

THE POWER SOURCE

Santa Rosa Junior College Classified Employees Local 707

The Newsletter of the SRJC Unit, SEIU Local 707

March 2007

President's Message

Doug Kuula

It has been a while since my last communication to our unit. Let me bring you up to speed on a number of key issues.

Negotiations

As you are no doubt aware, our last contract, covering 05/06, has expired. On February 1, we had our first negotiation meeting for the current negotiation cycle, which covers at least 06/07. I have heard from a number of classified that we need to move to negotiating so that there is life left on our contracts after they are ratified. Also, there is the hope that we won't be involved with so many retroactive salary increases. We have begun to explore a multi-year contract. In my mind there are at least two types of multi-year contracts. There is one where everything (i.e. salary, benefits, etc.) is tied up for the term of the contract. Then there is the kind where there are a certain number of re-openers each year. Our multi-year contracts in the past have been of the latter variety. The problem with this kind is that salary and benefits are the typical re-openers. Salary and benefits are the main reason that contracts are not settled in a timely fashion, so it is very likely that a multi-year contract with re-openers will not result in a reduction of the retroactive salary increases. Unless we can agree on a multi-year contract that ties up salary and benefits for the term of the contract there is little benefit to us except that there would be a reduced number of topics on the negotiation table. We would be meeting less with the District negotiation team, but the negotiations will most likely drag on as they always do.

Salary Adjustments

Our last negotiation cycle saw us get back on track with our salary adjustments by making up for the 3.7% we missed in 02/03, and staying on par with the other groups on campus. The final portion of this salary agreement will be coming soon. In the March payroll we will be getting a 1.518% salary increase retroactive to July, 1, 2006.

As we go into negotiations for 06/07 what factors are at play? The state COLA for 06/07 was 5.92% and the governor called for a 4.04% COLA for 07/08. As you may have read in the latest AFA Update (2/5/07), the faculty salaries are significantly less (7.75%) than their traditional Rank 10. Why does this concern us? Well, in short, we all compete for the same pot of money. Other factors will no doubt include the cost of health benefits, and the ongoing needs of the District such as staffing, etc.

Health Benefits

With respect to health benefits, we are again facing the specter of sky-rocketing premium costs. Our current health care packages and rates are in place until December 31, 2007. This means that shortly after the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester we will be looking at renewal rates. This does not mean that we can just sit back on our haunches till fall. We have to explore options. The thing that would benefit us the most is to become part of a larger group so any large claims are diluted in a bigger pool of people. To this end, SEIU representatives have contacted California Value Trust (CVT) to see if this group would be right for us. You may have heard about CVT in the recent Press Democrat article about the Santa Rosa City Schools. CVT would provide similar Kaiser rates, but the rates for a PPO (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) would be significantly lower than what Health Net is charging for their HMO. It would also offer portability, which we lack at this time. At this point the only obstacle to joining CVT would be

that the faculty can't join and remain an independent union. This is something that they are not interested in doing. Why does this concern us? Well, actually it doesn't concern us as much as it does the District. If we join CVT it will mean that the faculty will be an even smaller risk pool and their rates will likely go up even further. This would make negotiations between the District and faculty much harder. In this scenario it will be a tough battle to get the District to go along with only the classified joining CVT. This is a battle that has been fought and won at other institutions. So, what's the good news? Well, at the end of this month Fringe Benefit Committee representatives will be attending a presentation by another large health care trust (SISC) that the faculty and classified staff could join. This might provide the faculty with an option and leave us with two options (CVT or SISC).

Reclassification

I will close my column with some observations about the reclassification process. After many complaints about the lack of timely reclassifications, SEIU and the District agreed to a process that gives a reclassification review to every classified employee at least once every five years. Not only that, we also agreed to a process that is consistent, fair and balanced. We have a review group that is equally weighted with both classified and management representatives, and we employ the most commonly used tool, the Hay Methodology, to measure jobs. This is a far cry from private industry where you may or may not have a job description, and certainly will have little or no input as to what it contains. Why am I writing this? Because I think we may forget how far we have come in this area. I also invite you to read Vicki Reed's column on Reclassification for more information.

Health Care

Vicki Reed

Some of you may have read the article entitled "I Can't Afford to Get Sick" in the April 2006 issue of Reader's Digest. It's a very informative article on the health care crisis from the perspectives of

the employee, employer, and the physician. It also had some good suggestions on how everyone can help. You can access it online at rd.com. Then, click on Article Archives, then "Health and Fitness" category.

Question and Answer Column

Vicki Reed

I was recently asked whether we might reinstate the "Question and Answer" column that Ann Samson used to have in the Power Source. I will consider that to be my first question and this is my answer: YES. And, here is question #2: How long are breaks supposed to be when we work a 10-hour day? Answer: A 10-hour day has two 20-minute breaks, while an 8-hour day has two 15-minute breaks. Bring on the questions. You can email them to me at vreed@santarosa.edu. I will do my best to track down the answers and include some in future Power Sources.

Pay Stubs

Vicki Reed

CEC requested some information regarding pay stubs from Payroll and we are passing this on to you. Here is the summary: Our paychecks are printed through the County. The information that is printed on the pay stubs is limited to the space provided and the types of earnings. In general, if people hold two positions, or have PAF's, those earnings are listed separately. Retro pay is not listed separately if paid in the current fiscal year. If there is a prior year retro, then it is listed separately.

Stewards' Corner

Jana Conley

Do you have a work issue you need resolved? Do you wonder how the contract applies to your personal situation? If so, call one of your union stewards. We are here to help you. We have an office on campus in Bussman Hall where we can meet confidentially. Bring any work issues that need resolution and we will be here to help you. You have four stewards available to help you. They are Jana Conley, Alex Drake, Debra Miller,

and Bob Peterson. Debra Miller is down in Petaluma, which is very helpful to all the staff at that location. Here are our email addresses and phone numbers. Please do not hesitate to call any one of us.

Jana Conley	jconley@santarosa.edu	x4259
Alex Drake	adrake@santarosa.edu	x4805
Debra Miller	dmiller@santarosa.edu	x2486
Bob Peterson	rpeterson@santarosa.edu	x7853

UPCOMING EVENTS

Classified Executive Council

Classified Senate/SEIU Reception

Doyle Library

3rd Floor

The Center for New Media

April 6th

11 am – 1 pm

The Classified Senate and SEIU are teaming up to bring you the first co-sponsored social event! This is the Friday of Classified Recognition Week. There will be food and refreshments and everyone is invited to come and talk with your senators and your union representatives. More information will be forthcoming.

CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

Vicki Reed

The Classification Review Committee has completed the preliminary job descriptions for the 06/07 classification review cycle, and the incumbents of those positions are in the process of reviewing and responding. It quite often takes more than one try to get the job descriptions accurate and complete. Please remember that an accurate job description is the goal and the pay grade will be determined directly from this document.

One of the recurring comments/complaints we see is that there is no grade assignment on the preliminary job description. Employees feel that they need a pay grade in order to either accept or reject the proposed job description. Please

remember that the committee cannot “measure” a job until the description is accurate. In addition, the pay grade is not open to appeal. The employee’s job is to read the proposed job description carefully and correct any misconceptions, add anything that has been left out, delete parts that are no longer needed, etc. Once the committee has the final, agreed-upon job description, then the grading is a mechanical process that cannot be manipulated. If you have a proposed job description and disagree with it, the committee wants to know your thoughts – we are not here to argue but to come up with the best, most accurate job description possible.

Another common misconception is that employees often think that through this process they will be upgraded. This very seldom happens! Please try not to set yourself up for a disappointment. The majority of positions stay the same even when changes have been made to their job description. It takes some pretty big changes to alter a grade assignment – and all of our jobs naturally change over time, we have to learn new things, etc. These types of changes generally do not change our pay grades.

SEIU LOCAL 1021?

Doug Kuula

As of March 1, 2007, SEIU Local 707 will officially be known as SEIU Local 1021. This is the culmination of last year’s Unite to Win Campaign and the vote of all affected members back in October of 2006. Local 1021 unites former Locals 535, 614, 616, 707, 790, 949, 1280, 4988, and public sector workers of the United Healthcare Workers, and Local 1877 into one large Local with a membership of nearly 54,000 workers. The name Local 1021 came from the combining of 10 Locals into 1 (i.e. 10-2-1). Further information is available on the web (www.seiu1021.org).

CONTRACT CORNER

Debbie Eakins

Work less than full-time and been doing more than five consecutive days? Check out Article 6.13.3 in our contract:

§ 6.13.3 Unit members who work less than eight (8) hours per day shall be paid straight time for additional time up to eight (8) hours per day. Unit members having an average work day of four (4) hours or more during the work week who work five (5) consecutive days shall be paid overtime if required to work the sixth (6th) or seventh (7th) day. Unit members having an average work day of less than four (4) hours during a work week shall be paid overtime for the seventh (7th) day following the commencement of his/her work week.

For example, if you work four hours a day Monday through Friday, and your supervisor wants you to come in on Saturday, you should get overtime pay for the hours on Saturday even though you only worked 20 hours in the regular week.

If you work less than four hours a day Monday through Friday, and your supervisor wants you to work on Saturday, you don't get overtime pay for Saturday, but if you also work on Sunday, you would get the overtime pay for Sunday.

UNION REPRESENTATIVES

Classified Executive Council

We have openings on the Classified Executive Council. If you are interested in getting involved with your union please email Doug Kuula at dkuula@santarosa.edu, or call x4654.

CEC Meeting Dates

Classified Executive Council

The Classified Executive Council (CEC) meets each month on the second Thursday from 3-4pm, and the fourth Thursday from 3-5pm in Room 4401 of the Doyle Library. There is always a member comments section at the beginning of the meeting. We encourage you to come by and attend a meeting. Some portion of the meetings (e.g. negotiation updates, and grievance matters) may be held in closed session.

INFORMATION

Vicki Reed

The Power Source is printed at the SRJC Copy Center, and is paid for by SEIU Local 1021. The address of the Local is:

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Our Field Representative is Steve O'Keefe, and he can be reached at (707) 545-7349 x104.