



CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

COUNSELOR FACULTY HANDBOOK

UPDATED SPRING 2025

WWW.CALFAC.ORG



CFA's Principles of Anti-Racism and Social Justice Transformation

- We are a strong social justice organization, but we can be even stronger.
- We intentionally center anti-racism as part of our mission.
- We acknowledge that even WE in CFA are part of the problem of racism.
- We acknowledge that WE can be part of the solution by being intentionally committed to addressing it.
- We engage in courageous conversations about racism and discrimination, in order to transform our union.
- We adopt changes in organizational values, policies and practices consistent with principles of anti-racism and social justice.
- We become a more inclusive Union by focusing on, adopting and adapting the principles of anti-racism, social justice and equity to our union and employment work.
- We practice anti-racism and non-discriminatory behavior with one another and others, including our students and colleagues, in order to become more socially just beings and to ensure a stronger and more inclusive union.
- We ensure that this transformation is sustainable and the philosophy upon which it is based is continually offered to new and emerging leaders in our union and on our campuses.
- Fairness and Justice should be faculty working conditions!



Land Acknowledgement

- **WHAT IS A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT?** A formal statement that recognizes and respects the native/indigenous peoples as traditional stewards of this land, the enduring relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their traditional lands. This is an act of reconciliation that makes a statement recognizing the traditional land of the native/indigenous peoples who have called and still call the land home before and after the arrival of the settlers.

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose homelands you reside on and a recognition of the original people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. Land acknowledgements do not exist in the past tense or outside historical content. Colonialism is an ongoing process (Settler Colonialism), and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It encourages us to think about what it means to occupy space on indigenous lands.

We want to recognize the land as an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory we reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long history that has brought us to reside on the land, and to seek to understand our place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. Acknowledging the land is an important Indigenous protocol that we are honoring here today.
To find the native lands on which you reside: <https://native-land.ca>

Interruption Statement

As part of our continuing commitment to racial justice work, when we experience examples of racial narratives, racism, or whiteness in our meetings, or as we conduct our business, we will speak up. This means we can interrupt the meeting and draw the issue to one another's attention. We will do this kindly, with care and in good faith. Further, as we engage interruptions we will take an intersectional approach, reflecting the fact that white supremacy and racism operate in tandem with interlocking systems of oppression of colonialism, class, cis-heteropatriarchy, and ableism. This statement is a reminder that we commit to do this in the service of ending the system of racial oppression.

California Faculty Association Counselors Committee

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*Download the CFA Counselor Faculty Handbook as a PDF
from the [CFA Counselors](http://calfac.org/counselors-committee/calfac.org/counselors-committee/) Committee web page at calfac.org/counselors-committee/calfac.org/counselors-committee/*

Welcome and Introduction

The CFA Counselor Faculty Handbook is a “must read” for newly hired Counselor Faculty. The Handbook informs new Counselor Faculty about important rights (e.g., workload issues, evaluation process, etc.) and how to file a grievance if rights are being violated.

This edition of the CFA Counselor Faculty Handbook started in 2024. During this time period Counselor Faculty saw considerable changes, actions and wins.

- New tenure lines were opened for counselors on a few campuses, a struggle we have been fighting for years to accomplish.
- 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Campus shutdowns forced everyone to reimagine service delivery. Tele behavioral health and remote work became the mode of operation; health and safety were at the forefront of student learning and faculty working conditions.
- We were able to halt the outsourcing of Counselor Faculty work. The 2023 CFA bargaining team, which included two Counselor Faculty - Jay Howell and Katie Johnson - worked hard to make sure the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) included basic worker rights for Counselor Faculty. The lack of initial agreement from CSU management led to a strike and many gains were made including: an agreement to try to achieve a 1000-1500:1 student to Counselor ratio on all campuses, a new option of 10-month appointments, and a salary increase of over 10%.

These gains could not have been made without the activism of so many Counselor Faculty members who participated in both a rolling strike at San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pomona, and Sacramento in December 2023 and a CSU faculty wide strike in January 2024.

As the handbook’s revisions were being completed in early 2025, we saw the 47th President and his administration attack DEI programs, international and undocumented students and faculty, and take away funding and programming in higher education. Student activists have been targeted, and physical and mental health of students have declined. Fluctuations in the use of CSU counseling services indicate a complex interplay between the growing need for student mental health support and persistent safety concerns that may hinder service engagement. In addition, significant restructuring plans are taking place as we write this letter, Sonoma State administrators proposing to eliminate 23 academic programs along with the athletics program; creating a "singular administrative network" for East Bay, San Francisco and Sonoma; and merging Cal Maritime with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo reducing CSU from 23 to 22 campuses. As higher education and the campus community continue to be threatened, Counselor Faculty are speaking out and fighting to liberate the CSU.

We acknowledge the impact and consistent work of the CFA Counselors Committee and CFA Counselor Representatives. Monthly Zoom meetings, and hybrid attendance at CFA Assemblies, CFA Kick-Offs and other meetings were fruitful and essential tools for Counselor Faculty to discuss workplace challenges and organize for solutions and actions. We were able to strengthen our sense of community and solidarity across all CSU campuses. The Counselors Committee regularly hosted Lunch and Learn/Discuss meetings on various topics including union activism within the mental health field,



exceptional service award, etc. This has been instrumental in increasing the number of counselors learning about their worker rights. We succeeded in getting reclassifications and sabbaticals. Our meetings have also created a space where we address multicultural counseling issues. In January 2024, the Bilingual Consultation Group started. Through these monthly meetings led by Dr. Lissa Lim, Counselor Faculty have been able to provide support to one another in their work as bilingual/bicultural counselors. We have begun to talk about and organize around the issue of cultural taxation.

None of this could have been accomplished, including the revision of this handbook, without the expert guidance of Jason Conwell (CFA Staff to the Counselors Committee since 2007). Many counselors have contributed to this current revision of the Counselor Handbook. Many thanks to Karla Castillo, Susan Chen, Shelly-Ann Collins Rawle, Jay Howell, Katie Johnson, Stacie Pham, Manuel Rivera, Jennifer Staffero, and Ian Wallace for their dedicated effort to this revision!

Stacie Pham and Karla Castillo

CFA Counselors Committee Co-Chairs April 2025



Why Join CFA?

Since the late 1980s, CFA has been a steadfast advocate for Counselor Faculty, beginning with the successful unit modification that transitioned counselors from Unit 4 to Unit 3. This critical shift laid the foundation for continued support throughout the 1990s, as CFA fought for salary parity between Counselor Faculty and their teaching colleagues. This fight, prioritized in negotiations over many years, culminated in a significant victory in 2002. Salary parity was achieved, leading to salary increases ranging from 6% to over 22%.

In 2012, CFA further solidified its support by negotiating the inclusion of tenured Counselor

Faculty in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), extending valuable retirement benefits to those who had long served their campus communities. In 2024, CFA negotiated the creation of 10-month Counselor positions along with an agreement to strive for a 1000-1500 student to Counselor ratio on each campus.

Through these efforts, CFA continues to champion the rights and recognition of Counselor Faculty across the CSU system. These accomplishments were made possible through the tireless dedication of numerous Counselor Faculty, backed by CFA's unwavering advocacy.

More reasons to join CFA:

- **Stronger Numbers, Stronger Voice:** A robust membership directly strengthens our collective bargaining power. With more members, CFA has a louder, more influential voice at the negotiating table, ensuring faculty interests are heard and prioritized.
- **Counselor-Specific Wins and Benefits:** CFA has consistently fought for advancements that benefit Counselor Faculty, including salary parity, participation in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), and securing protections for both tenured and temporary counselors. CFA's advocacy continues to prioritize the needs of Counselor Faculty, particularly in the advocacy for more permanent tenure-track counselor positions and pushing back on the contracting out of Counselor Faculty work at Cal Poly Humboldt and Sacramento.
- **Member-Run, Future-Focused:** CFA is not just a union—it's a member-led organization. By becoming involved, you can actively shape the future of the CSU and have a direct say in the issues that matter most to you. Your participation makes a difference.
- **CFA Elections and Voting Rights:** As a member, you'll have the right to vote in critical elections, including contract ratifications. Your voice will directly influence decisions that impact your working conditions, benefits, and future as a faculty member.
- **Advocating for Permanent Counselor Positions:** CFA has been instrumental in supporting the increase of tenure-track positions for Counselor Faculty. If you believe in stability and the future of counseling services at the CSU, your membership is key to driving this change.



- ***Equitable Representation for All Faculty:*** CFA represents and fights equally for all its members, whether you're tenured, tenure-track, or contingent. Counselor Faculty, in particular, have gained significant visibility in CFA since 2018 due to their activism and leadership within the organization.
- ***Legislative Advocacy for Counseling Services:*** CFA is a powerful force in legislative advocacy, pushing for laws that support the CSU mission. In 2018, CFA sponsored Senate Bill 968, aiming to establish minimum students-to-counselor ratios. By joining, you can help influence future legislation that continues to advance access to both education and essential mental health services.

Joining CFA means joining a collective that fights for real, lasting change, ensuring that the Counselor Faculty have the support, benefits, and recognition they deserve. Be part of the movement and shape the future with CFA.

Participating in CFA

CFA has been able to advocate effectively for Counselor Faculty because of the dedicated involvement of Counselor Faculty who have stepped up as advocates and leaders over the years. These faculty have brought attention to the unique issues counselors face within the CSU, and their grassroots effort have been instrumental in ensuring Counselor Faculty voices are heard.

Through this continued activism, Counselor Faculty have become a vital part of the faculty union. While their advocacy led to significant victories like achieving salary parity, there are still many important issues left to address in future negotiations. It's crucial for the Counselor Faculty to remain actively engaged to protect and build upon the progress already made.

Counselor Faculty can participate in several meaningful ways, including:

- Serving as a **Counselor Representative** for their campus, ensuring counselor issues are represented.
- Attending **CFA statewide events**, where you can collaborate with both fellow Counselor Faculty and other CFA members to influence policy.
- Participating in **CFA campus chapter meetings**, staying connected with local efforts and advocacy.
- Joining **scheduled Counselor Representative meetings, as well as Lunch and Learn/Discuss gatherings** where you can engage in discussions and strategize around counselor-specific concerns.

By continuing to engage with CFA, Counselor Faculty can ensure their unique perspectives are reflected in the union's work and maintain the momentum of past successes. Your involvement is key to shaping the future of Counselor Faculty within the CSU.

COUNSELOR REPRESENTATIVES

Counselor Faculty in every Counseling Center in the CSU system are encouraged to nominate at least one representative to CFA. The Counselor Representatives meet monthly via Zoom to discuss current issues facing counselors (e.g., workplace best practices, grievances, salary and other benefits, and contract negotiations). All Counselor Faculty who are CFA members are welcome to attend the monthly Zoom meetings.

CAMPUS CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT

Each campus has an Executive Board that meets regularly and invites your ideas and input. It is important that Counselor Faculty, Teaching Faculty, Librarians, Lecturers, and Coaches support each other in the instructional mission of the university. You may participate by attending or serving on a number of committees such as Faculty Rights



which deals with grievances, the Membership Committee, or the Political Action Committee.

Counselor Faculty are also eligible to serve in many of the executive committee roles for their chapters. Counselor Faculty have served as Chapter Presidents, Vice Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries, Council for Affirmative Action Reps and at-large positions. Some campuses have designated Executive Committee positions for Counselor Representatives.

STAYING INFORMED

Even if you are unable to participate directly in union activities, staying informed about your rights is essential. The CFA Counselors' Committee webpage at calfac.org/counselors offers detailed information and contact information for the Counselors' Committee Chair.

Additionally, familiarize yourself with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between Unit 3 and the CSU to ensure you understand your rights and benefits. You can access the current CBA through your campus chapter or on the CFA website at calfac.org/contract.

Your profession and livelihood depend on knowing your rights and staying engaged. CFA also offers "CFA Headlines," a valuable resource to keep you informed about the latest developments affecting CSU campuses, including legislative updates, budget news, and other critical activities. You can find it on the CFA website at www.calfac.org.



Employment

In order for CFA to help protect your rights, it is critical that you stay informed about your employment status. CFA recommends that the Counselor Faculty keep a carefully maintained file of documents pertaining to their employment in the CSU.

The following information should be kept in your records:

- All appointment letters (for tenure-track faculty this may be only one letter)
- Date of your first appointment
- Annual performance reviews
- Awards, recognitions, and nominations
- Current Curriculum Vitae
- Any student feedback about your work that does not violate HIPAA or FERPA.

Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments also should keep:

- Date of your most recent hiring and/or duration of your current appointment.
- The time base for your current appointment. (Full-time, 0.5, etc.)
- Your current classification (SSP-AR I, SSP-AR II, SSP-AR III and Academic Year, 10 months or 12 months).
- Your current salary and job description

Tenured/Probationary Counselor Faculty also should keep:

- Letters granting retention/tenure/promotion.

Appointment Letter

A Counselor Faculty's terms of employment are further specified in the appointment letter. At the time of the appointment, a Counselor Faculty member must be provided with a letter specifying the effective dates of appointment, other unique aspects of the appointment, and the salary. The appointment letter also serves as the notice of termination, since it indicates the specific period of employment, including the end of that period. If you are not provided with this letter, request it from the Director of Counseling Services.

It is important not to confuse the appointment letter with the contract ([Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) or CBA). The appointment letter states terms specific to the individual Counselor Faculty. The contract (CBA) is the master agreement for all faculty statewide. For example, sabbaticals, which may be awarded to Counselor Faculty, are an important provision in the contract, but would not be mentioned in the appointment letter. Both appointment letters and the Collective Bargaining Agreement are sometimes referred to as the "contract."

Part-time temporary appointments may be conditional on budget and enrollment, while full-time temporary appointments beyond an initial full-time appointment must be



unconditional. The appointment letter states specific budgetary or enrollment conditions under which the appointment becomes void.

The terms of an appointment letter must never be lower than the terms stated in the CBA. Individual campuses may also have varying policies pertaining to Counselor Faculty, such as those that define eligibility for service on academic committees, or those that pertain to evaluation processes. These policies may be available through the departmental office, Academic Senate, or personnel office. Such policies may not conflict with the terms of the CBA.

Reappointment and Careful Consideration

(For Counselors on Temporary Appointments)

Under the CBA articles on Personnel Files, Appointment, and Evaluation (Articles 11, 12, and 15, respectively), Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments have important rights with respect to possible re-employment. CFA has successfully argued that department and campus criteria and standards for the evaluation of temporary faculty must comply with Article 15: Evaluation.

It is important for the Counselor Faculty to take a proactive approach regarding reappointment. Suggested steps include meeting with your director to discuss your possible reappointment and salary, request written notification of the subsequent appointment, and review your counseling center and campus guidelines for evaluation and appointment of Counselor Faculty to make sure your department follows these guidelines.

A Counselor Faculty is entitled to a one-year contract if they were appointed to both semesters of the prior academic year in Academic-Year, 10-month, or 12-Month appointments. The time-base for the new contract should be similar to the prior years' time-base and if there is additional work available, it must be offered to available and interested incumbent Counselor Faculty before it offered to a newly hired Counselor Faculty on a temporary appointment. Most Counselors are appointed to full-time (1.0 timebase) positions, but there are a few appointed to part-time positions.

Three-Year Appointments: After six consecutive academic years of employment (defined as at least one semester on semester campus and two quarters on quarter campuses), Counselor Faculty on temporary appointments are entitled to be considered for a three-year appointment. During the sixth year, an evaluation shall be performed to determine whether a Counselor Faculty member is "satisfactory." If the Counselor Faculty is found to be "satisfactory," then the University must offer a three-year appointment. If the Counselor Faculty is found to be "un-satisfactory," then the University may not offer a subsequent appointment. After the initial three-year appointment, subsequent three-year appointments shall be granted following a similar evaluation process. **Note.** Three-year appointments can be requested by Counselor Faculty, and offered by the appropriate administrator prior to the six years of employment





Three-year full-time appointments are not contingent upon budget or enrollment during the life of the three-year appointment. The University must usually offer the affected Counselor Faculty full-time work. During the three-year full-time appointment, Counselor Faculty have similar job protections as tenured faculty members. However, Counselor Faculty on three-year appointments may be denied subsequent three-year appointments based on the evaluation in the third year of their appointment or the needs of the center.

For a full discussion of temporary faculty appointments, please refer to the [CFA Lecturers' Handbook](#) at calfac.org/council-of-lecturers/

If you believe you have not been reappointed because you were not carefully considered, it is important that you seek assistance from your CFA Counselor Representative, one of your CFA Chapter Faculty Rights Committee members, or your CFA staff representative, as soon as possible.

What is careful consideration? At a minimum, it means the department must carefully review the information in your personnel file, including student and peer evaluations, as well as your application, when considering you for reappointment. This review should go beyond mere formality, and the decision should not be capricious or arbitrary. Arbitrator Phillip Tamoush offered the following useful, succinct definition of careful consideration:

"Careful consideration" means exactly that, cautious, accurate, thorough and concerned thought, attention and deliberation to the task at hand. In a sense, on behalf of applicants, it can be viewed as a benefit to guarantee that special attention be given to persons who have already devoted effort and gained experience within the system and especially the department where the "new" position exists.

Personnel Files

Your personnel file is important, as it is the basis for all re-appointment, tenure and promotion decisions. It can be composed of two related but separate entities, the Personnel Action File (PAF) and the Working Personnel Action File (WPAF).

- **Personnel Action File (PAF).** "The Personnel Action File shall be defined as the one (1) official personnel file for employment information and information that may be relevant to personnel recommendations or personnel actions regarding a faculty unit employee." (From CBA Article 11.1)
- **Working Personnel Action File (WPAF).** "During the time of periodic evaluation and performance review of a faculty unit employee, the Working Personnel Action File, which includes all information, materials, recommendations, responses and rebuttals, shall be incorporated by reference into the Personnel Action File." (From Article 11.6). Some CSU campuses refer to this as a dossier. It often includes a narrative or self-reflection as well as other materials included by the person being reviewed as required by the evaluation processes and criteria.



Operationally, this means that the Personnel Action File (PAF) is permanent whereas the Working Personnel Action File (WPAF) is temporary and exists during the evaluation process. These files combined demonstrate your competence and accomplishments on which evaluators base their recommendations and decisions regarding reappointment, tenure, promotion/reclassification etc. It is your responsibility to ensure that your file is up to date. The PAF is kept in the office of a designated custodian of the files (e.g., Vice President of Student Affairs, Provost/Academic Affairs, Office of Human Resources).

If you are unsure where the PAF is housed, ask your Counseling Center Director. You have a right to see and review this file, and also to add to it. You should find the written records of your employment in this file. You may add materials that document your counseling competence, scholarly and creative activities, professional development, and other activities at the university or in the community (e.g., serving on the board of local mental health organizations, partnering with community organizations to provide trainings, etc.) This is especially helpful for Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments. The university administration must base any personnel actions taken with respect to you on your PAF. You must be given a copy of any item five days before it is placed in your file (CBA Article 11.4).

You have the right to respond in writing to any material placed in your file. Your rebuttal or explanation will then be included in your file. Review your file periodically (at least once a year) so that you are familiar with its contents. If you find material in your file that is inaccurate, irrelevant or was placed in your file without prior notification, please contact your campus CFA faculty rights representatives. Additionally, if you have received a reprimand, it shall be removed after three years upon your request. (CBA Article 18.7).

Your PAF is only available to you, to review committees, and to designated administrators. Anyone reviewing the file for any official purpose must sign the log attached to the file. The file is not made available to anyone outside the University, for example, to another university or employer to which you are applying for a job.

It is important to remember that no one else is aware of all the activities in which you participate; therefore, if you consider these activities relevant to any CSU evaluation process, it is your responsibility to ensure they are documented in your file. Your personnel file should always include a copy of your current Curriculum Vitae.

Workload

Counselor Faculty have complex workloads and engage in diverse activities that go far beyond individual, group and couples therapy. Some of these activities include:

- Consultation and referral regarding student mental health and campus safety (e.g., advising faculty and staff regarding difficult student situations, campus safety teams, residence halls, university police, etc.)
- Outreach and prevention (e.g., workshops, presentations, tabling, and mental health related trainings)
- Crisis and emergency intervention and de-escalation
- Supervision/training of emerging mental health practitioners

- Program development, implementation and evaluation (e.g., sexual assault/stalking/interpersonal violence prevention, LGBTQ+ and ally programs, Active Minds and other peer education groups, outreach to underserved student groups, suicide prevention, alcohol and drug prevention)
- Advising for student groups (e.g., students of color, foster students, undocumented students, Students for Quality Education, etc.)
- Participation in shared governance (e.g., Academic or Faculty Senate)
- Acting as the liaison with related professional services or departments (e.g., Athletics, International Programs, Academic Advising, etc.)
- Serving on University committees (e.g., evaluations, search committees, CARE teams, etc.)
- Completing Continuing Education Units and other professional development activities
- Collaborating with different campus departments or units as an embedded counselor

Counselor Faculty have three unique provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with regard to workload. The first is that, in consultation with the Counselor Faculty, the University shall provide work assignments that “correlate closely with activities expected of Counselor Faculty unit employees in order to qualify for retention, tenure/permanency, and promotion, and after tenure/permanency, activities expected of counselor employees in order to maintain their roles as contributing members of the campus community.” (CBA Article 20.11). In short, Counselor Faculty work assignments should correlate with the appropriate retention, tenure and promotion policies.

Secondly, the CBA states that full-time Counselor Faculty shall work “an average of 40 hours in a 7-day period.” (CBA Article 20.15).

Third, Counselor Faculty may request a particular work schedule, specifying the locations in which work is to be performed. For example, Counselor Faculty required to work weekends or evenings may request to reduce their work on other days. A Counselor Faculty may work off campus for continuing education purposes, telehealth work, or other reasons. Schedules are subject to approval by the Counseling Center Director or other appropriate administrator.

Workload Issues: According to guidelines established by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), it is recommended that Counselor Faculty spend a **maximum, that is no more than 65% of their time** (26 hours in a 40-hour week) on all direct services (e.g., intakes, assessments, individual and group sessions). The CSU Executive Order 1053 has established an expectation of a **minimum** of 60-65% of Counselor Faculty time on direct services, which is narrowly defined. Excess direct service may compromise client safety and Counselor Faculty effectiveness.

Counselor Faculty spend their non-direct service time engaging in case documentation, faculty consultation, participation in staff meetings, continuing education to maintain licensure, training interns, university service, and more. Many Counselor Faculty have found themselves routinely compelled to work more than 40 hours in order to complete excessive work responsibilities, in violation of the CBA.



If you believe your workload rights are being violated, please contact your CFA Chapter Faculty Rights team who can inform you about your grievance rights.

The Forty-Hour work week and Counselors in the CSU. Counselors are exempt from the overtime provisions established in the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA). This means that they are not eligible for overtime or other protections established under the FLSA. In conjunction with the sick leave provision in the CBA in 24.15, this means that Counselors should not be charged for partial sick days.

With that said, under 20.15 of the CBA, Counselors should work an average of 40 hours per week. It is possible that Counselors need to work more than forty hours during some weeks, but this should be offset by fewer hours in other weeks.

Student-to-Counselor Ratio Issues: For many year, IACS also recommended that college campuses maintain a ratio of having at least 1 Counselor per every 1,000-1,500 students. For years, very few campuses maintained that ratio. CFA pushed legislation to require the CSU campuses to maintain a ratio of at least 1 Counselor for every 1,500 students and even had the legislation pass both houses of the state legislature only to have it vetoed by then Governor Brown.

CFA continued to push for healthy student to Counselor ratios and in the 2024 contract won a modest achievement by having the CSU agree that campuses would strive to meet a ratio of 1 Counselor for every 1,000-1,500 students. The CSU Counselors Committee is committed to continue to advocate for healthy Counselor staffing levels in the CSU. Over time and with much pressure from CFA, more campuses have met the 1,500 students per Counselor with about half of CSU campuses meeting the ratio at the time of this publication.

Compensation

Appointment and Classification

Counselor Faculty are appointed to the classification of Student Services Professional-Academic Related (SSP-AR) and are appointed at Level I (equivalent of Assistant Professor), II (equivalent of Associate Professor), or III (equivalent of Full Professor).

The classification standards can be found at

https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/careers/compensation/Documents/Student_Services_Prof.pdf

Counselor Faculty are classified as 12-month, 10-month, or Academic Year (AY) appointments. Twelve-month appointed Counselor Faculty accrue vacation time and work year-round. Ten-month Counselors also accrue vacation time, but work the business work days of the 10 months assigned to them. Academic Year Counselor Faculty work during the academic calendar. No vacation is accrued, but vacation time coincides with academic breaks and the summer session. In a somewhat complicated payment schedule, paychecks are received throughout the year for all three categories.

Counselor Faculty may be hired at any point on the salary scale. This determination is generally based on academic background, professional ability, and experience. Budgetary considerations can also play a role in determining where Counselor Faculty are appointed along the salary schedule. The University determines the salary it will offer Counselor Faculty at the time of the initial appointment. This salary is negotiable at the time of appointment. After appointment, the beginning salary generally determines the individual's salary level for subsequent reappointments. However, Counselor Faculty on temporary appointments can be appointed at a higher salary in subsequent appointments. That salary is negotiable, as are the terms of the appointment (e.g., 12-month, 10-month, AY). It does not hurt to ask for what you want.

Salary Schedule for Counselors, July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025
(Monthly Full-Time Equivalent Salary)

12-Month Counselors			Academic Year & 10 Month Counselors		
SSP/AR I	SSP/AR II	SSP/AR III	SSP/AR I	SSP/AR II	SSP/AR III
		\$14,681 (Max)			
	\$14,019 (Max)				
\$12,771 (Max)		\$11,910 (SSI Max)		\$12,191 (Max)	\$12,771 (Max)
	\$10,849 (SSI Max)		\$11,105 (Max)		\$10,347 (SSI Max)
\$8,593 (SSI Max)		\$9,883 (Min)		\$9,431 (SSI Max)	
	\$7,830 (Min)		\$7,481 (SSI Max)		\$8,593 (Min)
\$7,127 (Min)				\$6,825 (Min)	
			\$6,221 (Min)		

In 2002, because of many years of negotiation, Counselor Faculty received salary parity with teaching faculty. The salary of an SSP-AR Level I, II, and III are equivalent to assistant, associate, and full professor salary, respectively.

Counselor Faculty may be hired into tenured, tenure-track/probationary or temporary appointments. Probationary Counselor Faculty will go through the tenure and promotion process like equivalent professors do and, once tenured, Counselor Faculty are entitled to the same job protections as other tenured faculty members. Counselor Faculty on temporary appointments have similar job protections as Lecturer faculty and are hired on an as-needed basis (Please see "Reappointment and Careful Consideration" in the previous section).

*The [current salary schedule](http://calstate.edu/hradm/salarieschedule/salary.aspx) can be found at
calstate.edu/hradm/salarieschedule/salary.aspx
Type SSP into the search box*

Salary Increases

After the initial appointment, there are three main ways that Counselor Faculty typically receive increases in salary according to the most current bargaining agreement: across-the-board General Salary Increases (GSIs); Service Salary Increases (SSIs); and promotions/reclassification. Other potential avenues for salary increases are merit pay, and market or equity increases.

During each bargaining cycle, CFA and the CSU administration negotiate **General Salary Increases (GSIs)** based, in part, on what the legislature and the governor decide is available in the state budget for increasing the salary pool for the year. These increases are intended to offset inflation. Once a GSI is negotiated, all faculty members receive the same percentage increase. In the most recent contract extension (2023-2025), Counselor Faculty received a 5% salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2023, and another 5% salary increase on July 1, 2024.

Service Salary Increases (SSIs) refer to upward movement on the salary schedules. Such adjustments are determined by CFA and CSU management during negotiations every bargaining cycle (see 31.24 of the CBA for details). In recent years, eligible faculty received SSIs in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the 2023-2024 fiscal year, and the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

There are some limitations to SSI increases. All salary ranges in the salary schedule have an "SSI Max Step." You cannot receive SSIs if your salary equals or exceeds the SSI Max Step. *(See the chart on page 14 for an illustration.)*

Promotion for Tenured and Tenure-Track/Probationary Counselor Faculty:

Under the CBA, promotion from SSP-AR I to SSP-AR II typically occurs at the time tenure is awarded (usually after six years of service). However, in some circumstances, when a Counselor Faculty member is performing duties more typically done by those who are at the SSP-AR II level, it is possible to request early consideration for promotion. Under the CBA, faculty would generally be promoted from SSP-AR II to SSP-AR III after five years as an SSP-AR II (however, they may be promoted earlier).

Re-Classification (Promotion) for Counselor Faculty on Temporary

Appointments: Counselor Faculty on temporary appointments can request to be re-classified into higher classifications. Article 12.30 of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) explains the process:

12.30: A temporary Counselor Faculty unit employee or coaching faculty unit employee may request a classification review at any time during the appointment. All such requests shall be made to the appropriate administrator. Review criteria shall be based on the applicable [classification standards for Counselor Faculty](#) unit employees or coaching faculty unit employees.

Procedures for classification review shall be determined by the President [In the CBA, the term "President" is defined as the "chief executive officer of a University or college or



his/her designee."] The employee shall be notified in writing of the decision. If the employee is granted a higher classification, the employee shall receive compensation at the higher rate retroactive to the first day of the pay period immediately following the submission of the classification request.

Decisions shall not be subject to the grievance procedure, but CFA may submit appeals of decisions for final and binding adjudication to a third-party neutrally selected by the parties within 60 days of ratification of this Agreement. Costs shall be borne equally by the parties pursuant to the side letter to be developed by the parties.

If you are a Counselor Faculty member on a temporary appointment and are interested in being classified at a higher range, we recommend the following steps:

1. Review the classification standards at https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/careers/compensation/Documents/Student_Services_Prof.pdf. If you meet the standards then:
2. Request a classification review from your Counseling Center Director or other immediate supervisor. You may begin your request as:

Dear [Insert Director's name],

I have reviewed the Counselors Classification and Qualification Standards, and I believe I am performing the duties of an SSP-AR II [or III as appropriate]. Therefore, I am requesting a classification review pursuant to Article 12.30 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Please let me know what materials I need to provide or any applicable policies.

For tips and suggestions, please see [Best Practices](#) on the Counselors' Committee web page at calfac.org. For consultation, please contact the CFA field representative assigned to your campus.

Evaluation

Through collective bargaining, Counselor Faculty have won the important right to evaluations of their work. This right plays a critical role in other areas of importance to Counselor Faculty, particularly "careful consideration" for reappointment for Counselors with 1-year appointments, being deemed "satisfactory" to qualify for a 3-year appointment, and tenure and promotion for tenured and tenure-track/probationary Counselors.

Evaluation criteria and procedures are developed by appropriate faculty committees (e.g., tenured Counselor Faculty in the RTP Committee) and often are approved by the faculty Senate and campus President or designee. Your department/unit must make written evaluation criteria and procedures available to you within 14 days of the beginning of the term in which the evaluation will take place (CBA Article 15.3). Any changes in evaluation criteria made prior to commencement of an evaluation must be given to the Counselor Faculty in advance. The criteria and procedures may not be changed after the evaluation

process begins. If you have not received the criteria, you should request it from the Counseling Center Director.

Since RTP (Retention, Tenure and Promotion) and reappointment decisions are to be based solely on the contents of your personnel file, it is important that you make sure you are evaluated. Evaluations of Counselor Faculty's clinical work may consist of a written self-evaluation, written student evaluations, peer review by a peer committee, and evaluations by appropriate academic/Student Affairs administrators. It is up to you to decide what type of working personnel action file (WPAF) best reflects your professional work and shows that you meet the criteria in the evaluation policies. Other information documenting performance in the areas of counseling effectiveness, university and community service, research, creative and/or professional contributions, professional development, evidence of licensure, etc. may be included in the file.

Each stage of the evaluation process should result in a written recommendation that is incorporated into your personnel file and of which you will receive a copy. You have the right to submit a written response (rebuttal or clarification) following receipt of the recommendation. In any response you make, it is best to avoid inflammatory language and address carefully the issue(s) raised. Because the nature of your response is important, review it with a sympathetic colleague or a CFA representative.

If you are denied reappointment, retention, tenure, promotion, or reclassification, please consult with a CFA Faculty Rights Representative immediately about your appeal options. There are timelines associated with each.

Post-tenure review: Once tenured Counselor Faculty become tenured SSP-AR III, they are subject only to a post-tenure review. Tenured SSP-AR II's who choose not to apply for promotion to SSP-AR III may also be reviewed under this process. These reviews are to be conducted every five (5) years and are intended to give constructive feedback to Counselor Faculty so they may maintain their effectiveness. These reviews include a peer-review component and a review by the appropriate administrator (i.e., the Counseling Center Director). Your campus *should* have some criteria for post-tenure review, but not all campuses have criteria.



Benefits

The sections below highlight some of the benefits available. There are designated employees in your campus Human Resources/Benefits Office with whom you may discuss your benefits. You are encouraged to make an appointment to find out details about any of the programs below.

PERS Eligibility for Health Benefits: Health benefits are provided through the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) and are available to faculty who meet PERS eligibility standards. This health benefit eligibility covers medical benefits, vision and dental care, life insurance, and disability income protection insurance. Counselor Faculty unit employees with temporary appointments are eligible for CSU health insurance if they are employed at least half-time for a period of more than six months.

Flex Cash: Counselor Faculty may waive medical and/or dental benefits through the Flex Cash Program and receive a monthly payment if they can document having non-CSU health coverage from another source. If they do, they receive \$128 per month in lieu of health benefits and \$12 per month in lieu of dental benefits. Please note that Counselor Faculty need to receive health benefits through their CSU employment when they retire in order to be eligible for the lifetime medical benefits from CalPERS.

Health, Vision, Long-Term Disability and Life Insurance: For Counselor Faculty who meet PERS eligibility standards, some health plans, plus non-PERS vision, life insurance, and long-term disability benefits are fully paid by the University. Note that domestic partners are eligible family members under the bargained contract. However, benefits for domestic partners are taxed as income under current federal law. Health plans that require an employee contribution are also available through PERS. Because health insurance considerations are complex, questions are best addressed to your campus benefits office.

Dependent Care Reimbursement Program: Counselor Faculty are eligible to participate in the CSU Dependent Care Reimbursement program (DCRA). This is a voluntary benefit that offers you the ability to pay for eligible out-of-pocket dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars, thus reducing your tax liability. Eligible expenses include such things as day care expenses for a dependent child under 13 years old, or care for an elderly parent. Contact your Human Resources/Benefits office for more information.

Fee Waiver: All tenure-track/probationary, tenured Counselor Faculty and temporary Counselor Faculty with a three-year appointment may enroll in the CSU fee waiver program subject to provisions of the contract. This benefit, which covers up to two CSU courses or six units, whichever is greater, may be extended to a spouse, domestic partner, or dependent child subject to certain conditions as defined in Article 26 of the CBA.

Licensing Fees: With the prior approval of the President, Counselor Faculty unit

employees who are required to maintain a license or credential as a condition of employment, shall be reimbursed for all normal and customary credential or licensing fees consistent with program needs. Any denial shall include a written explanation. (See CBA Article 25.5). Reimbursements are granted at the discretion of the campus President or designee. However, campus Presidents or their designees must explain any denial in writing.

Some campuses have developed policies that require reimbursement of licensing and continuing education requirements. CFA advocates for campuses to reimburse Counselor Faculty for all continuing education units as well as licensing fees. Continuing Education Units should be counted toward a Counselor Faculty member's regular workload. Vacation time should not be required to complete Continuing Education Units. *(See the [Best Practices](#) section on our web site at calfac.org/counselors for more information on how to advocate for helpful policies for your Counseling Center.)*

Direct Deposit: All bargaining unit employees determined eligible by the State Controller's Office may participate in the direct deposit program.

Tax-Sheltered Annuity: Counselor Faculty may participate in a tax-sheltered annuity plan at the time of hire or any time thereafter. This option is funded entirely by the employees' contributions, but the benefit is that payment of taxes on the portion of the salary that is invested is deferred.

Miscellaneous Benefits: Counselor Faculty are eligible to use campus recreational facilities as long as it has been determined that this use does not interfere with student use. A nominal fee may be charged by the campus. Counselor Faculty may be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a result of travel on official CSU business in accordance with CSU travel regulations. Counselor Faculty are eligible for payroll deductions for parking fees at CSU facilities. Eligible bargaining unit employees can participate in the CSU Pre-tax Parking Fee Deduction Plan.

Leaves

Counselor Faculty in the CSU are eligible for various kinds of leaves, both paid and unpaid. (See CBA Articles 22, 23, 24, 34 and remember to check for any provisions pertaining to prorating of time/compensation for part-time faculty).

In some cases, it is possible to combine available paid and unpaid leaves to create a longer absence.

In other cases, the maximum duration of a leave may be limited by the CBA—even when longer periods seem available. Because determination of types and lengths of leaves can be quite complicated, it is better to make use of a variety of sources of

information (e.g., the contract, experienced colleagues, and of course, the Faculty Affairs/Benefits Office on your campus) to clarify what is possible in any particular situation. Errors in applications can lead to leave denials.

Sometimes Counselor Faculty, including temporary Counselor Faculty, hesitate to take time off even when there is a legitimate need to do so. Remember that in most cases the contract protects your current position in the university, but it is important to follow the established leaves procedures for these protections to work.

Paid Leave

Sick Leave: All Counselor Faculty accrue paid sick leave beginning in the second month of paid status. Full-time Counselor Faculty members accrue 8 hours of sick leave per month. Part-time Counselor Faculty accrue sick leave on a pro-rata basis (for example, a Counselor Faculty member appointed half time would accrue 4 hours of sick leave per month).

Bereavement Leave: Upon request to the campus President, five days of paid bereavement leave will be granted in the instance of a death in the immediate family. See CBA Article 23.3 for the definition of “immediate family.” You may also use up to 40 hours of accrued sick leave in such an instance, if authorized by the University (CBA Article 24.12).

Parental Leave: All bargaining unit employees are entitled to up to 50 days of paid parental leave. This leave shall commence within a 135-day period beginning 60 days before the anticipated arrival of the new child and ending 75 days after the arrival of the new child. Only workdays are counted in determination of the calendar span of the 50 days of leave. (Also see disability leave and unpaid maternity/paternity leave below). Alternatively, Counselor Faculty with new children may take a 60% reduction in workload for one semester or a 100% reduction in workload for one quarter.

Under Government Code Section 12945, subdivision (b)(2), female employees have a legally guaranteed right to take up to four months of pregnancy disability leave. This may be supplemented with paid or unpaid family care or medical.

Personal Holiday: One day per calendar year may be used for a personal holiday. The scheduling of a personal holiday must be by mutual agreement of the Counselor Faculty and appropriate administrator, usually the Counseling Center Director. Personal leave days are not cumulative. When planning leave dates, please note that in many cases vacation days (if you accrue them) may be saved for the subsequent academic year. Personal holidays are lost if not used within a calendar year.

Disability Leave: For information on disability leave consult Article 24.19-22 and check with your Faculty Affairs/Benefits Office. Also check with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) for information about state disability insurance benefits. The EDD telephone number is 800-300-5616 and the website address is <https://edd.ca.gov>

Other Paid Leave: Counselor Faculty are also eligible for several other types of paid leave, including jury duty, leave to vote, absence as a witness, emergency leave, and military leave. (See CBA Article 23 for details).

Sabbaticals, Difference-in-Pay Leaves, and Vacation

Full-time Counselor Faculty, including temporary Counselor Faculty are eligible for both sabbaticals and difference-in-pay leaves for approved professional purposes after six years of employment. These leaves must occur within the period of employment specified in the appointment letter. There are many conditions that apply to these leaves. It is important to consult CBA Articles 27 and 28.

Sabbaticals and difference-in-pay leaves may be granted for professional reasons including, but not limited to, research, scholarly and creative activity, instructional improvement or retraining.

To be eligible for sabbatical or a difference-in-pay leave, you need to have worked full-time for six of the previous seven years. The CBA does not require that a faculty member be tenured to get a sabbatical. Counselor Faculty on full-time temporary appointments have been granted sabbaticals.

If granted, faculty members will receive salary based on the following:

Academic-Year Counselors

- one (1) semester at full salary.
- two (2) semesters at one-half (1/2) of full salary.
- one (1) quarter at full salary.
- two (2) quarters at three-fourths (3/4) of full salary.
- three (3) quarters at one-half (1/2) of full salary.

12-Month Counselors at semester campuses:

- four (4) months at full salary.
- eight (8) months at one-half (1/2) of full salary.

12-Month Counselors at quarter campuses:

- three (3) months at full salary.



- six (6) months at three-fourths (3/4) of full salary.
- nine (9) months at one-half (1/2) of full salary. (CBA 27.11)

When you are close to being sabbatical-eligible, look at your campus sabbatical calendar (e.g., the request for applications which should be published online) in order to plan ahead. Consult with Academic/Faculty Affairs in this initial process.

Following the application of a sabbatical, the campus may deny a sabbatical based on the needs of the department. However, the campus may not deny a sabbatical based on the needs of the department for two consecutive years. Sabbaticals are competitive, so they may be denied based on merit.

Please see [Best Practices](#) on the [Counselors Committee](#) website at calfac.org for some examples of Counselor Faculty sabbatical projects that have been approved and completed.

Difference-in Pay-Leave: In lieu of a Sabbatical, a Counselor Faculty member may apply for a difference-in-pay leave (DIP), which is similar to a sabbatical. The salary during a DIP may be considerably less than a sabbatical. Details can be found in CBA Article 28.

Vacation Leave: Full-time Counselor Faculty on a 10-month or 12-month appointment earn 16 hours of vacation leave for each qualifying month of service. After the first year of service, 10-month and 12-month counselors are required to use at least 40 hours of vacation per year; any unused part of the 40 hours will be forfeited. Vacation balances are capped at 320 hours for faculty with less than 10 years of service and 440 hours for faculty with at least 10 years of service. Vacation scheduling is done by mutual agreement between the Counselor and the department. Please see your Counseling Center's Policies and Procedures manual for guidance around requesting vacation leave. Details on vacation leave can be found in CBA Article 34.

Unpaid Leave

All Counselor Faculty may be granted unpaid personal leave for a specific purpose and length of time.

Part-time temporary Counselor Faculty may be granted unpaid personal leave for a short duration, not to exceed two years. Details can be found in article 22 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Temporary Counseling Faculty will not lose any accumulated employment rights for taking such a leave. Faculty unit employees on a personal leave without pay shall not accrue service credit toward sabbatical eligibility, difference in pay eligibility, service salary increase eligibility, or seniority except as provided in provisions 22.22 and 22.23 of this Article. If the leave extends longer than 15 days, you become responsible for payment of insurance premiums for any health or dental benefits you may have.

The campus President will determine if the leave constitutes a break in service; if this is the case, the employee must be informed at the time the leave is granted.



Unpaid professional leave allows Counselor Faculty to take advantage of scholarly and/or other professional opportunities away from the campus. There are a number of conditions that apply, so consult the CBA Article 22.24-22.27 for details. Note especially that responsibility for health and dental benefit payments shifts to the employee during a leave of this type.

Counselor Faculty, including temporary Counselor Faculty, may receive up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave within a 12-month period if they have at least two semesters or three quarters of service. While this category of leave is unpaid, benefits do continue. (See also paid Parental Leave above).

Note that all leave rights automatically terminate at the end of an appointment.

Retirement

California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)

Tenured and tenure-track/probationary Counselor Faculty are enrolled in the CalPERS Retirement System, which has both employee and employer contributions. Counselor Faculty on temporary appointments who are not already CalPERS members are enrolled in CalPERS once they have worked at least one year at half time or greater.

CSU employees eligible for CalPERS also pay into the Social Security retirement system and thus contribute to their future Social Security benefits.

Vesting in CalPERS (meaning you are eligible to retire) occurs after you have put in the equivalent of five full-time years of service and are at least 50 years old. You must retire within 120 days of separating from the CSU in order to remain eligible for lifetime CalPERS health benefits. CalPERS is a defined benefit, which means that your pension is based on your years of service, your age at retirement, and a multiplier based on your age (the multiplier varies based on your date of hire).

Counselors who become CalPERS members after already working at the CSU are eligible to purchase the service credit for the time they worked, but were not members of CalPERS. For more information, please contact CalPERS.

Part-Time, Seasonal, and Temporary (PST) Employees Retirement Plan

If you are not eligible for CalPERS (e.g., **you are a Counselor on a temporary appointment in your first year**) you will be enrolled in the PST Retirement Plan. This plan is funded entirely by employee contributions that equal 7.5% of your salary. If you later become eligible for CalPERS, you have the option of rolling over your PST contributions into another plan called the State 457 Retirement Plan, which is something like an IRA or a tax-sheltered annuity. You may also have the option to buy service credit from CalPERS. [Contact CalPERS](http://www.calpers.ca.gov) at www.calpers.ca.gov for more information.

If you separate from CSU service without actually retiring, you may cash out of the PST retirement system to which you have made contributions. However, cashing out of such a plan may be subject to taxes and penalties.

Tax-Sheltered Annuity

Counselor Faculty may participate in a tax-sheltered annuity plan at the time of hire or any time thereafter. This option is funded entirely by the employees' contributions, but the benefit is that payment of taxes on the portion of the salary that is invested is deferred.

Pre-retirement Reduction in Time Base (PRTB)

A PRTB allows tenured Counselor Faculty at the age of 55 or older to reduce their time base (and salary) but continue to accrue full-service credit toward retirement. In order to be eligible for a PRTB, the Counselor Faculty must have been employed in the CSU full-time for at least 10 years. Once they are authorized to participate in PTRB, they may not revoke the reduced time base and return to full-time employment unless approved by the campus President. In addition, a PRTB may participate for up to five years, at which time the Counselor Faculty is then retired from the system. See the CBA and your Benefits office for more information.

Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP)

After years of fighting, tenured Counselor Faculty became eligible to participate in FERP in 2012. FERP is a program in which a Counselor Faculty member retires from service and returns to work at up to one-half of the previous time base (this can be either full-time for half of the year or half-time for the whole year). The benefit is that a FERP faculty member can collect both the retirement allowance and half of the prior salary. It helps to transition a faculty member into retirement and provides for some stability as we transition to newer faculty members.

Specifics of the program are found in CBA Article 29. An announcement for FERP generally comes out in October, and an application for the program is generally due at the end of February of the same academic year. A completed application for entry into FERP must be signed by the applicant and the appropriate administrators. However, the University may not deny the application of eligible Counselor Faculty who submit their applications within the deadlines. Counselor Faculty who are planning to retire and who are planning to enter FERP are encouraged to consult with their Counseling Center Director as early as possible as well as contact their Human Resources Benefits Representative and CalPERS for further information.

Additionally, a Counselor Faculty member may choose to FERP for up to 50% of their regular time base in the last fiscal year of employment preceding retirement, but no more, in any given fiscal year. For example, if the Counselor Faculty member had a full-time appointment prior to retirement and entrance into FERP, the counselor could either work 0.50 (half time) for each of the Fall & Spring semesters or 1.00 (full time) for either the Fall or Spring semester.

FERP work assignments and specific duties within a semester remain the prerogative of the administration, delegated to the appropriate administrator, usually the Counseling Center Director. A Counselor Faculty member who intends to enter FERP is therefore encouraged to work with their director the year before entering the program to establish how they will fulfill their necessary hours (not to exceed 960 hours) during the fiscal year.

Grievances

Counselor Faculty have the same grievance rights and due process protections as their teaching faculty colleagues. CFA can help resolve many problems or complaints informally and encourages this approach where it seems effective and appropriate. However, depending on the specific circumstances, formal dispute resolution provided by the CBA may be necessary.

The CBA distinguishes among **three basic types of grievances**: contract grievances, statutory grievances, and disciplinary appeals. All three types of grievances may be taken by CFA to binding arbitration. This allows Counselor Faculty to have the case heard before an independent arbitrator who has the legal authority to overturn the University's action. All grievance articles cited below may be found in [the contract section](#) on the CFA web site at calfac.org

Contract grievances claiming that the university misapplied or violated specific provisions of the contract, or other employment rights, must be filed at the CSU campus within 49 days of a Counselor Faculty member becoming aware of the issue. An example of a contract grievance could be working an excessive workload.

Article 20.15 of the CBA states that, "The Assignment/Schedule of a full-time librarian or counselor faculty unit employee shall be an average of forty (40) hours in a seven (7) day period."

If the University regularly requires Counselor Faculty to average more than 40 hours per week, it may be subject to a grievance. Other contract grievance examples may include the failure of the University to carefully consider a part-time Counselor Faculty for future work, a denial of tenure or promotion, or a failure to pay contractually bargaining compensation.

Statutory grievances go through a different process. A statutory grievance is an allegation that the University wronged you in connection to rights you acquire as part of your employment. These rights do not necessarily need to be covered in the CBA. These rights can be found in University policy files, state law, or rules of applicable licensing boards. If not settled, a statutory grievance may be heard by a committee of three faculty members. One Counselor Faculty member won a statutory grievance when the University assigned him more clients than allowed by the campus policy.

Discipline cases have much faster timelines, going into effect when a Counselor Faculty member receives a "notice of pending disciplinary action" from the administration which sets up the disciplinary action procedure. Discipline cases usually articulate a claim of "unprofessional conduct," and have three kinds of sanctions—suspension, demotion, and termination. Since the timelines on discipline cases are expedited, CFA must be notified by Counselor Faculty as soon as possible so that CFA can begin reviewing the case for possible arbitration. The timelines and procedures for discipline are found in Article 19 of the CBA. After completing the disciplinary procedure and receiving a final notice from the campus president, faculty have only 10 days to file an appeal.

Reprimands are covered in Article 18 of the contract and are not considered disciplinary



actions. However, since reprimands can be a first step towards a future disciplinary action, they should also be treated as very serious matters.

On each CSU campus, CFA has trained faculty (Faculty Rights Representatives) to help Counselor Faculty with grievances. In addition, there are professional CFA staff members on each campus to provide assistance. You can find information about your chapter at <https://www.calfac.org/cfa-chapters/>.

If you are considering whether to file a grievance, you have been notified of a pending disciplinary action, or you have been denied retention, tenure or promotion, it is your responsibility to immediately contact CFA for assistance. We will help you understand the process and inform you of

your rights. We also can provide union representation, and when possible, work out a settlement that avoids litigation.

CFA has a complex process of reviewing grievances as they move from the campus to the Chancellor's Office and then to CFA for a final review and decision. If the case is denied arbitration by CFA's Director of Representation, Counselor Faculty are provided an appeal process before a statewide representation committee that has the authority to reverse the decision not to arbitrate.

For more information about grievances, please see the [CFA Grievance Filing Guide](#) at calfac.org/item/cfa-grievance-and-discipline-appeal-filing-guide



Brief History: Counselor Faculty and CFA

Counseling and Student Life

Higher education in this country has traditionally adhered to the concept of *in loco parentis*—assigning some level of responsibility to colleges and universities, in place of the parents, for the well-being of students.

In the California State University (CSU) system, as in many other universities, this led to the development of Student Health Centers, Offices of Student Life, and Counseling Services. Thus, in one form or another since the beginning of the system, professional counseling, including individual and group counseling, outreach and prevention education, and consultation have been fundamental services within the CSU system.

Initially, counselors were acknowledged as holding academic and professional backgrounds and credentials similar to those of teaching faculty. As a result, within the California State College System (as it was called at the time), counselors were regarded as general faculty, holding class and rank, tenure, benefits, privileges, and salary equal to their teaching colleagues. For many years, Counseling Services evolved on a track parallel to their teaching department colleagues, developing a professional identity and taking on increasingly complex roles on campus.

Separation of Services

In the early 1970s, the CSU Chancellor's Office began a move to separate counselor and teaching faculty. Counselor Faculty working in the division of Student Affairs were designated as Student Affairs Officers (SAOs), thus administratively separating them from their teaching colleagues.

The Academic Related (AR) designation was added for counselors and others who had previously held class and rank. Originally, there were no functional differences between the old and new classification, with five ranks in the new SAO-AR and no differences in salary. Subtle differences, however, were instituted in retention, promotion, and tenure procedures.

Unionization

In 1978, the legislature passed the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA), which permitted collective bargaining in many state agencies and allowed CSU faculty to elect a union. In the early 1980s, CFA emerged as the bargaining representative for all CSU faculty, including librarians, coaches, and counselors (Unit 3).

However, over time—and despite advice from its own attorneys that counselors belonged with teaching faculty in Unit 3—the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) divided the system into nine bargaining units. PERB assigned counselors to Unit 4, along with other student affairs staff, while assigning teaching faculty and librarians to Unit 3.



This separation from the teaching faculty marked the beginning of a downward trend for Counselor Faculty. The SAO-ARs in the new Unit 4 became Student Services Professionals, Academically Related (SSP-AR), with new guidelines, job descriptions, qualifications, criteria for reclassification (not promotion), and different benefits. A separate and lower salary schedule was instituted, beginning a salary gap that widened over the next ten years.

It was a challenging time for counselors. While the level of psychopathology and intensity of student problems increased, counselor salaries fell substantially behind those of teaching colleagues.

Additionally, universities became more risk-averse and demanded higher levels of professional preparation. Doctorates and state licensure became mandatory; an inflexible 40-hour workweek was enforced, and morale declined. Some Unit 4 cohort members resented counselors' advanced degrees, licensure, higher salaries, and retained faculty privileges. This tension within Unit 4 created rifts within the Division of Student Affairs and further alienated counselor professionals from the rest of the institution.

Perceived as outsiders, counselor positions were often exploited for salary savings. When counselors resigned or retired, their positions were frequently lost. The number of Counselor Faculty in the CSU system declined significantly and never rebounded. These difficulties underscored the challenges stemming from PERB's unfortunate decision to place counselors in Unit 4.

By the late 1980s, a statewide group of counselors began exploring the possibility of joining Unit 3. Formally called a "unit modification," PERB maintained strict rules for such a change, requiring agreement from both bargaining units, their representatives, and the CSU administration.

Eventually, both bargaining units and their agents acknowledged that assigning counselors to Unit 4 had been a mistake. Unfortunately, the Chancellor's Office remained strongly opposed to reassignment. Over the ensuing years, the Chancellor's Office raised numerous roadblocks during discussions.

A group of counselors from campuses across the state dedicated hundreds of hours to navigating the ever-moving target presented by the Chancellor's representatives. Counselors were required to maintain 80 percent membership in APC (Academic Professionals of California, which represents Unit 4), prove their job responsibilities were similar to those of professors and librarians, and petition both unions for permission to change. Still, the CSU administration refused.

Finally, in the fall of 1991, PERB announced that the CSU had agreed with all parties to the unit modification moving counselors from Bargaining Unit 4 to Unit 3. No increases in benefits, wages, or conditions accompanied the reassignment. Any changes would have to be bargained by CFA in the future.

Counselor Faculty in Unit 3





With CFA's support, the move to full parity began. Initially, the gap in salary scales was the most vexing issue. Again, a small, dedicated group of counselors undertook a nationwide study of university counseling salaries, attempting to show that California's professional counselors were underpaid.

Over time and with the strong support of teaching and librarian colleagues, Counselor Faculty regained many of the losses of the 1980s. There was still some disparity between counselors and teaching faculty but with formal membership on the CFA Bargaining Team and with the support of the union, counselors were able to obtain sabbaticals during re-opener negotiations. Pay parity with large salary increases for all ranks was obtained during full contract bargaining.

It should be noted that much of the credit for the victories Counselor Faculty have enjoyed was due to the hard work of many people. This is by no means an exhaustive list and others should feel free to add names from their memories.

We are very grateful to the hard work of Ron Perry (Fresno), Hal Giedt (Northridge), Rick Gutierrez (San Francisco), Rick Canteley (Long Beach), Jeff Clark (Sacramento), Bill Sternal (Los Angeles), Lee Broadbent (Fullerton), Martha Kazlo (San Bernardino), Rick Miller (Northridge), Elie Axelroth (San Luis Obispo), Michael Ritter (San Francisco), Mimi Bommersbach (Chico), Martha Cuan (Stanislaus), Carrie Sakai (San Diego), Susan Chen (San Francisco), Jay Howell (San Marcos) and Linda Smith (San Diego) for their unflagging efforts in the long march to parity for Counselor Faculty.

Counselor efforts led by Janet Millar (Bakersfield), Mary Diaz (Los Angeles), Jeff Tan (San Bernardino), Linda Smith (San Diego), Richard Francisco (San José), Mary Cavagnaro (San Francisco), Carrie Sakai (San Diego), Jay Howell (San Marcos) and Katie Johnson (Dominguez Hills) continued in subsequent contract negotiations. With the support of the full CFA Bargaining Team, the 2012-14 Collective Bargaining Agreement finally included the right for tenured counselors to take part in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP). Additionally, new language was introduced regarding workload and work assignments for counselors, the inclusion of reimbursement to cover professional licensing costs for counselors, and the addition of new classifications for post-doc and post-master interns and trainees. These were gains in the 2012-2014 contract. With the inclusion in FERP, Counselor Faculty have finally achieved all major components of faculty status.

The fight for Counselor rights continued after the 2012-2014 contract. In the 2014-2017 Collective Bargaining Agreement, CFA won the right for Counselors on temporary appointments to have reclassification rights when they were doing the work of higher-paid counselors.

In the 2024 contract extension, Counselors won the possibility to hold a 10-month (as opposed to an academic year) position and the CSU agreed that it would strive to hire at least one counselor for every 1,000-1,500 students.

Restructuring—CSU Select Committee for Mental Health, EO 1053

At this time, the concerns and struggles for Counselor Faculty involve the restructuring of many counseling centers (i.e. at many CSUs, student health services took control of counseling



services), the losses of faculty positions (particularly tenure-track positions), workload issues, and the assignment of work responsibilities.

Most recently, due to budget cuts and various campuses Student Affairs (SA) budgetary priorities as well as the opposition and/or resistance by some SA administrators to counselors being faculty members, many CSUs have lost counselor tenure-line faculty positions, and some centers are now staffed exclusively by Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments.

In 2009, the creation by then-Chancellor Charles Reed of a task force, the CSU Select Committee on Mental Health, was charged with assessing the appropriate level of mental health services to meet student needs and to review and identify the resources necessary to provide these services. This eventually resulted in the creation of Executive Order 1053 (EO 1053). See it at <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/11384781/latest/>.

The Chancellor's office hand-picked members of the Select Committee on Mental Health resulting in the exclusion of adequate representation of Counselor Faculty and Counseling Center Directors.

In October 2010, prior to the release of the EO 1053, the CFA Counselors Committee responded to the task force's report with a statement expressing concerns about the lack of counselor representation and made recommendations for improvements in the assessment process and the drafting of a mental health policy. The CSU administration disregarded CFA's input. Additionally, CFA responded to a draft of the executive order in November 2010 with a request to meet and confer about the impact on counselor workload.

However, the CSU neglected to consult with CFA and implemented EO 1053 in December 2010. CFA responded by identifying a reasonably foreseeable impact of EO 1053 on Counselor Faculty workload and took our case to the Public Employment Relations Board, which ruled in our favor in the summer of 2013. PERB stated that the CSU administration violated HEERA in issuing Executive Order 1053 without meeting and conferring before implementation.

Again, it should be noted that these victories come at the hands of the hard work of dedicated CFA members and in this particular case, Jeff Tan (San Bernardino) gave generously of his time working with CFA staff to present our case to PERB to help them understand our work responsibilities and workload issues.

At the time of this publication, the CSU is working on another modification to EO 1053.

Elimination of Tenure-Track lines

Despite this victory, various CSU administrators have taken steps to halt the hiring of tenure-track Counselor Faculty. Instead, they have increasingly relied on hiring counselors on temporary contracts at lower salaries and with significantly less job security—effectively avoiding the tenure process.

Temporary and contingent faculty cannot achieve permanency and must be reappointed annually, or every three years if they meet certain criteria. Because of the contingent nature of

their appointments, these faculty may be less aware of their faculty status and, as a result, their rights. They may also fear that asserting those rights—such as voicing concerns about administrative decisions regarding mental health service delivery or work assignments—could jeopardize their chances of reappointment.

It is a serious concern that CSU Counseling Centers risk becoming staffed solely by employees on temporary appointments. As with our teaching faculty colleagues, maintaining a balance of positions within a unit—tenured, tenure-track/probationary, and temporary—provides students with greater continuity of care and support, and makes the unit stronger, more effective, and more vital.

Know your Rights

In 2014, as a result of bargaining, Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments earned the right to request a classification review at any time during their appointment. These requests will be reviewed using criteria based on the applicable classification standards for Counselor Faculty unit employees and will be retroactive to the month after the request was made.

As Student Service Professionals-Academic Related (SSP-AR), it is important to understand your rights as a member of Unit 3, which include rights both within your classification (SSP-AR) and within your appointment status as faculty (tenured, tenure-track/probationary, temporary). The CFA Counselors' Committee recommends that all Counselor Faculty maintain a file of their employment records, including appointment letters, evaluation criteria, and all evaluations.

Counselor Faculty are encouraged to become familiar with the [Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#). You can get a copy from your campus CFA chapter. The CBA, also referred to as “the contract,” is bargained between faculty and the CSU administration regularly. The current contract and its extensions are set to expire in 2025.

It is also recommended that Counselor Faculty with temporary appointments read the CFA Lecturers' Handbook which delineates provisions in the CBA particularly relevant to temporary faculty members. (It is available at <https://www.calfac.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Lecturers-Handbook-2022-2025-FINAL.pdf> or get a hard copy from your campus CFA chapter.) Please know that you can talk at any time with the CFA Faculty Rights Representatives on your campuses whenever you have questions about appointments, reappointments, entitlement rights, salaries, benefits, reclassification, tenure, promotion and working conditions.

Glossary

AAUP = American Association of University Professors. Known for its leadership in the academic freedom arena. Affiliate of CFA. CFA members may request a complimentary membership. See the CFA Member Help Desk at calfac.org/member-help-hub to request your complimentary membership.

Academic Senate = Each campus has an academic senate under the Education Code responsible for formulating certain academic policies, including criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion.

AY = Academic Year. It is a period of up to 180 days per year established by the University. Academic Year employees are expected to work or take leave for these days.

APC = Academic Professionals of California. Represents employees in Unit 4 of the CSU.

Assembly = CFA holds two meetings annually at which the work of the organization is reviewed and policy, strategy, goals and objectives are discussed and agreed on. Each chapter sends a delegation. The Counselors' Committee traditionally meets during Assembly weekend.

AVP/AA = Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. (Sometimes for Academic Personnel, or Faculty Affairs) in CSU campus administration.

Board of Directors = CFA's governing body, composed of statewide elected officials and committee representatives. The Chair of the Counselors Committee serves on the CFA Board of Directors.

CRSJ = Council for Racial & Social Justice. Composed of affirmative action representatives from each of the CSU campuses. The Council for Racial & Social Justice is an advisory body to the CFA Board of Directors.

CRSJ Caucuses = APIDA (Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans), Black, Chicana/Latinx, Disability, LGBTQIA+, Native American and Indigenous Peoples, PAM (Palestine, Arab, and Muslim), Teacher

Education, & Womxn's Caucuses. See the CFA website for descriptions of each caucus.

CalPERS = California Public Employees' Retirement System.

CBA = Collective Bargaining Agreement. Informally referred to as the "contract."

CD/BS = Contract Development/Bargaining Strategy Committee. Made up of elected and appointed CFA members. Assists in strategic decisions regarding bargaining.

CFA = California Faculty Association. The union representing faculty including professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches in the CSU.

CSUEU = California State University Employees Union. Represents employees in Units 2, 5, 7, and 9 of the CSU. (Formerly California State Employees Association, CSEA).

CSU = California State University. A statewide University system with soon to be 22 campuses.

CTA = California Teachers Association. Represents K-14 teachers and faculty. Affiliate of CFA.

DIP = Difference-in-Pay Leave.

FERP = Faculty Early Retirement Program, for tenured faculty only.

FTE = Full Time Equivalent. FTE salary is the salary of a 1.0 time base appointment. (Full-Time Equivalent Salary X Time-Base = Gross Salary.)

GSI = General Salary Increase. Across-the-board or cost-of-living (COLA) increase.

GTAs = Graduate Teaching Assistants. They are not in our bargaining Unit 3, but in their own Unit 11 with the United Auto Workers (UAW). They are graduate student employees who teach classes in their field of interest, often required as part of their course of study.

HEERA = Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act. This is the law that gives employees in the CSU the right to have a union and to bargain collectively.

Lecturers' Council = The Lecturers' Council, comprised of elected Lecturers' Representatives from each campus, has become increasingly involved in the national and international movements of contingent academic labor.

MOU = Memorandum of Understanding.

NEA = National Education Association. Affiliate of CFA.

PAF = Personnel Action File.

PERB = Public Employment Relations Board. A quasi-judicial administrative agency charged with administering the collective bargaining statutes covering employees of California's public schools, colleges, and universities.

Presidents' Council = Composed of CFA chapter presidents from across the CSU. The Presidents'

Council is an advisory body to the Board of Directors.

PRTB = Pre-retirement Reduction in Time Base.

Re-openers = Refers to contract provisions that the CSU management and CFA negotiate after the contract is settled. In the most recent contract (2014-2020 with extension), CFA had a re-opener on salary after the first year of the contract. That re-opener led to a 7.1% salary increase for all faculty.

RTP/TRP/PRT = Retention, Tenure, Promotion. Refers to the annual process on each campus during which tenure-track or tenured faculty are evaluated by their peers for retention (another probationary year), tenure (usually after six years), or promotion.

Sabbatical = A leave of absence with full or partial pay, depending on the length of the leave, to pursue research or writing activities.

SEIU = Service Employees International Union. Affiliate of CFA.

SSI = Service Salary Increase. See description in prior sections.