

FALL 2009 REFERENDUM

REFERENDUM DISCUSSION:

The following are faculty responses emailed to afa@santarosa.edu from santarosa.edu email accounts with subject line, *REFERENDUM*:

DATE	
11/16/09	<p>I appreciate Warren "setting the record straight." But in regard to this: "It's also worth noting that when both adjunct and regular faculty votes were tallied in aggregate, the vote was 48.5% Yes 51.5% No," I have to note that some of us, myself included, did not vote in this survey because of the separate issues on which regular and adjunct faculty were being polled. We are supposed to be one union, not two -- the separate representation in AFA seems to be manifesting itself more now than I've seen in the past few years, and frankly I didn't feel that I could support that. I don't think making an aggregate of the two separate polls is really valid.</p> <p>I can't express how disappointed I am that the regular faculty are so unwilling to support their hourly colleagues. If we end up with an "everyone for him or herself" mentality, that will be as severe a crisis as the budget cuts, and could leave longer lasting scars. So now it is up to those of us with only hourly salaries, facing a large paycut as well as load reductions (33 percent, in my case), to shoulder the burden so that some of our colleagues have basic medical coverage. I don't use the program, as I fortunately have access to other insurance, but of course I will vote yes on the referendum. I expect that it will pass; maybe those of us closer to the edge have a great sense of gratitude, in the "there but for the grace of whatever go I."</p> <p>As someone said to me recently, if tenure makes you callous about your colleagues, I guess I'm glad I'm not ever in line to get it.</p> <p>Juli McDermott Adjunct</p>
10/12/09	<p>Adjuncts, please join AFA as you are paying the dues anyway, but if you do not join you can not vote. Some full time employees think adjuncts should take a larger cut in salary than others. This is not fair. We did not cause the problem, therefore, it is not just our problem to correct the situation. ALL employees at the college should be cut in equal percentage to correct the economic problem at the college. We</p>

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	<p>should be voting as a unit not as separate groups. Let us support each other and ALL EMPLOYEES TAKE THE SAME CUT IN SALARY. Jo Caulk</p>
10/28/09	<p>ALL FACULTY ASSOCIATION SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE EXCERPT FROM OCTOBER 28, 2009 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (pending appvl) MEMBER CONCERNS</p> <p>AFA Referendum. Several faculty members in attendance expressed their concerns about the referendum. Warren Ruud and Janet McCulloch responded to the concerns. Cheryl Dunn explained the lengthy development and review process that AFA engaged in, which resulted in the final questions and background pieces for each initiative. A summary follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member Concern: The wording is biased and the questions could have been phrased more neutrally. Why is the faculty being asked to take permanent steps for an economic situation that's temporary? Older faculty will be retiring soon and will be replaced by younger faculty lower on the salary schedules with fewer health problems. There's a possibility of getting federal stimulus money, and Congress is trying to do something about health care. <p>AFA Response: Districts across the state are moving in the direction of premium cost-sharing. There won't be any COLA for the next four or five years. Medical costs are going up on the magnitude of 16 - 20% every year. The gap between costs and revenue needs to be closed somehow in the immediate future. There is less money on the table every year — some will have to be partitioned off to benefits and salary and some to programs. The question that AFA is asking regular faculty is, "How much do you value fully funded premiums?" If faculty want to continue to have fully funded medical premiums, there is no doubt that there will be consequences in the form of less money somewhere else. Not pointing out these consequences would skew the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member Concern: What amount of dollars does the District need to cut for the next contract year? Other than the information about the Adjunct Medical Benefits Program (AMBP), no specifics are given. Does AFA plan to present more information? <p>AFA Response: Since the beginning of the State budget crisis, AFA has sent out at least 17 lengthy emails to faculty and</p>

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hosted three budget presentations. According to Vice President of Business Services Doug Roberts, the current (conservative) estimate of the budget shortfall is \$8 million, and it is expected that in January there will be another \$4 – 5 million in cuts. The District's general reserves are very low. Categorical programs have taken severe cuts, and most likely won't be restored until 2012 or 2013. The federal stimulus money, which is not necessarily directed at the categorical programs, has been reduced from \$140 million to \$35 million statewide. There is a \$1.1 million hole in the hourly salary schedules. The longer AFA postpones the decision regarding where reductions will be made, the larger the hit will be to those people who are still working. If the regular faculty votes no on the questions related to salary reductions, adjunct faculty could be looking at a 5 – 7% pay cut. For the questions that deal with redirection of salary to fund the Adjunct Faculty Medical Benefits Program or to mitigate cuts to the enhanced hourly schedules, faculty members can look up what the impact on their salaries would be on the AFA Website. The two questions related to the regular faculty Early Retirement Option and retiree stipends are not slated for an immediate decision, as an actuarial study will need to be performed to determine costs before any changes are negotiated. AFA is interested in holding onto as much as possible in terms of salary and benefits and is trying to balance the needs of all faculty. At the same time, AFA is committed to interest-based bargaining principles, and, therefore, a positional stance in negotiations is not an option.

- **Member Concern:** Several regular faculty members expressed support for ways to help mitigate the reduction in hourly schedules. At the same time, they expressed discomfort taking a 3 – 5% pay cut when some of their adjunct faculty colleagues have well-paying full-time jobs outside of SRJC. One faculty member remarked that for the 1,000 adjunct faculty members who work at SRJC, there are 1,000 different stories, ranging from those who are the sole support of their families to those who are retired from full-time jobs and have returned to teach one class.

AFA Response: Means testing is not possible.

- **Member Comment:** Thank you for putting this referendum together. I like the overview and hope that we can concentrate on the spirit of what the proposals are designed to do, which is to provide money in the places where it does the most good, helping the people who are in the most need (e.g., adjunct

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faculty who can't get medical insurance elsewhere).

- Member Concern: Could something like Bridging the Doyle Scholarship be set up, where faculty could put money into the Foundation to support programs?

AFA Response: The most recent Tentative Agreement included an MOU that provides faculty with the option for a voluntary deduction from their paychecks to be directed towards any instructional program of their choosing. AFA has sent out several announcements about this option. A form is posted on AFA's Website at:

www.santarosa.edu/afa/Forms/voluntary_reduction.pdf .

- Member Comment: The faculty has already given up 0.565% of salary, which was not directed to any specific area. If everyone shared equally in the salary cuts and in maintaining the AMPB, it would mean a 3.5% cut for all — 1% for each group to maintain the AMPB, and 2.5% for each group to address the categorical program reductions in the enhanced hourly salary schedules. The alternative could be a 0% reduction for regular faculty and a 7% reduction in salary for adjunct faculty.

- Member Concern: The possibility of another furlough day has been mentioned. Could all or part of the PDA days be furloughed?

AFA Response: The problem with furloughing PDA and Flex days is that they are funded by the State, so it is not as efficient to target those days as it would be to target other days, such as New Faculty Orientation Day and Commencement Day. SRJC is still the only college in the State where the regular faculty has taken a pay reduction because of the budget crisis. The majority of districts are taking money off of the adjunct salary schedules only in response to the two categorical program cuts.

- Member Concern: If we take a salary reduction, we can earn that back over time; however, we would never make up a reduction in health benefits.

AFA Response: That's true. One alternative first step would be to increase the copays or what the health insurance industry calls "user fees." People who go to the doctor use the services more and, therefore, would pay more.

- Member Concern: I understand the first two options under

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Regular Faculty Initiative #3 (premium cost-sharing). With the first option (a fixed percentage of salary), if I am single with no dependents, I would pay the same amount as someone who is married and has 8 dependents. With the second option (a fixed percentage of the premium), the person with 8 dependents would pay more than me. I don't understand the third option. AFA Response: Many other districts utilize the third option, which is to decide on a fixed amount of money (e.g., the Kaiser rate for single, double, and family) that they will pay for each regular faculty member. If the faculty member wants Blue Shield, s/he would have to pick up the extra cost. With SISC, Mediacash is not an option because they do not allow faculty to opt out of the group coverage. The downside of the third option is that single, healthy people are more likely to take the Kaiser option, and older, sicker people are more likely to take the more expensive plan, which would ruin our experience and rates would go up. Another downside to the third option is that there would be no incentive for the District to negotiate a cheaper price for the more expensive plan option. Money that could be going on the salary schedule is going to pay for other costs like health care.

- Member Concern: How often would that pre-determined base or benchmark be renegotiated?

AFA Response: If that option were ever negotiated to be the agreement, the rate would be renegotiated every year. There isn't a lot of competition among carriers, doctors, and hospitals in northern California. There is still a real advantage to having competing plans in one district. Districts that go to one plan only see their rates skyrocket. A district in Marin went to Kaiser only and saw a 39% increase in premiums.

- Member Concern: Does voting yes on Regular Faculty Initiative #1 contribute to the AMBP or just salary?

AFA Response: Just salary. Voting yes on R4 would contribute to the AMBP if a majority of adjunct faculty also votes yes on A1.

- Member Concern: Why isn't the District using its reserves?

AFA Response: Our district doesn't have a lot in reserves. A lot of schools with larger reserves and better prospects are spending off their reserves, hoping it's a two to three-year problem. Reserves are one-time money. Hiring with one-time reserve money and committing to paying someone 30 years out is not financially wise. Also, Sonoma County's high schools are

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not generating students like other districts, and it will take SRJC longer to rebound from this economic crisis than other districts through State growth funding. SRJC is no longer considered to be a "growth" district.

- Member Concern: Does AFA have any influence with the District in terms of the use of the reserves?

AFA Response: AFA monitors the District's budget on a regular basis; however, the Board is in charge of the financial health of the District. In the past, people have complained that the reserves were too high. The District was banking money to build the buildings. Then the bond money came in. Our district never did recover from the 2003-04 budget crisis. AFA has negotiated well, and the District has not put a lot of money in reserves over the course of the last several years. SRJC doesn't have the reserves that other districts have. Many districts are going to weather the storm this year by spending down reserves, but not next year.

At the conclusion of Member Concerns, Janet McCulloch reviewed a spreadsheet about enrollment that was shared at a recent Budget Advisory Committee meeting. She explained the history of budget cuts at the state level that led the District to the target goal of 20,436 FTES. For enrollment above that number the District gets no money, and falling below that number would result in the loss of \$1 million. The District can borrow and carry forward FTES from summer. The credit schedule has taken a small hit compared to the non-credit schedule. The entire non-credit Unit B schedule (the Seniors Program represented by CFT) has been decimated. After making dramatic cuts to the Spring 2010 schedule last week, departments were just told to add courses back in. AFA is trying to preserve Article 16 rights to ensure that the restored classes go to those who have assignment priority based on like-load and date of hire, not as new or increased assignments which can be assigned however a chair chooses. The District's goal for Spring 2010 is 497.5 FTEF, which is based on a certain ratio of FTEF to FTES. The target could still move. The District needs to decide if it's worth chasing unfunded growth in order to maintain the base allocation. The Student Information System cannot adequately account for non-credit positive attendance; however, it is the case that non-credit courses are less expensive than credit courses and the District may choose to increase those offerings. Multi-college districts receive higher base allocations, but have the increased costs of hiring a

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	chancellor and setting up
10/28/09	<p>Initiative R3:</p> <p>This was a difficult question to form since we do not have any clear ideas about the possible cost increases to either the SISC-Blue Shield or Kaiser. Normally we receive quotes from the carriers some time in April for the benefit year beginning the following October. From that point we begin negotiating how to pay for any increases. For the 2010-11 benefit year we do still have money set aside from the "sale" of the Sabbatical Leaves last year; however, we are anticipating a 16% increase from Kaiser based on information supplied by the carrier last year. It is also possible to adjust the co-pays and add possible deductibles to defray any cost increases for the 2010-11 benefit year.</p> <p>Although we are not happy about the possibility of asking faculty to vote on these options, we are trying to plan for 2011-2012. I will try to explain this in more detail here.</p> <p>These three options have been used in many other districts:</p> <p>A. A fixed percentage of his/her salary means that a percentage would be directed to an account dedicated to setting aside money to pay for future premiums. This is problematic when the increases are dramatic because the negotiating team would still have to go back to the membership to ask for possible concession to pay for the increases; however, the positive side is that in years when increases were minimal the extra salary deduction could be banked for future increases.</p> <p>B. This is really the most common way that employers deal with the issue. At this time many K-12 and community college districts use a 90/10 split where the district picks up 90% of the premium and the employee pays 10%. The problem here is that families pay more than singles or doubles in terms of a percentage of salary.</p> <p>C. In this scenario AFA and the District would agree on a fixed dollar amount (single, double, and family) and the faculty member would pay all of the cost over and above that amount. The fixed dollar figure would have to be negotiated each benefit cycle. Some districts pay 100% of the cheapest plan and employees wishing to use the more expensive plan(s) use payroll deduction to pay the excess premium. The downside to this is what we call "adverse selection"--older and sicker people</p>

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	<p>choosing the more expensive plan and younger and healthier people migrating to the cheaper plan. This adverse selection skews the experience ratings and can cause the premiums for the more expensive plan(s) to skyrocket because of high and expensive use of that plan.</p> <p>There is much, much more to say about all this as it is an extremely complicated set of negotiations. At the meeting this afternoon we can discuss this in finer detail, but I hope this give you a little more information.</p> <p>Janet McCulloch (707) 527-4494 English Instructor Chief Negotiator, The All Faculty Association Faculty Co-Chair District Tenure Review and Evaluation Committee</p>