PONDERINGS OF THE PRESIDENT
By Laurie Ordin

RANDOM THOUGHTS UPON SITTING DOWN TO WRITE THIS NEWSLETTER ARTICLE:

Random Thought # 1: UPM had a social event last month. We saw Robert Reich’s recent film, Inequality for All. The refreshments were delicious, thanks to our hard working Social Committee, but participation was low. I guess I can’t blame people who aren’t working on a Thursday afternoon for wanting to leave work and go to their homes and families. Maybe if you see me in the hallway or out on the mall, you can stop me and tell me when the best time would be for you to come to one of these events. Or maybe you’ll tell me you are just too exhausted, which I would understand. We will be having an event at the end of the semester and perhaps people will want to wind down with colleagues one more time before we leave for summer vacation.

Random Thought # 2: In addition to our industrious Social Committee, our Bargaining Team is hard at work, negotiating our new contract. John Sutherland, our Chief Negotiator, writes regular updates in this newsletter, and Deborah Graham, our Budget Monitor, is busy digging through data and doing research to bolster our position. Last month we posted the raises that our Vice Presidents recently received, and in case you didn’t catch it, they came to approximately 30%. Deborah also did some digging to look into College of Marin’s non-compliance with the 50% Law. This state law mandates that at least 50% of college funds need to be allocated to the academic areas of the college (as opposed to the administrative side.) It does seem reasonable, doesn’t it, that an institution whose mission is to educate students, would spend at least half of their funds on the teaching and learning part of the equation. But College of Marin is one of three districts in the state that had fallen out of compliance. >>>

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE
Ponderings of the President – Laurie’s Spring Break Ponderings
Editorial – Crotch Rot and Computer Privacy
Connecting the Dots – Paul Robeson, a Witness for Human Rights: 1898 - 1976
Bargaining Update – News from the Bargaining Table — What Might God Do?
For the Good of the Order – Jackie Robinson – “Inequality for All: Some”
Random Thought #3: Deborah’s research also looked at our average salaries relative to other community college districts. When doing the comparisons, she looked at the middle column and middle row of the salary schedules. When comparing ourselves to the Bay 10 + Santa Rosa (11 districts) we came in 9th. The top average salary was $92,087 at Foothill-De Anza. Our average salary is $73,772. When you look at the average of the top three of the Bay 10, we are talking about an average salary of $86,953. In order to come to this average, the District would have to give us a 17.8% raise. The three districts we are referring to are Foothill-De Anza, Ohlone, and San Mateo. While these districts are all expensive places to live, Marin County consistently ranks near the very top of all counties, not just in the state, but in the country!

Random Thought #4: A recent article by Robert Reich in the San Francisco Chronicle presents a discussion about how people are, or are not, paid what they are worth. Have any of you ever wondered about how what a person does could be worth salaries of millions of dollars per year. Or how people who were responsible for the crash of 2008 could be worth billions of dollars in bonuses at the same time. Which do you think you would notice more? If hedge fund managers suddenly disappeared or if nurses suddenly disappeared?

Random Thought #5: Back to Robert Reich’s film, Inequality for all. Reich looks at the bifurcation of our society in terms of wealth. He condemns this inequality and draws correlations on a number of issues. He looks at tax policy and notes that as the highest marginal tax rates on very high income have plummeted in the recent past, economic inequality has surged. He points to the shocking fact that the wealthiest 400 people in this country have more wealth than the bottom 150 million. He looks at low marginal tax rates for the rich and points out that as these have dropped our ability to maintain infrastructure in our country has declined. There are many other things that Reich points to that are pulling our country apart economically, but one very important point he makes is that as participation in labor unions has declined, economic inequality has skyrocketed.

Okay, no more random thoughts. Where am I going with all of my randomness? Well, just that the District seems to think that it is important to pay upper management well to attract good people. Doesn’t that same logic apply to the pay treatment of faculty? What is most important regarding resource allocation? Isn’t it the direct education of our students? If almost all other districts in the state can comply with the 50% law, why can’t we? But in a world where an alternative Golden Rule applies, i.e. “He/She who has the gold has the rule,” the only strength that the little people have is the strength we have when we stand and work together.

Come to a UPM social event. Let’s get to know each other and help each other. Besides, the food is great! Talk to your UPM reps. Run for office or work on a committee. Remember, if you are not at the table, chances are you are probably on the menu! So stay informed, stay in touch, and stay involved.

Hope you are enjoying Spring Break. Now I am going to!

“LIBERALS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH BECAUSE IT ALMOST INEVITABLY LEADS TO THE CONCENTRATION OF POWER THAT UNDERMINES DEMOCRACY.”

Robert Reich
Tinea cruris is a fungal infection of the groin area. It’s sometimes called crotch rot or jock itch. But women’s private parts are also affected by it, as are the areas between one’s toes. It results when parts of the human body are deprived of sunlight and fresh air. A similar condition exists in shower stalls.

Temporary anti-fungal medications often help, but since the fungus thrives in dark, poorly ventilated areas, the real cure for tinea cruris is to be sure that one’s private parts and toes and shower walls have plenty of fresh air and exposure to light.

The same may be said of academic institutions. They also are subject to fungal growth if they are deprived of sunlight and fresh air, because the essence of academe is that it be untainted by the dank air of secrecy and the oppressive gloom of deceit and paranoia. And this requisite for openness and light should not only exist in the classrooms, but should also be a watchword in the college’s administrative suites.

Unfortunately there seems to be some evidence of a musty fungus growing here at College of Marin, because it has come to our attention that our administration has surreptitiously hacked the emails of one of our CoM employees. It is unclear why they did this since there had been no suggestion that the employee had engaged in any illegal or inappropriate activity.

This kind of secret surveillance should be completely unacceptable at CoM. It would be unfortunate if we returned to the fetid atmosphere of a previous administration when the malodorous spores of distrust and paranoia grew unabated on our campus.

UPM intends to negotiate contractual language to prevent the spread of this contagion, but until we are able, please be aware that the tinea cruris fungus is apparently thriving at College of Marin, so take appropriate precautions when you use your campus email, because someone other than your intended recipient may be logged on. □
Collective Bargaining Update
John Sutherland
UPM Chief Negotiator

Once again, the District canceled our most recent Bargaining session, so there’s not much to report. Your UPM Bargaining Team and the District are ready to begin discussion on Article 3, Wages, having covered most of the Articles both sides originally sunshined.

However, many recent meetings on contractual issues have revealed an item of upmost importance for instructors with ETCUM status, and it’s certainly worth reporting on here. Some time ago one of our ETCUM instructors was denied a teaching assignment because she had upset her area Dean even though she hadn’t broken any contractual provisions. Still, she was “offered” only assignments that she could not accept due to other work and family obligations.

At first, the Dean’s denial of the agreed upon assignment between this ETCUM instructor and her Department Chair was based on the District’s right to selection of assignment, but it eventually became clear that neither pedagogy nor Program considerations had anything to do with the reassignment. Then it was the instructor’s past “marginal evaluations.” But when all evidence revealed that her evaluations had been topnotch, the next excuse for “reassignment” was that she had not filed an ETCUM Availability Form.

Investigation by President Coon then discovered that this instructor was not alone in failing to file the Availability Form. It turns out that 34 other ETCUM instructors did not have the contractually mandated Availability Form on file with the District, yet none of these instructors was denied assignment (or intentionally offered an assignment that he or she could not accept).

As a result, all Deans will now be directed to notify ETCUM instructors who do not have the Form on file. Each ETCUM instructor must submit the Form to HR by April 30th to be considered for fall 2014 teaching assignments. From this point on, the Vice President’s office will ensure that Availability Forms are on file before any ETCUM assignment is offered. Ergo, it is imperative that ETCUM instructors file their Availability Forms. UPM urges all ETCUM instructors to hand deliver, date stamp and copy (copy to be retained in the ETCUM instructor’s personal files as proof of submission) ETCUM Availability Forms each semester by the designated date.

I must mention here with admiration President Coon’s commitment to fair treatment and respect for all CoM employees and his taking the time to investigate that matter thoroughly. In addition, HR Director Kristina Combs played an important role in safeguarding rational and fair-minded decision making in this matter (as well as many others).

When we have more to report on Bargaining, we will let you know. ☐

Editor’s Comment

As reported above by our Chief Negotiator the District canceled another bargaining session with UPM. This is not the first time that the District has canceled scheduled bargaining meetings.

The District has the right to cancel, of course, but UPM does not believe that these cancelations serve the best interests of our college. Consider the following and see if you agree:

In the Old Testament there are many examples of God participating in negotiating sessions. He negotiated with Moses about punishing the Israelites for worshiping the Golden Calf. And he negotiated with Abraham about how to punish the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah. And God negotiated with Job about the terrible plagues that he inflicted on him. God wasn’t forced to bargain with any of these people, but he did it anyway.

So I’m thinking that if someone as important as God was able to find time to negotiate with Moses and Abraham and Job, shouldn’t the District be able to find the time to negotiate with our union? ☐ A.L.
April is the Birth Month of a remarkable American; a brilliant athlete, actor, singer, cultural scholar, author and civil rights activist. Born in 1898 he died in 1976.

He attended Rutgers University where he won 15 varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball and track and was twice named to the football All-American team and inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

But he was not only a superb athlete. He was also an outstanding scholar and intellectual. He received a Phi Beta Kappa key, was elected to the Rutgers Cap and Skull Society, graduated as class Valedictorian, and went on to receive a law degree from Columbia University.

Rather than pursuing the practice of law, however, he decided on a career in the theater, and won international acclaim as a Shakespearian actor as well as appearing in 11 Hollywood movies.

And he was considered to have one of the great bass-baritone voices of his generation, appearing on concert stages throughout the world, singing lieder and World Music and releasing dozens of recordings. He was the first artist to bring “Negro sorrow songs” (spirituals) to the concert stage. He sang in twenty-five languages and spoke seventeen, including Chinese and Russian.

He was a great friend of organized labor and spoke and sang at strike rallies, conferences and labor festivals throughout the world. And he supported the anti-fascist struggles in Spain in the 1930’s and in other countries around the world. His early civil rights activism and his outspoken opposition to Jim Crow laws helped lay the foundation for the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

He was a close friend of Albert Einstein, Jawaharlal Nehru, WEB DuBois, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce and Ernest Hemmingway. He was a citizen of the world; a tireless champion of the poor and oppressed, not only in the U.S. but all over the world. He was one of the great iconic and revered figures of his generation.

But he lived at a time when his struggle against racism and his support for economic justice and world peace was considered a threat to the growing right-wing political agenda in our country, and in the 1950s he was denounced by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) as a Communist, and he was harassed and blacklisted and placed under house arrest for his political views. His concerts were cancelled and his passport was revoked making it impossible for him to travel or perform or earn a living.

Yet his national and international reputation and moral stature remained so great that he was still considered a threat and, according to information released through the Freedom of Information Act, in order to silence him permanently he was poisoned with hallucinatory drugs by CIA agents as part of their MK-ULTRA PROJECT,* and then subjected to 54 electroshock treatments, which rendered him feeble and silent and ineffectual.

As a result of the brain damage caused by this mistreatment he lost the ability to sing and perform and was forced into an illness-ridden retirement.


* MK-ULTRA: A covert CIA project of the 1950s designed to manipulate people’s mental states and alter brain function by surreptitiously administering drugs, especially LSD. (See Wikipedia for numerous citations.)
APRIL LABOR HISTORY

On April 15th, 1889, A. Philip Randolph was born. He was the founder and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The BSCP was the first African-American labor union to sign a collective bargaining agreement with a major U.S. corporation. As its president, Randolph endured repeated threats from the Pullman Company until, on August 25, 1937, after a struggle that lasted 12 years, the BSCP was recognized as the official union of the Pullman Porters. In subsequent years Randolph became a trusted aide, confident and advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King. Randolph died in 1979.

Besides the birth of Randolph, there was another significant event that occurred on April 15th. It was that day in 1947 when America was changed forever — Jackie Robinson became the first black baseball player to play in the major leagues. It was the result of a momentous ten year struggle undertaken by people like A. Philip Randolph and Paul Robeson and organizations on the left who advocated on a regular basis for major league baseball to integrate. According to Arnold Amperesad, author of Jackie Robinson: A Biography, “to their great credit, the most vigorous efforts [to integrate baseball] came from the American Communist press.”

After Robinson’s historic breakthrough, baseball was steadily integrated, with professional basketball and tennis following in 1950.

Robinson’s groundbreaking achievements also transcended sports. He used his fame to speak out publicly for black equality. In 1949, he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee, surprising them with a scathing condemnation of racial discrimination.

Regarding the support he received from the American Communist Party, he remarked, “anything progressive is called communism.”

INEQUALITY FOR ALL

On Thursday, March 27th in Deedy Lounge, our UPM Social Committee presented a showing of Robert Reich’s film, Inequality for All. The film offered a passionate of the American demonstrating income gap has impact on the

The film is also an intimate portrait of a man who adversity to Clinton’s and Professor of Berkeley. His is to protect unable to

At COM, however, we might rewrite the film title to be “Inequality for Some,” because the District has just raised the salaries of our three VPs by more than 30%! Yet they are only offering our faculty a pay raise of 1%! What might Robert Reich say about that kind of Inequality?

Our information indicates that District poor-mouthing is unjustified. They are receiving property tax revenue from the county that would more than justify a far greater faculty pay raise than 1%.

Or will it be like this?

Maybe we better turn the chart upside down before we negotiate wages with the union.
MS. OBAMA REGRETS

February 26, 2014

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Obama,

I am the Newsletter editor for the United Professors of Marin, Local 1610 AFL-CIO. Our union represents ~400 faculty members at the College of Marin in Kentfield, CA. (Marin Community College District.)

As I’m sure you are aware, March is National Women’s History Month, as proclaimed by President Obama. In keeping with this observance, we would like to include submissions in our Newsletter honoring the contributions that women have made in the struggle for economic, social and educational justice.

We would be thrilled and honored if you would be willing to contribute your comments or observations on this important holiday for our March publication. We will print whatever length submission you might send. Our usual publication deadline is March 20th.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Arthur Lutz
College of Marin
Kentfield, California
94914

Dear Mrs. Obama:

Thank you for writing to the Office of the First Lady. We have received your request.

Mrs. Obama values such and every opportunity, but due to the volume of requests and the countless demands on her time, she must decline the majority of requests she receives. We have reviewed your letter, unfortunately, the First Lady is unable to honor this request.

On behalf of the First Lady, please accept our best wishes and appreciation for your interest.

Sincerely,

Margaret E. Freshwater
Director of Correspondence
Office of the First Lady

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE EVERY MONTH FOR YOUR LETTERS OR COMMENTS OR KUDOS ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO OUR FACULTY
HELP MAKE OUR NEWSLETTER INTERESTING AND RELEVANT, AND ELLIMINATE THE BAD JOKES WHICH I FIND TO FILL THE SPACE, e.g:

A UNION-BUSTING MANAGER HAD A HEART ATTACK and was rushed to the hospital. While there he had a near death experience, and seeing God he asked, “Is my time up?” And God answered, “No, you have another 40 years to live.” The union-buster was so elated that upon release from the hospital he immediately went out and got a hair transplant, a tummy tuck and a face lift. And after the last procedure was done he was crossing the street and was hit by a car and killed. Arriving in front of God he said, “You told me I had another 40 years to live, why did you let me die now?” To which God answered. “I didn’t recognize you,”

Send your submissions to arthur@unitedprofessorsofmarin.org
UPM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Name: ___________________________ SS#: ___________________________

Address: __________________________ City: _______________ Zip: _________

Date: __________________________ Email: ___________________________

Home Phone: ______________________ Campus Ext: _______

Check the appropriate category:

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

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

____ I am a Community Education Instructor

Return to the UPM mailbox or to the UPM Office, TB-124.
And please make sure you have completed the UPM payroll deduction option, in Human Resources.

Please Note: Unless you have filled out the above UPM Membership Application, you are only paying a representation fee and you are not a member of UPM and entitled to UPM’s full membership benefits.