

From the California Faculty Association
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CFA HEADLINES

September 24, 2013 · Weekly news digest from CFA

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Welcome back

Greetings to the faculty and campus communities starting classes this week at East Bay, Los Angeles, Pomona and San Luis Obispo. All 23 California State University campuses are back in session.

Are you a faculty member who is new to the CSU or never got around to joining CFA? Now is the time to add your support to your union. [Learn more about membership and how to join.](#)

CFA addresses the CSU Trustees this week

The CSU Board of Trustees meets at the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach this week. As always, they will take up a range of topics including one that regularly comes up this time of year—their funding request for the CSU from the state for the next fiscal year.

Faculty and any member of the public can watch the proceedings at <http://calstate.edu/bot/opensessions/>

You can view the agenda giving approximate times topics will be taken up at <http://calstate.edu/bot/agendas/sep13/Agenda.pdf>

And, see the overall topics, advance reports and more detailed agendas of each committee of the board at <http://calstate.edu/bot/agendas/?source=homepage>

CFA Associate VP-North Jen Eagan of East Bay addressed the Trustees about the results of reopener bargaining this morning. (Reopener bargaining took up salary in the last year of the current faculty contract. See a [report on the CFA web site.](#))

On Wednesday, CFA President Lillian Taiz will take up the nature of the “bargaining culture” with the Trustees in the hope for an improved negotiating process for the next faculty contract.

Also, Melina Abdullah, CFA Affirmative Action Representative at Cal State Los Angeles, will speak on negative changes underway at some campuses regarding ethnic studies departments and programs. (See [background on this issue on the CFA web site.](#))

CFA bargaining info meetings scheduled at CSU campuses

All faculty are invited to meetings with CFA Officers and Bargaining Team members at your campus about the process and issues in negotiating the faculty’s next contract.

(Note, a meeting has already have been held at these campuses: Chico, Humboldt, Sonoma, Dominguez Hills, San Bernardino, Fresno and Channel Islands. If you missed it, learn about bargaining by [contacting your CFA campus chapter.](#))



Here are the upcoming meetings.

Wednesday, Sept 25

- SAN MARCOS, 2-4 pm, SBSB 4117.

Thursday, Sept 26

- MONTEREY BAY, 5-7 pm, UC Living Room.
- MARITIME, 11 am-Noon, Peachman Hall.

Monday, Sept 30

- STANISLAUS, 11 am-1:30 pm, FDC 118.

Tuesday, October 1

- SAN DIEGO, 11:30 am- 1 pm, Faculty Staff Club.

Thursday, Oct 3

- POMONA, 11:30-1:30 pm, Kellogg West.

Monday, Oct 7

- EAST BAY, Noon-2 pm, Biella Room, Library.

Tuesday, Oct 8

- FULLERTON, 11:30-1:30 pm, PLN 130.
- SAN JOSE, Noon-2 pm, ENGR 285/287.

Wednesday, Oct 9

- LONG BEACH, Noon-2 pm, Anatol Center.

Thursday, Oct 10

- LOS ANGELES, 3-5pm, FA 143.
- SAN LUIS OBISPO, 11 am-1 pm, [call chapter for location](#)
- NORTHRIDGE, 11:30 am-1:30 pm, [call chapter for location](#)

Wednesday Oct 16

- BAKERSFIELD, 11:30 am-1:30 pm, [call chapter for location](#)

Thursday, Oct 17

- SACRAMENTO, 5-7:30 pm, [call chapter for location](#)

Death of a lecturer

The death this month of an elderly adjunct (Lecturer) at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is incredibly sad and tragic.

It also points directly at the extraordinarily bad working conditions and compensation that she and many thousands of contingent faculty endure on campuses across the United States.

Mary Margaret Vojtko, an 83-year old adjunct instructor of French, died of a heart attack on her front lawn soon after learning she had lost her teaching appointment at Duquesne. She was given no severance or retirement benefits.



Adjuncts at Duquesne work without medical insurance or any other benefits or job security for between \$3000 and \$3500 per 3-unit course. She had taught at Duquesne for 25 years; she had lived in poverty.

Most Americans are unaware of the two-track hiring system in American higher education with some faculty on a permanent-hire/tenure track and contingent faculty on a radically different, temporary and lower-compensated track.

A union attorney Vojtko contacted for help just before her death called Adult Protective Services about her need. He wrote in a [commentary](#), “The caseworker paused and asked with incredulity, ‘She was a professor?’ I said yes. The caseworker was shocked; this was not the usual type of person for whom she was called in to help.”

Vojtko's case has gone viral on the internet and evoked wide commentary.

"In some senses, her death was not preventable: she was 83 and fighting cancer," writes [blogger and English professor Daniel Nel](#). "It's likely that she would have died sooner rather than later.

"But in other senses, her job killed her. And I'm not speaking figuratively. As [Mr. Kovalik notes](#),

'In the past year, her teaching load had been reduced by the university to one class a semester, which meant she was making well below \$10,000 a year. With huge out-of-pocket bills from UPMC Mercy for her cancer treatment, Margaret Mary was left in abject penury. She could no longer keep her electricity on in her home, which became uninhabitable during the winter. She therefore took to working at an Eat'n Park at night and then trying to catch some sleep during the day at her office at Duquesne. When this was discovered by the university, the police were called in to eject her from her office. Still, despite her cancer and her poverty, she never missed a day of class.'

Many academic unions including CFA say that unionization is one of the few options faculty have to draw a line on the rapid erosion of academic work. Although there is a long way to go to address two-track hiring, the CFA contract, for example, guarantees many contingent faculty more livable conditions including health insurance, improved pay and other rights as an employee of a university.

If you are ready to speak out, there is an [online petition](#) and a [Facebook page](#). It is likely that more online petitions and social media resources will develop.

CAMPUS EQUITY WEEK: Vojtko's story and those of many other lecturers will be among the issues taken up at [Campus Equity Week](#) events across the nation, including by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education and by CFA chapters at CSU campuses, October 28-November 1. Organizing is underway. If you would like to join in, [contact your CFA campus chapter](#).

To see some of the many online news reports and commentaries, go to

[National Public Radio](#)
[Inside Higher Education](#)
[Chronicle of Higher Education](#)
[Yahoo](#)
[CNN](#)

[Twitter](#) – Search for #iammargaretmary

Blogs by
[Maria Maisto, President of New Faculty Majority](#)
[William Lindsey, Catholic theologian](#)

Faculty rights tip of the week: Grievance filing

This is a new feature for the CFA Headlines. CFA will run regularly a brief “faculty rights tip” or short information piece about the faculty contract.

GRIEVANCE FILING

Did you know that you have 42 days to file a grievance if you believe your workplace rights have been violated?

Article 10.4 allows you to file a grievance no later than 42 calendar days after the event giving rise to the grievance or 42 days after you knew or reasonably should have known of the event giving rise to the grievance.



Once you believe your contractual rights might have been violated do not wait; contact your campus representative immediately at: <http://www.calfac.org/faculty-rights-chapter-representatives>

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](#) with the subject line “Faculty Rights Tip.”

REMINDERS!

CFA members – participate in the bargaining survey

Thousands of CFA members have already submitted their input on bargaining the next faculty contract via the CFA Bargaining Survey. Join them! [Fill out the survey today.](#)

Not yet a CFA member and want to participate? It’s simple to sign and submit a membership form. [Join CFA](#) today.

Postmark deadline on your CalPERS election ballot is this Friday

CFA, SEIU and other California unions have endorsed [J.J.Jelincic](#) (Position A) and [Michael Bilbrey](#) (Position B) in the election now underway for the CalPERS board. Both are experienced fighters to protect retirement security for CalPERS members.

CalPERS members should have received an official ballot from the state. If you are an eligible member of CalPERS and did not receive a ballot, contact the Board Elections Office at (800) 794-2297.

Vote now. Ballots must be postmarked or received by CalPERS by this Friday, September 27.

CSU employee health insurance open enrollment through Oct. 11

Open enrollment for CalPERS healthcare plans is underway now through October 11. During this time, new faculty members can choose a health plan for themselves and their families and continuing faculty can make changes.

CSU employees should already have received a mailing from CalPERS that includes a table of available plans by county.

If you have not received the mailing or have questions, [details are on the CalPERS web site](#). (Note, the site may ask you for information about your CalPERS status before going to the main page where there is a box to connect you to the open enrollment page.)

Links of the week

CSU Trustees to talk budget

Next year's budget will be on the minds of California State University Trustees this week when they gather here to examine a preliminary proposal that seeks at least \$100 million more than what Gov. Jerry Brown plans for the 2014-15 fiscal year.—[Long Beach Press Telegram](#)

New EWU (Eastern Washington U.) contract eases pay inequities

When students come back to school at Eastern Washington University later this month, they may be taught by a very happy professor who just got a big raise. The regional university isn't celebrating a financial windfall. The new money comes from a creative new faculty contract... —[Associated Press](#)

CSU spends \$19 million on increased salary for faculty

In a recap of the CFA-CSU reopener bargaining settlement, the student newspaper at CSU Chico reports: The California State University system will be cutting a larger check for CSU faculty after much negotiation with the California Faculty Association.—[The Orion](#)

Online courses don't live up to hype

Massive open online courses were supposed to revolutionize — and democratize — higher education. But two years since their debut, the initial buzz seems like nothing but hype. Millions have signed up for online courses sponsored by elite colleges, yet they report [high dropout rates](#) and [disappointing student performance](#) — [Politico](#)

Layoffs arrive at Blackboard

Blackboard Inc. carried out a round of layoffs last week as part of a broader reorganization by CEO [Jay Bhatt](#), the latest in a string of actions aimed at revitalizing the 16-year-old ed-tech

behemoth. ... This is not the first round of job cuts for Blackboard since its \$1.64 billion acquisition by Providence Equity Partners in 2011. The company laid off 90 in September 2012... —[Washington Business Journal](#)

What Do MOOCs Cost?

The "Massive" in MOOC refers to class size, but one might think it stands for cost savings as well. But MOOCs are not terribly cheap for the colleges and partner platforms producing them. So what do MOOCs actually cost the producers?... —[Minding the Campus](#)

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