually, your campus administration is required to notify you at least 30 days prior to the application deadline if you are eligible.

Deadlines and policies range from campus to campus, so please be sure to check your specific campus range elevation policy by clicking here.

• Learn more about Lecturer Range Elevation here.
• Click here to read a Q&A on Range Elevation.

Faculty Rights Tip of the Week: I Need a Union Rep!

Have you (or someone you know) ever been called into a meeting with an administrator and you were not quite sure what the meeting was about?

And once in the meeting realized, you were being questioned or investigated about some issue for which you might be disciplined, reprimanded, or otherwise negatively affected? You need, and are entitled to have, a union representative or another advocate of your choosing with you at that meeting.

You can invoke your right to have an advocate with you before or during the meeting by saying: “If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my working conditions, I request that my CFA representative or another advocate of my choosing be present at this meeting.”

The administrator must grant the request even if it means rescheduling the meeting to a time that works for you and your advocate.

The rights of represented (i.e. you are in a union) employees to bring an advocate and to have the time needed to obtain an advocate for investigatory meetings comes from the 1975 Supreme Court case, NLRB v. J. Weingarten, thus the term “Weingarten Rights.”

Given the increase in investigatory meetings, it’s important to know about and exercise these rights now more than ever. If you are called in, clarify whether the meeting could result in discipline.
Here are links to previous Faculty Rights Tips about Weingarten Rights:

- Weingarten Rights
- Campus Investigations and Weingarten Rights
- More about Weingarten Rights

Want to learn more? Become active with your local CFA chapter faculty rights team. Find your representative here.

If you have questions about a faculty rights tip or would like to suggest a tip, please write us at cfa@calfac.org with the subject line “Faculty Rights Tip.”

Check out more Faculty Rights Tips here.

In Other News…

**FACULTY RIGHTS ARE OUR RIGHTS:** On Friday, Feb. 8, faculty rights representatives from CSU campuses gathered at a conference at San Francisco State. The San Francisco CFA Chapter hosted a fantastic event with its faculty rights panel leading the discussion on the development and work of a faculty rights committee. Participants also learned more about faculty rights basics, Lecturer appointments, RTP, arbitration decisions, and issues pertaining specifically to Counselors, Coaches, and Librarians.

Unions like CFA do not function without the dedication and selflessness of faculty members who volunteer their time to assist their colleagues with workplace problems. If you are interested in participating in faculty rights work, please contact your CFA Chapter executive board.

**VICTORY:** Charges were dropped in the case of CFA Activist and Cal State LA Professor Melina Abdullah, a Black Lives Matter leader who was recently targeted for her activism by the LA Police Commission.

The negotiated agreement followed hundreds of phone calls to the LA City Attorney by colleagues and supporters, along with an 11,000 signature-strong petition, rallies, and demonstrations at the county courthouse.

The LA Times reported that Abdullah and her attorney credited supporters with helping pressure the city attorney’s office into what they termed a “surrender.”

“How many of y’all called Mike Feuer every single day?” Abdullah shouted to cheers. “This is
not the city attorney’s office coming after Melina Abdullah. This was the city attorney’s office coming after black protest.”

Click here to read the LA Times article.

OEA NEEDS YOU: CFA supports Oakland Education Association and their potential strike, and the CFA Board of Directors showed its solidarity with Oakland teachers this weekend during its meeting Saturday, Feb. 9 at CFA Headquarters.

Ninety-five percent of OEA members voted to strike during a recent authorization vote. OEA, which is fighting for smaller class sizes, fair teacher salaries, and more support staff, could be heading for a strike soon. The union is asking people to volunteer to help. Click here for more information and to fill out the volunteer form.

Links of the Week

‘Now Comes the Hard Part’: 20-Day Strike at Wright State Has Ended
Chronicle of Higher Ed
Unionized faculty members at Wright State University returned to the classroom on Monday, ending a strike that waylaid operations at the Dayton, Ohio, institution for 20 days.

Application Growth Finally Slows at U of California
Inside Higher Ed
Even as selective colleges in many parts of the country report increases, system sees application decline -- after years of increases. Some of the private colleges in the state with large in-state student populations (and ability to focus on minority students) see growth.

…The University of California, systemwide, saw a drop of 3 percent. This follows 15 straight years of increases in application totals for the system.

Not-so-free college: The limits of California’s Promise program
Cal Matters
As student government president for the California Community Colleges, liyshaa Youngblood represents millions of people who scrape to pay for, and complete, even a two-year degree program. So you might expect the Inland Empire psychology major to be excited about a proposal to offer Californians two years of community college tuition-free.

Yearbooks Aren’t the Only Place to Find Blackface on Campus
The Atlantic
Purdue University. The University of North Dakota. Auburn University. The University of Oregon. Brigham Young University. Xavier University. Oklahoma State University. These are just a handful of the schools in America that have had blackface scandals—not, as one might presume, in the long-distant past, but in the past two decades.
Contra Costa County judge rejects police unions' attempt to keep misconduct records sealed

San Francisco Chronicle

A new California law requiring cities to unseal police misconduct records applies to past records as well as new ones, a judge decided Friday in denying injunction requests from several police unions fighting to prevent the release of pre-2019 records.

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