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California State University Employees Union/SEIU 2579

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March 2010



March 4, 2010

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NOTE: This issue went to press just as layoff notices were being announced at CSU East Bay and the Chancellor's Office. Please check the CSUEU web site, www.csueu.org, for the latest news.

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Furloughs— how are they working out for us?

A mid-term check-up yields mixed results

By Leeanne Bowes, Sonoma State University

When we began furloughs, we all had ideas on how things might go. Less pay, 24 days that we need to take off in the next year, and, we were told, 10% less work. How would this affect the students, as faculty were getting furloughed as well? Did the Chancellor have the answers to all these questions? How could we manage these closures when we work with the everyday demands of education?

The cut in pay is hard, and it is coming to light that we should have been equally worried about workload. With furlough days, vacations, sick days and work environment limitations, this has become a big problem.

On one campus during a Unit 5 night meeting, members did not relate their frustrations over the lower pay. Instead, their frustrations were with not obtaining the supplies they needed to get their job done. Budgets have been cut, leaving departments with less money for supplies. The custodial staff were frustrated that management had not given them a plan for the challenges they were experiencing with skeleton crews.

Employees are finding their workloads not being reduced—just the opposite. While we are working and getting paid 10% less, the work is not reduced by 10%. Temps have been let go, and permanent staff are expected to pick up the workload. Foot traffic is not decreasing, neither are clients' and managers' expectations. Students,

faculty, and administrators are angry that we can't get the work done quickly enough. In turn, the stress levels of our employees are rising.

One member did the math to quantify the impact on her department. During Spring 2009 the office had a temporary part-time person who worked 24 hours a week. Due to budget cuts the temp was let go. Fall semester furloughs meant 16 hours less a month for the full time employee. The loss of the temp employee resulted in another

96 hours less per month. The total loss equaled 112 hours a month. The employee's work was not reduced by 10%: in fact, it was increased. She is now expected to get 256 hours worth of work done in 144 hours. What is wrong with this picture?

Students are also affected. Some have had to move back home, tuition is higher, work hours have

been cut, and some of them have lost their jobs completely. Faculty also voted to furlough. Their furlough day might fall on a day they have office hours, leaving students with less contact hours than in the past. Some faculty are cutting classes short or dropping lecture subjects. One student said, "Faculty are trying to cram so much into a class that students are not able to absorb it all, and grades are going down."

Not everything is negative with furloughs. They have brought us closer by creating bonds of those under common

See "Furloughs Working Out?" on page 2

"Faculty are trying to cram so much into a class that students are not able to absorb it all, and grades are going down."

How are CSU Staff Members Handling Furloughs?

"I am out of the office today..."

By Donna Melendez, CSU Los Angeles

The effects of furloughs on staff members vary widely from individual to individual, with some staff feeling the "pain" more than others. Likewise, public messages regarding furlough days vary from campus to campus, as do implementations of the agreement.

Staff members on the CSU Los Angeles (CSULA) campus, for example, were issued a calendar last fall by the university's president indicating the dates he had designated as "furlough days." The calendar referenced the days as either "administrative days," with the campus being partially closed and some classes in session, or "state budget closure days," on which the campus is completely closed with the exception of campus police and information technology staff. An informational e-mail was also sent via the global campus system reiterating furloughs information.

CSULA's Public Affairs Office also circulated a message template to employees with instructions to post it on department doors, telephone voicemail, and out-of-office email. The message reads: "Due to the state and CSU budget crisis, I am out of the office on unpaid leave today and will return on (day). In the meantime, please contact your state legislators and tell them how important the CSU is and why they must fund it adequately to ensure California's future. Thank you." Similar messages have been distributed on other campuses.

CSULA employees have united to spread the message of saving the CSU. Various groups on campus have joined together and held rallies to voice their concerns. On October 14, 2009, a CSULA Union Labor Council rally featured California State Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico as a guest speaker. Torrico presented information regarding his Assembly Bill 656, which proposes additional funding for higher education via an oil severance tax. The well-attended rally was an expression of wide support for Torrico's bill and the future of the CSU. Action by CSU and other advocates helped this bill get committee approval recently, though its potency was subsequently severely diminished.

Last fall, Deborah Campbell, president of Cal Poly Pomona's CSUEU chapter, held a chapter meeting entitled, "Furlough 101 – The Basics," featuring the campus' director of payroll discussing the top 10 common questions commonly asked by staff, as well as Pomona chapter leaders informing staff members of their rights. Included was a discussion about using voicemail to inform the public regarding campus closures. A campus newspaper reporter from Cal Poly's campus newspaper, the Poly Post, attended the meeting, and a subsequent article on the meeting was featured in the campus newspaper.

At CSU Bakersfield, Wendy Gerhold, a Unit 7 member who works in the Facilities Management office, wrote new lyrics to the tune of Harry Belafonte's "Banana Boat Song":

Fur—lough! Fur—ur—ur—lough! (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!) Fur—lough! Fur—ur—ur—lough! (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!) California can't pay its bills! (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!) Thinks the furloughs will cure its ills! (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!) I cannot work today, 'cause it is my day off. (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!) Twice a month so I won't get a lay-off! (State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

See "Handling Furloughs" on page 4

President's Message

From the desk of Pat Gantt, CSUEU President



The Governor presented a New Year's surprise to Higher Education on January 8th with a state budget proposal that restores

\$305 million to the cuts from last year. The CSU campuses had been planning for another round of deep cuts up to that point in time. Everyone in the CSU, administration and unions, are now looking at the budget carefully to see what the level of restoration really means at the campus level. Do

we need furloughs at all? Is the threat of massive layoffs removed?

The budget process is long and tedious. Parts of the budget get cut all along the way and sometimes without warning. The CSU budget was cut in 2004 by \$80 million in the last hours of the budget process just before the Governor signed it. In that case there was no warning or public discussion or debate.

It is critical that every CSU employee contact their legislator and tell them about the impacts of the cuts from the current year. While the economy has not yet fully rebounded, the deep cuts from last year, if continued, will drastically affect the

ability of the CSU to meet its mission and serve the students and return to California a prepared workforce and productive society members. The comparison of the Higher Education spending versus prison spending has put CSU funding on the front burner of the budget process. We must all try to keep it there and remind every Californian of the impacts of the cuts.

The CSUEU will continue to research and fight to restore funding for the system and eliminate the need for furloughs or deep budget cuts.

Please visit our web site regularly at www.csueu.org to see how you can help in the process to restore funding for the CSU.



Working for Your Future

CSUEU campaigns for budget relief

By Ray Finnell, CSU Bakersfield

One thing has become clear recently: in order to survive, we can't sit back and expect others to fight our budget battles in Sacramento. The Alliance for the CSU was the first step in working as a united front of management, faculty, staff, and students on lobbying for full CSU funding. Smaller group efforts are underway at the grassroots level. CSUEU is involved with several ventures that focus on convincing key legislators of higher education's worth in today's society. Each of us can play a major role in these efforts. Here are some ways you can get involved:

CSUEU's CapWiz program gives employees the power to contact their legislators with a few keystrokes. As the first furlough days approached, we sent a barrage of e-mails using this tool. We need to continue doing that the day before every furlough day at our respective campuses. As the financial impact of furloughs becomes more apparent, it's important to personalize your message according to your own level of hardship and your observations of degraded services. To use CapWiz, on a computer connected to the Internet, go to the CapWiz URL: <http://capwiz.com/calcea/issues/> and click the link for your campus.

Rallies and informational activities help us get the word out to the public. Watch for announcements or contact your chapter leaders about upcoming events. Voice your opinion by carrying a sign or handing out information. Students are eager to learn what's going on and how they can help determine their educational future. Talk to students and guide them to news and action sites on campus and on the Internet.

Contact your legislators at their local offices. Even in districts that traditionally don't put education at the top of priority lists, legislators and their aides

will listen to voters. Incumbents are more willing to listen, since 2010 is an election year. Tell them your concerns about the public service that you are proud to provide, how the budget has affected it, and why higher education is so important.

We need to protect ourselves for coming years.

Spread the word to friends, neighbors, family, and your community. They need to understand the CSU is dying, and their messages to the legislature and governor can help save CSU. Talking points and persuasive facts can be found at: www.csueu.org under the headings "State Budget News" and "Other State Budget Info." Send a message to the Governor by following the E-March link from CSUEU's home page. Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper. Quote facts from CSUEU's E-News: <http://www.csueu.org/Links/CSUEUENews-Archive/tabid/577/Default.aspx>

Many employees post budget situation and anti-furlough signs on their office doors, in e-mail out-of-office notices on furlough days, and on their voicemail greetings. The purpose is to

inform others of the impact the budget is having on CSU services. For examples, see the accompanying article, "How are CSU Staff Members Handling Furloughs?"

Join CSUEU statewide officers at CSU Board of Trustees meetings. The schedule is posted at: <http://www.calstate.edu/bot/>. CFA and CSUEU chapters sometimes pool their resources to provide transportation; check with your local leaders.

CSUEU hosts a Lobby Day every spring in Sacramento that features training sessions, visits to legislators' offices, and a reception. Chapters send a limited number of people to these events for face-to-face contact with decision-makers. Check with your chapter president for information.

The Alliance for the CSU is still active. One recent campaign is a shared effort with state Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico (20th District, Fremont), who has revived AB 656, the oil severance tax bill. Torrico visited several CSU campuses in October and boosted support for the bill, proceeds from which would go to higher education. Learn more about the bill and show your support at: <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a20/mainpage.aspx>

Our California public universities are in severe trouble. The efforts of CSU, UC, and community college activists may well have convinced Governor Schwarzenegger to propose better budgets for education. But the deal isn't done yet. Action on our own behalf may tip the balance toward restoring the CSU to its former stature. It might be uncomfortable to do some of the above, but what's the alternative? What harm can come from trying? More importantly, what harm can come from not trying?

The Cost of Furloughs

Do furlough programs achieve their goals?

By Steve Sloan, San Jose State University

Those of us who work for the state are all too familiar with the hardships that furloughs impose on families. We're also aware of the impact of furloughs, reduced class sessions and increased fees, on students. But, do furloughs work?

They are designed to save money and reduce layoffs. They may save some jobs, but do they really save money? According to a variety of recent studies and articles, it is possible that state furloughs do not save much money. In a recent edition of the online journal California Progress Report, David Greenwald of the UC Berkeley Labor Center said that state furloughs save California's general fund only 12 cents for every dollar cut in wages.

Our sister union, SEIU Local 1000, represents 95,000 of the 193,000 state workers covered under the furlough program. Many of these workers are furloughed three days per month, a 14 percent pay cut.

In a recent policy brief, "The High Cost Of Furloughs," UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education Chair Ken Jacobs wrote, "Whether imposed on employees paid from state, federal, or special funds, furloughs impact the broader economy in multiple ways. First, any reduction in pay is a reduction in spending in the local economy and will have a multiplier effect, resulting in private sector job loss and subsequent loss of tax revenues."

He added, "It is poorly designed, if the goal is to provide savings to the general fund. Key design problems include furloughing state workers in revenue-generating positions, continued accumulation of pension and benefit debt, and inclusion of workers whose salaries are paid by the federal government and other special funds, in addition to the general fund."

While the tool may be popular and widely used, that doesn't make it effective or the best choice.

—Dr. John Sullivan

Even some conservatives question furloughs. In a post titled "Employee Furloughs Can Be a Bad Alternative to Layoffs" in the employee-recruiting forum ERE.net, SFSU Professor John Sullivan, PhD, wrote, "While the tool may be popular and widely used, that doesn't make it effective or the best choice."

Sullivan cites many reasons for this conclusion, including productivity loss, morale decline over loss of income and increased workload, increased employee stress, higher error rates, angry customers, possible lawsuits over furloughs, loss of good employees who react to furloughs by leaving, and a general decrease in innovation.

Sullivan said, "It's hard to plan ahead and think of innovations when your job security is up in the air."

These and other factors are considerations that may have to be taken into account next year if the furlough question comes up again.

Furloughs Working Out?

Continued from page 1

hardship. Union membership is at an all-time high. Steward trainings are filled to capacity. On one campus the number of certified stewards has tripled since June. Management, it seems, is working closer with the unions. Businesses are offering furlough discounts. Coworkers are helping each other. We are reaching out to one another.

We might be wise to think now about the big "ifs." If next year's budget isn't better, would we do this again if asked? I don't know: members I have spoken with are leaning more

towards the no box on this issue. 80 percent of us felt strongly last July that we wanted to save jobs and we gave the Chancellor time to work this out. If funding doesn't improve, will he come up with solutions? He has a few more months... will it be enough? What are the alternatives if furloughs aren't workable?

The big hope for the CSU is that state leaders will agree to fund higher education at the level needed. If that happens, the other "ifs" will go away.

Quotables

"I strongly urge you to recommend to the Trustees that the CSU allocate these restored funds (from the Governor's proposal) to remove the need for the furlough program when the current agreement expires this summer. That will allow us jointly to bring the workforce back to full operations to serve the students and provide a quality education."

—CSUEU President Pat Gantt to Chancellor Reed, Jan. 21, 2010



Workplace Bullies

Close to half the workforce has either been a victim of bullying or has witnessed it.

By Annel Martin, CSU San Bernardino

Do any of the following situations sound familiar?

- Coworkers refusing to help you when asked
- Being given the silent treatment
- Rude or disrespectful treatment by others in meetings when your ideas are expressed
- Being yelled or shouted at
- Someone interfering with or sabotaging your work
- Being put down in front of others
- Being denied a raise or promotion without a valid reason
- Others staring, glaring or using nonverbal communication to intimidate you

Well, you are not alone. The situations listed above are some characteristics of a workplace bully.

Workplace bullying has been defined as "the tendency of individuals or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior against a co-worker." According to Wikipedia, some types of bullying tactics are: verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical, or humiliation, among others.

A 2007 Workplace Bullying Institute-Zogby survey found approximately 13% of U.S. employees are currently being bullied, 24% have been bullied in the past, and 12% of the U.S. workforce has witnessed workplace bullying. Close to half of

the American workforce has either been a victim of bullying or has witnessed some type of abuse to a co-worker.

Workplace bullying is harmful to productivity and efficiency. According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety Health (NIOSH), mental abuse among the workforce leads to a loss in employment (through sick leave and resignations) amounting to \$19 billion and a drop in productivity of \$3 billion (Sauter, et al., 1990).

Employees who are dealing with a workplace bully experience long-lasting psychological effects. Many employees are forced to leave their jobs because of continued mistreatment by a supervisor and/or by co-worker(s). Workplace bullying is reported across all cultures, (W.B.I., 2007). With the current deterioration of the CSU budget, this type of abuse is expected to increase. Many researchers agree this is a possibility, especially in tight economic times.

At this time, federal and state laws on workplace bullying are non-existent. However, as of April 2009, 16 states have proposed some type of legislation to combat this issue. California's proposed legislation died a number of years ago, according to VP for Representation Russell Kilday-Hicks. "With a bully in the governor's chair, it wasn't expected that the bill would get his signature," Kilday-Hicks said. "Hopefully our next governor will be able to recognize the need." As chair of Berkeley's Commission On Labor, Kilday-Hicks held public hearings on what he called "the epidemic of bullying" in American workplaces and helped pass a city council resolution on the issue.

Much work remains to be done to ensure employees receive proper protection against workplace bullies. CSUEU See "Workplace Bullies" on page 4



Interesting Times

Opinion from Russell Kilday-Hicks, VP for Representation

Have you ever heard the curse (cleverly disguised as a blessing): “May you live in interesting times”? It is a curious saying because living in “interesting times” can provide some fringe benefits—but only if we can rise to the challenges.

We are certainly cursed (and challenged) by the budget crisis. Looking back, our statewide and local chapter leaders met the challenge head on and our members made the right decision to direct the Bargaining Team to negotiate the furlough agreement. As much as I wish we didn’t have to go there at all—and even with all the problems of implementation that we experienced when the CSU “moved the goalposts” on us before the ink was even dry—averting for a time the 3,500 threatened layoffs was a worthy outcome.

Going forward, it’s important we all understand the bullet we dodged in the last fiscal year, if for nothing else than to leave our options open for dealing with future economic turmoil. If we don’t, unfortunate things can happen on both the union and the CSU sides that may work to limit our options.

For example, look at an incident that happened on the East Bay campus. When folks in BU 5 got news of the layoffs for BU 6 SETC (painters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, etc.)—the only union of the eight in the CSU to reject furloughs—a group of custodians walked off the job in protest and in solidarity.

We certainly need to respect their courage and their passion to take militant action. The trouble here is our actions can’t be self-defeating. We chose furloughs to avoid, for the most part, layoffs. Walking off the job is a “voluntary layoff,” going absent without leave (AWOL), a.k.a. quitting. Luckily, chapter leaders intervened so no one was fired. These employees are also angry with their union leaders and the membership super-majority vote (82 percent) for “selling out” by agreeing to furloughs in the first place.

This is a misunderstanding of what the furlough program accomplished. Accepting furloughs was not a concession to

Reed and the trustees but came out of looking at the bigger picture. We were given a bad choice. We picked the lesser evil: furloughs did less permanent damage to workers’ lives and to the institution as a whole. But we can’t end here.

The bottom line: we care deeply about our fellow workers, the real “union,” and the CSU and its mission. Accepting furloughs by the large majority we saw was hard evidence of this. Incapable of any larger vision, Reed and the trustees are merely managing the decline of the system. We acted to try and save it by taking a temporary cut. Now we have to work in community to make sure this downward trend, along with fee increases and cut programs, is reversed.

How do we change the choices they are giving us? We have to go after the forces that are making the trustees give us these choices. Those forces are the attack on the public sector. The real evil is a long-term drive to reject the very idea of public education being available to all comers. Of course, this is a denial of two things: the benefit to individuals by offering opportunity (often mischaracterized as a handout but an essential ingredient for democracy) and the economic benefit to California as a whole.

Here is the other silver lining: the mobilization that union leaders pulled off to confront the very real threat to our workforce was something to see. As a union, we are very new to this kind of action, including coalition building with faculty, students, and the larger community. Going forward, we need to get a lot better.

I understand that the Chinese character for crisis also implies opportunity. Just like the minority in power in the state legislature are not letting a perfectly good economic crisis go to waste, let’s not let this opportunity to come together stronger than ever go to waste either.

So, who is still thinking we are cursed? It may just be a blessing in disguise. Peace.



Great (Work) Expectations

A little realism can go a long way, with communication

By Nancy Kobata, CSU Fresno, Classification Committee Chair

“Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting the bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian.”

—Dennis Wholey, PBS host

Expectations! We all have them. We expect that people will be nice to us, that we’ll have good health, great marriages, faithful friends, and successful careers. But what do we do when life doesn’t live up to our expectations?

During the many meetings between managers and employees in which I have participated, I have been constantly made aware of the importance of expectations in our lives. Failure to communicate these expectations can lead to conflict—and suddenly you may have a disciplinary action or grievance in the making.

Everyone’s idea of the ultimate workplace expectation is different. Some managers expect that staff will always do what needs to be done without waiting to be asked. We, as staff, contribute our skills, knowledge, and commitment to the workplace, and, in return, we should expect to:

- Receive adequate training.
- Be treated fairly and with respect.
- Have rules, policies and changes in our duties explained.

- Be told what is expected of us.
- Be informed of changes that affect us directly before, rather than after, the fact.
- Have tolerable and safe working conditions.
- Be assigned a reasonable workload.
- Receive fair wages and benefits.
- Exercise a reasonable and appropriate amount of control over the work we do.
- Be given the opportunity to make suggestions and have them considered.
- Have our work fairly evaluated and be given credit for the work we do.

- Lack of recognition for work done.
- Incompatibility of work values between staff and management.
- Personality conflicts in the workplace that are difficult to resolve.
- Lack of a sense of belonging, acceptance, or importance as a person.

It’s almost as if some managers are saying, “Go ahead, try to figure out what I want. Don’t worry, I will let you know when you screw up.”

That’s why so many employees say to me, “If I don’t hear anything, I must be doing okay.” To their shock and amazement, many employees only discover the bad news at performance review time—or worse—when receiving a disciplinary notice. It is the responsibility of both employers and employees to communicate expectations to each other—especially if they want them to be met!

We are paid to do a job, as specified in our collective bargaining agreement, nothing more, nothing less. It is unrealistic for managers to expect more. On closer examination, most of the problems between labor and management can be boiled down to unrealistic expectations.

Reports of ever-increasing workloads, time pressures, deadlines, job stress, declining careers, feelings of insecurity, less emotional attachment to the workplace, and

See “Great Expectations” on page 4

Tales of overwork and exhaustion, mistrust and despair are not the ramblings of a few disgruntled workers who can’t keep pace.

Job dissatisfaction often occurs when these expectations are not met. Frustration and discontent commonly stem from:

- Poor communication between managers and employees, including a lack of feedback to employees about their work.
- A workload too heavy for a regular week.

2, 5, 7, 9: Bargaining Unit News

Items of statewide interest

The following reports from the Bargaining Unit Councils address issues and current news items from our diverse membership. After dealing with reduced paychecks, the impact of furloughs on workload seems to be the primary concern for most of us.

BU 2

Bargaining Unit 2 Chair Tessa Reese (San Diego) reports staggered furlough schedules were creating headaches for health center staff members statewide prior to the November agreement to exempt them from furloughs. Before the agreement, skeleton crews were left to mind the store and deal with overload when their co-workers took unpaid days off. Conversely, when the store-minders took their day off, the others faced overload due to more understaffing. Diminished services at the smaller campuses were routine on furlough days. One small-campus representative said, “We could administer Band-Aids, and that’s about it. We referred many students to the off-campus provider.” Vaccination campaigns on every campus against the burgeoning H1N1 virus compounded workload issues.

Reese and her BUC peers are working on bringing classification reviews to completion.

BU 5

From Bargaining Unit 5 Chair Sharon Cunningham (San Diego) comes news of recent threatened bumping at two campuses. A Public Employment Relations Board ruling allows SETC (Unit 6) employees who receive layoff notices to retreat to Unit 5 positions if they have achieved permanency in those positions prior to joining Unit 6. Those retreats triggered a domino effect, and some Unit 5 employees with fewer seniority points received layoff notices. Cunningham was outraged on behalf of the people she represents and vowed to fight every case to the fullest.

The good news is the effect was recently reversed on all campuses following CSUEU-initiated negotiations. Other cases are pending. Cunningham, proud of her fellow bargaining unit members, vows to pursue the cases fiercely.

BU 7

Little more than three months after being re-elected, longtime Bargaining Unit 7 Chair Annel Martin reluctantly had to step down after her position was reclassified into Bargaining Unit 9. Former Vice Chair Michael Brandt (San Luis Obispo) stepped up to the chair position, with April Webster (San Diego) becoming vice chair. Workload and classification issues are the focus of the council’s energies, and the furlough program has intensified those concerns. Being the largest bargaining unit, Unit 7 has more cases to deal with than the other bargaining units. Brandt and company have their plates full. On top of all that, one campus is undergoing a major reorganization of two of its four academic schools, which no doubt will cause increased scrutiny of the Unit 7 employees’ workloads and classifications.

BU 9

Bargaining Unit 9 Chair Rich McGee (San Bernardino) reports a disturbing statewide trend in under-classified new job openings.

“There have been several recent reports of technical jobs posted at the foundation level which involve system administration, data analysis or lead work assignments. These are not foundation level tasks! A foundation job is typically designed to be a bridge between a student assistant and a career-level campus position. A job at the foundation level requires only knowledge of key work terms and concepts; specific job knowledge is not required. Likewise, foundation employees must have constant, direct supervision.”

McGee urges all BU 9 employees to keep an eye on announcements and to report violations to their campus representatives immediately.

Another trend is exempt employee abuse during the furlough period. Thirty-two hours is the rule during furlough weeks, but that doesn’t mean non-furlough weeks can be overloaded past 40 hours to compensate.

That’s true for all employees. We agreed to accept a 10 percent pay cut in exchange for 10 percent less work. The CSU agreed to these conditions also. Report violations of the agreement to your campus representatives; part of our responsibility as union members is to watch each others’ backs as well as our own. And, as times get tougher, our vigilance must be stronger.

Keep in touch with your campus unit representative if you observe problems of any sort.

Communications Committee Spotlight

This term, the committee will explore how to best use each medium.

by Joseph Dobzynski Jr., CSU Channel Islands

The Communications Committee has been assembled and given its marching orders! The committee holds at least three meetings per year, normally timed with the Board of Directors meetings. It is tasked with developing and distributing University Employee, the very publication you are reading.

It also focuses on the collection and distribution of information to our membership in all its forms.

Communication channels are changing and expanding in today's increasingly connected environment. Micro-blogging (Twitter), social networking (Facebook), and portals (The

Activist) have joined the more traditional newsletters, flyers, websites, phone, and e-mail as different and effective modes of communications. This term, the committee will explore how to best use each medium, increase chapter communication, and streamline communications to meet challenges to our union.

The Communications Committee includes:

- **Ray Finnell (president, Chapter 310)**
Ray is chair of the committee and works as a performing arts technician at CSU Bakersfield. He is excited to work with what he terms "a new group of talented and dedicated people."
- **Leeanne Bowes (president, Chapter 304)**
Leeanne works in information technology at Sonoma State, providing computer support for staff and faculty. "Communications means getting the word out. It excites me that, in these challenging times, we are becoming stronger."
- **Joseph Dobzynski, Jr. (president, Chapter 324)**
Yours truly works in the Information Technology department at CSU Channel Islands as campus solutions lead for the campus CMS system (don't hate me for it!). I am excited to find better ways to communicate with members and expand my involvement with our union.
- **Annel Martin (activist, Chapter 320)**
Annel is an electronic medical records analyst at CSU San Bernardino and longtime CSUEU activist. She is looking forward to, as she puts it, "sharing experiences and supporting other committee members to ensure that member voices are heard."
- **Donna Melendez (secretary, Chapter 311)**
Donna works as an administrative support coordinator for the Civil Engineering Department at CSU Los Angeles. She sees her committee work as an opportunity to learn more about the union.
- **Jessica Post (president, Chapter 301)**
Jessica is a payroll/benefits representative at Chico State, handling new hire paperwork, customer support, and whatever else they throw her way. She is excited to work with other campuses to keep members informed throughout the state.
- **Steve Sloan (activist, Chapter 307)**
Steve is an information technology consultant and lecturer on new media at San Jose State University and a former newspaper photographer. He says he would "like to see the union have a communications strategy that evolves beyond the old metaphor of web, e-mail and print."
- **John Watson (communications officer, CSUEU Staff)**
John is assigned staff for the committee. He handles all communications for CSUEU, including newsletters, web sites, press releases, fact sheets, and e-mails. He admires the enthusiasm and skills within the new committee.

Communications have become more important as we meet the twin challenges of damaging economic times and fast-paced technology changes. It is easy

to lose the union message in the flurry of information that comes our way. However, this committee is well formed to ensure that everyone, from those on

the cutting edge to the technologically challenged, find useful information when they need it. **We are here for you!**

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Handling Furloughs

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President Nancy Kobata of Fresno's chapter has made a colorful, sarcastic door sign thanking Gov. Schwarzenegger, Senator Dean Flores, Senator Dave Cogdill, and Assembly Member Mike Villines for the severe budget reduction imposed upon the CSU.

Voice and e-mail messages and door signs acknowledging furloughs and their impacts can be found throughout the 23 campuses, including: "Today is a furlough day for me. I will be out of the office until the next business day, and I will return your call at that time. Sorry for the inconvenience."

Another sign seen on a CSU office door: "Due to severe cuts in state funding, today is a designated furlough day, when most offices are closed. Getting time off from work is usually considered a good thing—but not when it's unpaid and unwanted, no matter the circumstance. We (staff) will remain committed to and will be providing high quality of service to our students and will maintain a positive attitude through these difficult times."

Keep up the slogans, doors signs, and out-of-office AutoReply messages to remind the public why you are absent.

And keep CSUEU informed. We want to hear from you about how you handle furlough days! E-mail University Employee at rfinnell@calcsea.org with your furlough message stories.

FURLOUGH SONG

(Sung to the tune of Harry Belafonte's "Banana Boat Song")

Fur—lough! Fur-ur-ur—lough!

(State's in trouble so I have to stay ho-ome!)

Fur—lough! Fur-ur-ur—lough!

(State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

California can't pay its bills!

(State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

Thinks the furloughs will cure its ills!

(State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

I cannot work today, 'cause it is my day off.

(State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

Twice a month so I won't get a lay-off!

(State's in trouble so I have to stay home!)

Workplace Bullies

Continued from page 1

trains stewards and staff members, and counsels employees on what to watch for in the workplace. Employees should file complaints and immediately inform their manager and local union officer of any suspected harassment. Both employees and stewards should consult campus policies to determine whether their campus has a civility policy. After

all, CSU has a responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. Let us not keep silent on this issue.

For further help on workplace bullies, please see www.workplacebullying.org/ or www.worktrauma.org/ as well as your campus Human Resources department.

Great Expectations

Continued from page 4

less time and energy for the family are ever-increasing problems. Conditions like these—reflecting a pervasive, pessimistic view of the workplace and a sense that the daily norms have changed in a host of long-term, negative ways—are not going to disappear anytime soon.

These tales of overwork and exhaustion, mistrust and despair are not the complaints of a few disgruntled workers who cannot keep up with a fast-paced work environment, but more and more often they come from both long-term and new employees. Increasingly, they come from new employees hired to fill the void when those with historical knowledge of the university retire.

When did the rules and rewards of our workplace change? How do we maintain a positive, upbeat façade before students, all the while waiting for the axe to fall? One manager instructed an employee to "smile more often so that people would know how grateful she was to have a job."

As absenteeism, stress-related medical costs, high employee turnover and poor morale become widespread, the CSU may find that it has exhausted and alienated its human capital: staff and faculty who were once one of its greatest resources.

How do we turn this around? We turn this around with communication, communication, and more communication! I know that may seem like an overused word, but, until we learn to communicate our expectations to one another, we will continue on this downward spiral of unrealistic expectations.

Set realistic expectations for your supervisor. Tell your supervisor—respectfully and tactfully—when his/her expectations of you are unrealistic.

None of us will ever receive as much praise and acknowledgment as we expect for a job well done, so learn to give yourself the praise and recognition that you deserve! Do not hesitate to apply for in-class progressions, reclassifications, and, whenever possible (once a year), in-range progressions. Know your rights under the terms of our contract. Don't be afraid to let managers know when they are violating one or more of those terms.

Union activists are here to help facilitate that communication, to help us develop and reach realistic expectations, and to protect our rights.

YOUR UNION



NEEDS YOU

AND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TOO!

Your CSU Employees Union needs your help to keep you informed. Register your email address today and you will be able to stay up-to-date on the CSU and the budget.

Go online now: www.csueu.org/register

