CFA Passionately, Defiantly Calls on CalPERS to End its Investments in Private Prison Operators…and Evokes a Response

On Monday, more than 40 CFA activists converged on CalPERS' headquarters, marking the latest action in our union's months long campaign to compel the pension system to end its investments in private prison operators CoreCivic and GEO Group. However, this meeting played out differently than previous ones.

CalPERS board members Theresa Taylor, Lisa Middleton, David Miller, and Stacie Olivares all acknowledged that they clearly hear our concerns – and even share them – and appreciate our continued advocacy. Taylor, Vice President of the Board, immediately thanked members for sharing their compelling stories and responded that the Board is listening, saying, “We are looking into this, we are working on this. I, myself, through my union, went and did a tour of two CoreCivic facilities…I understand and I hear your concerns and we are looking into this.”

The positive responses from the assembled CalPERS board members came after another round of spirited commentary from CFA members, many of whom traveled long distances, to support this campaign.

Susan Green, CFA Treasurer and History professor at CSU Chico, kicked things off emphatically by remarking, “I simply cannot live with knowing that the money I earn is being used to further the deplorable work of companies like CoreCivic and GEO Group, which have been repeatedly criticized for the dreadful conditions of their facilities and the
inhumane treatment of their detainees.” As she relayed her comments, a sea of CFA-red rose behind her, as our members stood with her in solidarity.

Michelle Ramos Pellicia shared with the Board a recent discussion she had with her students at CSU San Marcos, where she is a professor of Spanish Sociolinguistics. “Last week, I spoke with some of my students about my plan to come here today and speak on this issue. After outlining the matter, their disappointment was palpable, with one of them remarking, ‘You’re saying that your pension is invested in camps where people like me are imprisoned, caged like animals?’”

More than a dozen CFA members also spoke on the record with statements reiterating their support for CFA’s demands in solidarity with the other speakers. View the testimony here.

Although no clear decision about next steps by the Board was announced, this was perhaps the clearest indication that our strategy is making a sustained impression on CalPERS officials.

“We knew from the beginning that this was not going to be an easy fight,” said Margarita Berta-Avila, CFA’s Associate Vice President. “It’s been a long four months, but CFA members have shown up in a big way. I could not be prouder of my union siblings, who month after month have exhibited an unwavering passion and dedication to affecting change on this matter.”

Members also delivered more than 500 signed postcards at the September meeting, underscoring their desire to see CalPERS end these investments. We will continue to keep up the pressure until we see real movement. Contact your chapter to get involved.

**CSU Board of Trustees to Discuss 2020 Budget, Executive Pay, New Admissions Rules**

Next Tuesday and Wednesday, the CSU Board of Trustees will convene for its bi-monthly meeting at the Chancellor’s Office in Long Beach. CFA leaders along with students from Students for Quality Education will be in attendance to deliver public comments on both days. We urge faculty members to tune in online, where there is a livestream of the meeting.

Among the topics the trustees will consider are the 2020-21 budget and a proposal to add a new quantitative reasoning admissions requirement for the CSU. This is a policy proposal that has generated a lot of attention over the past several months, including a special meeting of the Ed Policy Committee last month dedicated entirely to this issue.
The Board will also revisit the topic of executive compensation. Last year, the Chancellor’s Office brought in outside consultants to advise Trustees on ways to increase salaries for campus presidents and other executive employees. The proposals were met with considerable push back at that time, from elected leaders as well as from students, faculty, and even the Trustees themselves. The consultants will be back next week with a new report.

The full agenda, with documents concerning each item, is posted online now.

Finally, for anyone planning to attend, the CSU agenda preview also announced that new, enhanced security measures in the form of two metal detector machines for all attendees will be in place.

**Bargaining Survey Hits Inboxes this Thursday!**

With our current contract set to expire on June 30, 2020, CFA is working diligently to solicit input from all members to identify important issues in successor bargaining. This is central to the work we do as a labor union and foundational for our work as faculty in serving our students. However, it cannot happen in the right way, unless you play an active role in the process, from beginning to end.

A key component of this early process is the Bargaining Survey. An email with a link to the survey will be delivered to all CFA members tomorrow. For us to secure the fairest contract, we must first have a firm grasp on our members’ priorities. So, look for an invitation to take the survey in your inbox this Thursday.

Another way for members to learn more about the bargaining process and to further voice their concerns and express their priorities – in addition to taking the survey – is by attending a campus meeting. These meetings are a great way for members to meet each other and have meaningful conversations about bargaining, as well as a host of other critical issues.

“Our bargaining efforts are set to ramp up rather quickly in the next several weeks and member engagement is an indispensable element of this process,” said Antonio Gallo, chair of the Contract Development and Bargaining Strategy Committee. “CFA’s goal is to secure the best possible contract for our members, but without your active participation, that simply will not be achievable. So, I urge all members to fill out the bargaining survey and get to a campus meeting. Communicate your thoughts throughout this bargaining campaign and let us know what matters to you.”

All CFA members can participate in the bargaining survey. If you're not yet a member, join now at calfac.org/join-cfa. Better yet, be an active member by getting involved in your campus chapter!

**In Other News…**
WEEK OF EVENTS AT SFSU TO MARK 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ETHNIC STUDIES:
Next month, San Francisco State University will mark the 50th anniversary of the social
movement and student-led strike that ultimately led to the establishment of Ethnic Studies
as a discipline in the United States. The SFSU College of Ethnic Studies was established in
1969 after a strike by the Third World Liberation Front – a coalition that brought together
the Black Student Union, Latin American Students Organization, Asian American Political
Alliance, Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor, and the Native American Students Union.

The week-long commemoration, Practicing Ethnic Studies – Past, Present and Future, will
take place October 7-12 at SFSU. It comes at a time when the discipline of ethnic studies is
again in the spotlight, with bills requiring ethnic studies to be added to K12 and the CSU
moving through the legislative process.

“For five decades San Francisco State University has been central to Ethnic Studies in
California, the United States and the world in its unwavering commitment to a discipline that
has never been more critical to our society than now,” said Charles Toombs, CFA
President and Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University. “Indeed, San
Francisco State University’s College of Ethnic Studies is a structural (and aspirational)
model which highlights the importance of Ethnic Studies to its university, its students, and
the communities the university serves. Ethnic Studies courses and programs give
academic and scholarly voice to the rich and complicated histories, cultures, identities,
strategies of resistance to oppression, and service to communities that enables students to
better understand contemporary American life. It equips them with knowledge and
alternative lenses to make our state, nation, and world better for all. By requiring students
to engage in Ethnic Studies, both at the K12 and higher education levels, we expose them
to opportunities to be their best for themselves and for others.”

GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE: CSU students and faculty are
planning to participate in the global climate strike actions
planned for Friday, September 20. The call to action states,
“We, as a global society, are at a crossroads. We have a
decision to make. Are we going to choose money or power or
are we going to choose the future? The September 20 strike
is an invitation to everyone to choose us. Choose the kids,
choose humanity, choose the future.”

The demands include: a green new deal, respect of
indigenous land and sovereignty, environmental justice,
protection and restoration of biodiversity, and implementation of sustainable agriculture.

Melissa Jerez, an SQE activist and CSU Chico student said, “Climate experts have warned
us that we have 7-10 years to take action, but nothing is being done. Global temperatures
are rising, and people are being displaced due to droughts and natural disasters made
worse due to climate change. We demand action and change now. It’s time for us to seek a
more sustainable, equitable future and stop ignoring the gravity of this challenge.”
Find an action near you at the Climate Strike website and also take a moment to read CFA's Resolution in Support of Student Climate Action.

**IT'S OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR CALPERS-COVERED EMPLOYEES:** For all CSU faculty members, the open enrollment period began on September 9 and runs through October 4. This is your opportunity to enroll in a plan, change from one plan to another, add or delete eligible family members, or cancel coverage. For more information, please click here.

**Faculty Rights Tip of the Week: What to do when you want to report discrimination, harassment, or retaliation**

Article 16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the “Non-Discrimination” article, “prohibits discrimination against faculty unit employees on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, medical condition, or veteran status.”

Additionally, the CSU’s Executive Order 1096—“Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, Sexual Misconduct, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking against Employees and Third Parties and Systemwide Procedure for Addressing Such Complaints by Employees and Third Parties”—further protects faculty from acts and conduct that violate civil rights guaranteed by various laws.

Unlike other CSU employees, employees represented by the CFA/CSU Collective Bargaining Agreement do not use the complaint form contained in Executive Order 1096 when they wish to make complaints. Instead, they may file grievances and/or complain to California’s Department of Fair Housing and Discrimination (DFEH) and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

If you or someone you know wishes to file a grievance about discrimination and related violations of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, policies, and laws, contact CFA for advice and assistance.

Click here to find faculty rights advocates on your campus.

We recommend that faculty file complaints with DFEH if they are facing discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation in the workplace. DFEH is uniquely equipped to investigate and advocate for California workers, has a broader field of protection than the federal agency, and will cross-file with the EEOC when appropriate.

Finally, remember that CFA is embarking on an anti-racism and social justice transformation this year. To that end, we will be holding meetings to talk to faculty and will continue to offer trainings and workshops on Unconscious Bias. Contact your CFA chapter leaders to learn more.
• See previous Faculty Rights Tips on a range of topics in our contract.
• If you have questions about a Faculty Rights Tip please write us with the subject line “Faculty Rights Tip.”

Links of the Week

California college students’ biggest struggle is juggling jobs to pay for food and housing, survey finds
LA Times
Nearly two-thirds of California students say their biggest obstacle to succeeding in college is costs—including food and shelter—and juggling jobs with school, according to a survey released Thursday by the California Student Aid Commission.

Stanford, Cal, other college students: We won’t work for Palantir over ICE contracts
Mercury News
Some Palantir employees have questioned the company’s ties with immigration authorities. Now potential future employees — college students from around the country — are vowing not to work for Palantir unless it cancels its contracts with ICE.

California bans private prisons – including ICE detention centers
The Guardian
The private prison industry is set to be upended after California lawmakers passed a bill on Wednesday banning the facilities from operating in the state. The move will probably also close down four large immigration detention facilities that can hold up to 4,500 people at a time.

The UAW started its biggest labor strike in years with one new advantage
Quartz
Nearly 50,000 unionized workers at General Motors in the US went on strike this weekend in a bid to win better pay, caps on healthcare costs, and job security, among other basic demands.

80,000 Kaiser workers plan 7-day strike that will affect California, 5 other states
Sacramento Bee
The Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions announced late Monday their roughly 80,000 workers will walk off their jobs as part of a seven-day strike beginning Oct. 14 in California, five other states and the District of Columbia.

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