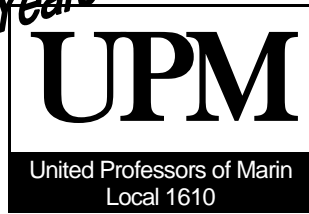


37 Years Strong!



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Volume XXXVI No. 5, May 2011

Union Press

Ponderings of the President

by Ira Lansing

It would be interesting if I could say that way back when, when I first joined the United Professors of Marin, it was a sleepy little organization, more concerned with raises than anything else. However, this would be far from true. Sure, UPM of the 80's was very different from the present-day UPM, but it was far from little. In those days there were close to 250 *full-time* faculty alone on both campuses and student enrollment hovered around 10,000. By comparison, our approximately 6000 students today are served by about 90 full-time faculty. Interesting side comparison: back then the Human Resources Office (called the Personnel Office at that time) consisted of just two people—the director and one secretarial assistant (yes, I know; the requirements are much more complicated today).

In addition, much as today, UPM back then had its hands full with other than collective bargaining matters. Within a half-dozen years of its initial selection as the bargaining agent, UPM was faced with representing 84 permanent faculty who had received March 15 layoff notices. It also was busy suing the

District for violating the 50% Law (some suggest the layoffs were retaliation for the lawsuit), litigation that ultimately resulted in millions of dollars going into our faculty salaries. And yes, all 84 faculty who chose to do so, were successfully returned to their jobs in the District.

There were some significant differences in those days, too. UPM had no president. In a nod to some egalitarian regime somewhere, UPM was headed by a “most responsible person”, or MRP (pronounced “merp”). There was also no regular newsletter. There was an occasional publication called “Strike Notes” that was literally cranked out (mimeograph machine) by Michael Brailoff. I think his choice of title was one to keep the administration on edge, never to know if a strike really was in the works. Despite the size of the faculty, this sort of leadership and communication seemed to work effectively. The core of involved Union members was quite large, and most everyone seemed to know what was going on.

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Over time however, the changes in administrative attitude and collective consciousness necessitated changes in the organization.

When I became MRP back before some of you may have been born (actually that could literally be true if you are in your very early 20's) structural changes in UPM were initiated. Our Constitution and By-Laws were changed by the membership to include written definitions and requirements for various officers and other positions, and the title of "president" was specifically used. Contractual committees were established to more effectively engage in shared governance, and the duties and responsibilities of department chairs were codified (the only section of the contract not written by the Bargaining Team, but by the Academic Senate at that time).

I take this short journey down memory lane, not to wax philosophically on "the good old days" (not necessarily good or better than now, only different), but because from my perspective UPM is undergoing another change that is as great or greater than the ones I have just mentioned. While we may be a smaller group of people now, the requirements and demands thrust upon us by technology, society and the law necessitate a change in UPM.

Over the next three months you will be contacted by one of more than 30 UPM volunteer leaders. Each of these 30 or so people has been assigned a group of about 10 faculty, full-time and part-time. In this way our current membership of about 325 people will have direct contact with one person who

can serve as a resource. Equally important, while we all may not choose to be BFF's (that's Best Friends Forever, for all of you who are generationally deprived) with this contact person, at least we will not all be strangers. There will be more than one person you see only once or twice a year with whom you can communicate—and that communication can and should be not only your issues and concerns, but also for suggestions and feedback for improvement and changes within UPM. The process will start over the next few weeks with your leader telling you about the strategic plan, asking you a few questions and hearing your thoughts. Throughout the semester your UPM contact will check in to update you on bargaining matters, political candidates and issues (this is a CoM Board of Trustees election year), whatever else is going on, and also to get feedback from you.

It may be a grand plan to think that we can keep over 300 people constantly informed and involved, but the past bargaining experiences have shown all of us that we cannot afford otherwise. From my own perspective, just keeping the 30-plus leaders engaged will be a challenge, but if we cannot do that, if we cannot show and tell you why you should care and be involved, if we cannot accomplish and gain what we all want, then we all deserve whatever is just handed to us.

Now when I close with my usual "stay in touch, stay informed, stay involved", I sincerely hope that there will be a new and better way for this to happen. Please give your contact person the necessary 10 minutes when they show up.



Tick-tock, tick, tock, time on the clock.
Amount paid to the attorney for the MCC
District for legal services as listed in the
May Board packet:
\$4365.00



CFT Training Workshop

On May 7, 2011, about 30 CoM faculty members gathered for a training workshop put on by the California Federation of Teachers. Jim Araby and Sandra Weese from CFT guided the four hour training, giving overviews of national, state and local union structures and then expanding on union organizing principles. John Hanley, former president of the San Francisco Firefighters Association, gave a motivational talk on the need to organize, and Paul Cohen, Chair of the Marin Democratic Party Central Committee and Director of Governmental Relations for the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council, spoke of the need for political organization and action.

Jim Araby from CFT Informs and Motivates UPM Leaders



CFT's Sandra Weese Leads UPM/CFT Workshop



The training infused in those present the need to reach out to our colleagues with the goal of avoiding another bargaining debacle created by the District over the past four years. With the help of labor organizer Dan Martin, UPM has developed a strategic plan with three main objectives to be accomplished before the fall semester starts in August: 1.) Survey each unit members; 2.) increase contributions to the UPM/PAC; 3.) find suitable candidates to run for the Board of Trustees and provide support for these candidates.

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UPM Labor Organizer Dan Martin on Coalition Building

The 30 UPM leaders who attended the workshop will soon be reaching out to you to accomplish these three goals. Please be on the lookout for your representative and take a few minutes to help him or her out. Your contribution now will go a long way towards unifying the faculty and preventing another sub-standard contract.



Jim Araby Gets Political

CRA Trust Vote

The recent vote on the CRA Trust was 83 to retain and 18 to dissolve the trust, so the trust will continue. CRA Trust Chair Ed Essick will send out a mailer for CRA election ballot soon.

UPM Student Grant



A few years back, UPM established an annual grant for students in need of emergency support. Please encourage disadvantaged students who need funds for books or other supplemental support to see Margaret Eliot in the College of Marin Foundation.

The UPM Fund currently has a balance of nearly \$1500 to assist students.

Grievance Update

Another UPM Win

A few years ago, in the darkness of the White administration, the District call for an investigation into two of our colleagues. The charge was racism discrimination, leveled by now-gone “leaders” of student organizations. Guided by the advice of HR Director Linda Beam, the District chose to conduct a formal investigation into the complaints even though at any time then-President White could have spoken up and ended the whole charade. But she didn't. Instead, President White allowed Ms. Beam to squander tens of thousands of Marin taxpayers' dollars on the investigation and the ensuing arbitration.

At odds in the arbitration was whether the investigated parties had the right to the investigation materials. It was Ms. Beam's contention that they did not even though UPM/MCCD contract clearly states otherwise (See Article 24.14, Faculty Rights, 7).

Although prior to the arbitration Ms. Beam cited Article 24 as her basis for the investigation, she later denied UPM's grievance saying that Article 24 did not apply.

Huh?

During the arbitration, Ms. Beam's contradictory statements had even Arbitrator Charles Askin shaking his head, forcing him to stop the proceeding so that he could try to make sense of the nonsensical.

In the end, Arbitrator Askin opined that “There is little doubt that the District's initiation and completion of an Article 24 investigation in this case was inconsistent

with the plain terms of this agreement,” and “Accordingly, it is concluded that the District's failure and/or refusal to provide the Union and the two affected Grievants the opportunity to examine or obtain copies of the materials in the investigative file that was obtained pursuant to the District's direction and express representation that material was obtained pursuant to Article 24 is a violation of the Agreement.”

Six recent arbitrations (all District losses) have cost the taxpayers of Marin County millions of dollars, and all have been guided by the sage advice of HR Director Beam and MCCD Attorney Larry Frierson.

If there is any ray of hope in all of this, it is that we have a new president who is willing to listen to and act on reason. Along with Interim VP Angelina Duarte, he has exercised welcome sanity and good judgment in dealing with grievances in order to avoid further legal proceedings.

Recent arbitrations have confirmed the District's wrongdoing; however, until President Coon intervened, Ms. Beam wouldn't budge in her insistence that two more grievances must go to arbitration, even though nearly identical arbitrations had just been won by UPM.

A colleague said to me the other day, “Just about the only thing President Coon has not done well is to allow remnants of the White administration to continue to block progress.” We hope that President Coon will soon turn his attention in this direction and rid us once and for all of Union-hating residue of the White years.

John Sutherland
UPM Grievance Officer

CONNECTING THE DOTS

News and Opinion
by Arthur Lutz

TWEET POWER

The great Italian social critic, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) once observed, ***“When a horse shits, a hundred sparrows eat.”***

Gramsci was describing the trickle-down theory of economics that became popular with the Reagan, Bush, and now Obama administrations. Namely, that if we grant tax breaks to the corporations and the rich and the financial firms on Wall Street, these handouts will eventually work their way down through the system and benefit the less fortunate folk on ‘Main Street.’

But Gramsci followed up with a question. Why should the sparrows have to eat horse manure in the first place? Why shouldn’t they be eating out of the same feed bin from which the horses eat rather than being forced to consume left-over, predigested, less nourishing fare? It’s a question that communists around the world have been asking since Karl Marx – who should own and enjoy the fruits of the labor that the working class created?

Gramsci was an anti-fascist activist who founded the Italian Communist Party in 1921 and was imprisoned by Mussolini for eleven years. He subsequently died as a result of his brutal treatment. But the question he asked in the 1930s is still relevant today, and it is relevant at the College of Marin because while faculty teaching units have been continually declining, the District’s contractors and consultants and attorneys, (who contribute little to the educational mission of our

college) continue to fatten at the trough. Are they really the ones who should be benefitting from the educational wealth that our faculty has created?

Gramsci noted that the reason for the culinary inequity between the horses and the sparrows is that horses are large and powerful and can hog the feed-bins and intimidate the smaller sparrows. But Gramsci also noted that although sparrows may be small, they are also many, and a flock of active, determined and unified sparrows can (if they choose) drive the horses out of the barn.

Certainly it’s not our faculty’s intention to drive our administration “out of the barn,” but we surely have the right to demand a share of the “feed” that our administrators prefer to allocate elsewhere. I’m speaking, among other things, of the summer school classes that were canceled and the need for additional full-time faculty hires.

Earlier this month, staff from the *California Federation of Teachers* held a workshop with a group of our faculty advising how we might pressure our Board of Trustees to agree to a more equitable distribution of District funds when we bargain our next contract.

Our most powerful weapon to accomplish this is our ability to influence the upcoming Board election, helping to elect trustees who are faculty friendly, labor friendly and education friendly.

Two years ago we had some success when our UPM Political Action Committee used voluntary payroll-deduction funds to unseat one of the more anti-union trustees on our Board and elect a candidate that our union endorsed.

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The very next day, Dr. White, (who had been standing in the way of a Contract settlement) saw the handwriting-on-the-wall and announced her retirement. And the newly aligned Board then hired a new Superintendent/President who rapidly settled our Contract. The money we spent to influence that election was clearly the moving force in changing the dynamic on the Board and bringing about a more faculty-friendly administration.

But there is another Board election coming up soon and there are still some powerful Board members who we consider anti-union, anti-labor and anti-faculty and whom we would like to replace or whose votes we would like to influence. If we can

do this we will be better able to eliminate some of the remaining regressive policies in our Contract. This requires money for advertising and campaign activities.

I hope you will contribute to our UPM Political Action Committee (UPMPAC) using the payroll deduction form in this newsletter, so that we might have a positive influence on how our Board votes. If we all contribute we can change the voting dynamic on the Board to our advantage. Because to paraphrase Antonio Gramsci,

“When a hundred sparrows tweet, even the most powerful horses will shit.”

Visit the UPM website for the most recent bargaining updates, newsletters, union announcements and more.

www.unitedprofessorsofmarin.org

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2010-2011

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Ira Lansing

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 Theo Fung, Arthur Lutz, Michele Martinisi, Laurie Ordin, Patty O’Keefe

UPM-PAC

Arthur Lutz, Laurie Ordin, Co-Chairs

GRIEVANCE OFFICER

John Sutherland

TREASURER

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Tom Behr

37 Years Strong!

UPM

United Professors of Marin

UPM Membership Application

I hereby apply for membership in the United Professors of Marin, AFT Local 1610

Date: _____ Email: _____

Name _____ SS #: _____

Address: _____ Department: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Campus Ext.: _____

Check the appropriate category:

I am a permanent credit or non-credit employee or leave replacement.

I am a temporary non-credit employee on the quarter system.

I am a temporary credit or non-credit employee on the semester system.

Return to UPM Kentfield campus mailbox or UPM Office, Science Center 136

United Professors of Marin UPM-PAC Payroll Deduction Form

The UPM-PAC (Political Action Committee) provides financial support to candidates and measures that support or benefit education in Marin County and the College of Marin in particular. If you would like to support the UPM-PAC with a monthly contribution, small or large, please fill out the form below and send it to the Payroll Office.

To: Payroll, College of Marin
Date: _____

I hereby authorize the Marin Community College to deduct from my earnings the sum of _____ beginning in the month of _____, _____ (year), and each month thereafter, and to remit this sum to the United Professors of Marin PAC #990958 until I revoke this authorization in writing.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

SSN: _____