



Reflections

Now that I have completed my first year as President of the LACCD Administrators' Association, I have begun to reflect on our accomplishments. We had a highly successful year. One of my goals was to garner respect from District Senior Staff and our Board members; to achieve relevance for the work we do and our commitment to serve. With the help of your officers and the negotiations team, we have begun to get that respect. Our contract negotiations were a huge success—again thanks to the negotiations team. Many long days were spent in an attempt to clarify vague language and to improve the financial and emotional well-being of our Unit members. The grid outlining our accomplishments is listed at the end of the article.

The District's lack of competitive stance in recruiting and retaining administrators was one of the primary issues driving negotiations. Salary studies indicated that we were not competitive with surrounding districts and had become a revolving door for new Unit members who left for better salaries and vacation within a year of their hire. By meeting with individual Board members, we were able to bring these concerns forward and gain their support. We were pleasantly surprised to find Board members shared our concerns, especially with regard to the large number of Unit members who will be retiring in the next six years and the difficulties the District will face in filling their vacant positions. Board members listened to our concerns and acted to collapse our salary steps, retroactive to July 1, 2008. (Please refer to the 2008-2009 Salary Steps at the end of the article.) Steps 1-5 have been combined and collapsed to Step 1. Steps 15-20 have been combined and collapsed to Step 15. The remaining steps reflect the higher, adjusted amounts.

We also got back one year's accrual for vacations. It now takes four years to reach the 24 day maximum vacation limit. We were able to obtain a Wellness Day, the only requirement for which is to give the immediate supervisor two days' notice. How the time is spent is up to each Unit member, and no proof of any kind needs to be provided. However, if you don't use it, you will lose it at the end of each academic year.

We modified the evaluation process to make it an objective snapshot of the things we do well and those we may need to improve upon. Supervisors will be required to communicate with our Unit members and provide guidance if, in their estimation, there are areas that require improvement. Benchmarks will be required for review and re-evaluation, and step increases will not be tied to performance. Another change: if Unit members are not evaluated by their supervisors within 90 days of their anniversary dates, a step-increase will occur and their yearly evaluations will automatically default to "satisfactory" and be noted in their personnel file.

This summer, we re-activated the Political Action Committee (PAC). The Committee's first task was to develop recommended funding guidelines, which were distributed to all of the Unit members

by private email and were accepted. The Committee has recommended that we support Miguel Santiago and Angela Reddock in their quest to be elected to the Board in March. Currently, they are serving the remaining terms of former trustees who moved on, and wish to be elected to their own terms. We will also be recommending support of two additional trustees, Kelly Candaele and Nancy Pearlman.

We will be participating in a task force with District HR to define levels of responsibility between Dean, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean, and to prevent our Unit from becoming a “dumping ground” for positions that have not gone through the appropriate District hiring process. This process should have been completed in our 2002 to 2005 contract and again in the 2005-2008 agreement. This lapse was a contract violation that is now, finally, going to be remedied.

Your officers will be participating in monthly consultative sessions with the District HR Department to share ongoing Unit concerns and to resolve them. Our quarterly meetings have been well-attended. My plan is to continue inviting Board members to each meeting and to provide an informative session with District personnel that will provide useful information and guidance to our members.

Although our accomplishments are many, they only begin to scratch the surface. We have much more work to accomplish. As the song says, “We’ve only just begun...” To continue improving upon the groundwork that has been laid, I am asking all of you to contribute to this process. Whether you participate in one activity or become totally immersed in the work yet to be accomplished, I am asking all of you to help in some fashion. We do not get the release time that other union officers and members get. Plus, we are extremely busy doing our jobs, which are becoming more and more demanding with the state budget shortfall. The officers cannot do it all; we need your help!

I want to thank all of you for your support during my inaugural year and for your patience while I learned to navigate the District hierarchy from a union leader’s perspective. I want to especially thank the following people for the enormous amount of time spent and the successful roles they played in moving us forward.

Bobbi Kimble, negotiations team member, who has been the lynch pin in the still evolving incorporation process; and for her valuable perspective and insight. She also serves on the PAC.

Annie Goldman, negotiations team member, who worked with me during Summer 2007 to read the existing contract word-for-word and to initiate the process of re-opening deficient articles, prior to the start of formal negotiations.

Royston Thomas, negotiations team member, who has been an important member of the JLMBC (Joint Labor Management Benefits Committee) and protects our interests. He also has an historical perspective on issues which have been extremely useful and downright entertaining.

Will Marmolejo who has been our able-bodied Treasurer and PAC member. He makes my job easier with his sound organizational skills.

Earnestine Robertson, negotiations team member, who fought hard and passionately for the rights of the campus Unit members she represents during the negotiations.

Nina Malone, negotiations team member, who provided valuable historical information regarding union issues which have remained unresolved and was a vocal participant during our team caucus sessions.

Merrill Eastcott, our resident Math wizard who helped us navigate the step collapse maze.

Mercy Yanez, our new PAC Chair, has volunteered to become active in our Unit by serving at the helm of this important committee.

Raul Cardoza, new PAC member, has committed to participating for the new academic year.

Special thanks go to *Celina Alcalá*!!!!!! She provided the comparative district salary grid that supported our presentation to the Board members regarding the District's unequal pay scale. This document was a true eye-opener.

Last, but certainly not least, *Bill Davis*, Business Agent, Teamsters Local 911, for his guidance. He urged the team to meet with individual board members over breakfast to present our concerns, and picked up the tab. These meetings turned out to be crucial to our success.

I look forward to another exciting year as we work together to further solidify our standing in the LACCD.