The Funding Gap

By Nancy Chadwick, Governing Board President

In 1978 passage of Proposition 13 shifted the control of community college funding from local districts to the state. AB 1725, passed in 1988, replaced the local property tax connection with a statewide calculation that combined property taxes, student fees and state general funds. AB 1725 also established a process for distributing these funds, a “revenue-allocation” method known as “program based funding.”

These two actions are the reason why each of the 72 community college districts receive a different amount of funding for each full-time-equivalent-student (FTES). In 2002-03, FTES amounts ranged from a low at Santa Monica of $3,540 and a high of $8,186 at West Kern. Palomar College was funded at $3,656. As a result of this inequitable situation, 57 districts were funded at less than the state average!

After years of concern, the Office of the Legislative Analyst in February 2000 finally recommended a more equitable funding structure. Various independent reviews since then, including the Dymally Task Force and the Holmes Report, supported a more appropriate FTES funding. The 57 “underfunded districts” caucus was formed to work together with other community colleges organizations to lobby the state legislature to equalize funding at the 90th percentile for the 57 districts that are below the state average.

Finally, in the 2004-05 budget, the Governor agreed to a three-year plan with $80 million over three years (total of $240 million) to achieve equalization. In that year, Palomar College’s FTES climbed to $3,784, which translated to $2,148,719 for the campus budget.

However, the second year of the 3-year plan got off-track in the 2005-06 budget. The second $80 million became $40 million, and finally dropped to only $30 million. Without the efforts of Senators Denise Ducheny and Dennis Hollingsworth, even the $30 million would not have been approved. The gap in student funding across the state now ranges from a low of $3,771 to a high of $8,186.

Without full equalization, the funding gap continues to widen. At least $130 million must be achieved in the 2006-07 budget to close the gap. This unfair disparity must end once and for all. All districts need to provide the same access to educational opportunities and a comparable investment in institutional quality for their students and local communities. We cannot and should not proceed to revise the “program-based” funding as proposed in Senator Scott’s bill, SB 361, until equalization provides equitable funding for the 57 underfunded districts. To do so will make the disparity even more profound.

Calendar of Events

- November 8 – Governing Board Meeting 6:00 pm in the Governing Board Room
- November 8 – Special Statewide Election
- November 11 – Veteran’s Day
- November 17 – General Classified Staff Meeting 2:00 pm in the Governing Board Room
Classified Spotlight –
Jeannette Martinez-Diaz

by Elaine Armstrong

There is approximately 500 classified staff working here at Palomar College. The Classified Spotlight will be an ongoing lighter side of the Classified Currents. The Classified Spotlight will help us get to know other classified staff working here at Palomar College. This month’s featured classified employee is Jeannette Martinez-Diaz.

Jeannette Martinez-Diaz is a senior office specialist for the TRIO/Student Support Services department. She started working at Palomar in June of 1991. She has worked in the PIC Center, Child Care Services, Educational Television, ESL department at the Escondido Center and now Jeannette works for the TRIO/Student Services Support office on the San Marcos campus.

I asked Jeannette to tell us a little bit about herself:

My hobbies are watching sunsets at the beach; dancing Salsa and Meringue as well as enjoying a cup of coffee with a good friend. I belong to Calvary Chapel in Vista, and I also enjoy reading the bible, praising and seeking God’s will for my life. I have an AA degree that I earned at Palomar College, and I am also pursuing a Bachelor degree in Accounting. I grew up in El Salvador, Central America, but I have been living in the USA for about 16 years now. I learned to love America and my heart is with its good people.

I really enjoy working at TRIO/SSS because I can be part of a student’s dream of pursuing his/her educational goals. TRIO/SSS is a federally funded program designed to increase the graduation and transfer rates of eligible students and assist in the transition from the community college, to a four-year university of the students’ choice.

I think that the simplest things in life are free and so rewarding. For example, a sincere smile, a genuine “Thank You”, the music of the pouring rain, etc...
Where We Stand
By Brian Engleman

It’s that time of year again. A time I like to call “the season of hypocrisy.” Get ready for shameless pleas for you to vote in either direction; actors pretending to be just like you in advertisements designed for mass appeal; along with half-truths, slippery slopes, and annoying – not to mention, far from clever – slogans.

With all the mudslinging that will take place over the next fifteen days or so, it’s a wonder that only half the country decides to abstain from voting. It’s enough to drive a voter Independent!

As a proud member of your union’s Political Action Committee (PAC), I’ve become quite aware of the issues, and the ramifications of certain measures on the ballot. There are a few propositions in the upcoming election that could impact our union, and our working conditions, quite significantly.

Often times, political recommendations and endorsements can feel as if we are being told how to vote. The PAC is very sensitive to this...
perception, and we have put much thought into trying to avoid doing just that. After all, your vote is your voice, and it is the whole of your values and interests that will affect which way you vote in the upcoming special election on November 8. No one could pretend to understand you enough to be able to tell you how to vote.

As a committee that serves the political interests of the union, however, PAC’s recommendations and endorsements can, and should, only take into account the interests of the union and the Classified Staff. Our endorsements in an election are meant to be a recommendation to you, if you would like to vote in a way that might benefit your own working conditions, and the union as a whole.

Through diligent research, discussion, and appraisal, the CCE PAC has determined that it is in the economic interests of our members to vote NO on Propositions 74, 75, 76, 77, and 78; and, that it is equally beneficial to vote YES on Propositions 79 and 80.

CFT State Council Meeting Report
By Ernie Carson

The September 24 CFT State Council meeting was held at the Oakland Airport Hilton Hotel and it was very well attended. As with every state council meeting the various CFT divisions held their respective divisional meetings the previous evening. The CCE division meeting was convened at 5:00 by CCE president Robert Chacanaca. During the meeting various Locals reported on what they were doing to support the CFT’s position on Propositions 74, 75, and 76. Local presidents reported that the buttons, flyers, cards, and Working Families Took Kits have been very valuable in educating members of their respective bargaining units. One Local had a union awareness week where all of the stewards and building reps handed out cards stating what the union has done and that they are proud to be union. The cards were given to members and non-members. They also gave buttons and t-shirts to their administrators.

A few locals expressed concern about Membership Suite because a lot of members are not getting mailings from the CFT and AFT. Margaret Shelleda, assistant to the CFT president, stated that the mailing addresses used by the CFT and AFT are only as valid/current as what’s contained in Membership Suite. Locals were urged to keep it up to date. Locals were also urged to keep retirees in Membership Suite.

Mike Nye, CFT Secretary Treasurer, reported that the CFT is still running on a very tight budget and thanked all Locals that were sending in their per cap payments on time because this really helps with the cash flow. Regarding per caps Mike also reminded everyone that their Local’s September per cap bill also included a $3.00/per member dues increase. This was the 2-year temporary dues increase for the CFT Education Defense Fund that was unanimously approved at the CFT Convention this past March.

Mike also urged Locals that were in the process of implementing agency fee to please try and complete this as soon as possible. If local leaders have any questions please don’t hesitate to contact him.

State Council Meeting (Saturday, September 24)

CFT president, Mary Bergan, spoke on the Teamsters, etc. disaffiliation situation with the AFL-CIO. During the recently held AFL-CIO convention a 4 cent per cap increase was discussed. The 4 cent increase would go to help various central labor councils that are being financially impacted by their loss of the Teamsters, UFCW, AFSCME, etc. Mary noted that attendance at State Council, CFT Division meetings, CFT convention, and other state meetings is not limited to Local presidents and executive board members. Any dues paying member can represent their Local and she encouraged us to carry the message back to our respective locals.

David Binder spoke on a poll that his company did regarding CFT union member’s perceptions of how President Bush and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger are performing on their jobs. While the majority of those polled gave the president and governor very low ratings, the results were still very interesting.

Regarding the propositions, organized labor is fearful that if Prop 75, “Pay Check Deception”,
had about 10 participants. The all-day training was conducted by Fred Glass, CFT Director of Communications, and Steve Hopcraft of Hopcraft Inc., who handles public relations for the CFT.

All of the attendees were given lots of documentation on the propositions along with special talking points. When speaking before the public we were cautioned to always stay on message and don’t get sidetracked with unrelated issues. One valuable portion of the training consisted of video taped interviews with each of the class participants. Fred played the role of a sometimes hostile media person and we had to respond to his questions on the propositions. At the conclusion of each interview the recorded session was replayed and we had a chance to critique and see how we would react and respond under pressure. I will have a chance to utilize my training on Sunday October 23 when I will be speaking on the propositions at a church in Southeast San Diego. My goal will be 1) to educate the audience and distribute literature and cards on these issues that will impact working families, and 2) clear up any misconceptions about these 3 critical propositions.

Amy, from the AFT, said that between now and November 8, the AFT will be assisting the CFT with phone calls to local members and agency fee payers regarding Props 74, 75, and 76. CFT State Council Meeting Report, con’t from pg 4

CFT Media Training, con’t from pg 3

passes then the Governor will put his PERS/STIRs pension plans before the voters in 2006 because Prop 75 will severely limit the union’s ability to use dues money to fight him on this political issue. Earlier this year labor unions (education, firefighters, nurses, police, etc.) joined together to educate the public about what was really behind the governor’s proposals and he eventually abandoned his pension revision plans. If Prop 75 passes we won’t be able to use dues money to fight him next year. Prop 75 not only will place additional restrictions on state and national political spending it will also have an effect on our ability to elect governing board members.

Happy Halloween from the Communications Committee