

G C F A - C T A - N E A
GAVILAN COLLEGE FACULTY
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President's message

On May 6 I went to both the Learning Council retreat and the Academic Senate retreat. I was inspired by so many good ideas for improving teaching and learning, and reminded how pivotal is our role as faculty. It's a strange time for California's educational systems, as if something as fundamental as gravity suddenly ceased to function. Community colleges are bidding to offer BA degrees, closing their doors to many students who have, in the old parlance, the "ability to benefit," raising their fees and their bars, and cutting programs. Suddenly teachers have to explain why we have pensions and what we do to deserve them (A lot). And lurking behind all the headlines is a reality: there are a great many people who would like to privatize higher education in the US. There is much money to be made. And steps towards privatization are getting serious attention: funding us based on student performance; abolition of tenure protections; "streamlining" so students can no longer afford to take a fun class, an interesting class, or a class just to explore; various means of engineering college so it becomes a place where students are processed as efficiently as possible through the system. I can hear Malvina Reynolds singing in the background: *Little boxes on the hillside, little boxes made of tickytacky, little boxes on the hillside little boxes all the same.*

Of course we need to provide our students with opportunities for social mobility. Of course we need to support their aspirations to overcome poverty, hardship, addiction, and inertia so they make important contributions. And of course we want students who go for what they want! But we also want to support the swirlers, late bloomers, undecideds, the students looking for inspiration who find it in odd places, the scholars, artists, dreamers, and community-activists who come into our classes not knowing what they want--but who find it there.

We need to work together--the Learning Council, Senate, GCFA, and district--to say clearly that those students are every bit as important to California's future economy and stability as the

students who shoot like arrows towards predetermined goals.

I don't know what's coming. But I know that I'm being forced to examine my values as a person and a teacher, and adjust to a rapidly changing reality. We are all. And I know I'd much prefer do it together, not alone.

Leah Halper

Unemployed this summer?

Many faculty able to come to the April workshops on unemployment benefits for part-time faculty went away inspired to apply, but many were not able to attend. The general message is: if you are not working this summer (or any period longer than two weeks anytime), you may well be eligible for benefits if you meet a few criteria that include being able to demonstrate that you are actively looking for work. For some tips on how to navigate the EDD system, see the Gavilan College Faculty Association website, www.gavfaculty.com. Click on Info you Need, and then look under Part Timers for Unemployment Benefits. And apply! Many part-time faculty find the process easy and rewarding.

Check those paystubs!

The college has a great payroll officer, but sometimes mistakes creep in. Always check your paystubs to be sure the right number and amount of deductions are occurring. If they are not, contact the college's business office as soon as possible. And CTA sends the following additional note: "Members who participate in 403(b) plans should check their pay stubs to ensure deductions are being made. Further, these should be compared to investments statements to make sure funds are being transferred [in a] timely [manner]. It is important that participants monitor their accounts to identify specific errors or general weaknesses in record keeping."

Mark your calendar

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Flex day for fall is Tuesday, August 30, and GCFA will again be offering a wonderful lunch to all unit members--which you have already paid for. Plan ahead now to come see old friends, make new ones, and catch up on college news after the summer away.

Fun-raising

We started with chocolate, progressed through an Indian meal with Monsoon Wedding, had bar bites on Saint Patrick's Day, heard about the UN from sociologist Lindsay Padilla, gathered in memory of deceased Life Sciences professor Don Santana, and had a wonderful BBQ together at the end of April. Our final two events are 1) a retirees' goodbye on Tuesday, May 17, and 2) a Finals Week Treat with Treat Ice Cream, fair trade coffee and/or tea, at BookSmart Morgan Hill or Garlic City Books Gilroy. (See below.) Thanks to Sabrina Lawrence's tireless efforts, every event was fun, green, and well-attended.

And then there were the benefits events: on retirement and general benefits for full-time and part-time faculty, on part-time unemployment benefits, on long term care.

For next semester, we are already planning more movie nights (think Italian with a ravioli-making lesson beforehand with Lisa Franklin) and other events. Wanna help plan some really great ways to bring people together? Email Sabrina at slawrence@gavilan.edu to volunteer for the fun-raising Social Events committee. If you have ideas for informational sessions regarding working conditions or benefits, email lhalper@garlic.com

Free Sweet Treat to Beat Finals Week

Finals Week doesn't have to be dull! During May 2011 finals, all Gavilan faculty are invited to visit: Garlic City Books in Gilroy - 7490 Monterey Street, 408 8842 2665 AND/OR Book Smart in Morgan Hill - 80 East 2nd Street, 408 778 6467, for a free treat ice cream, or fair trade tea, coffee, or other beverages. ***Have a great study break, and support these wonderful local bookstores at the same time--GCFA will pick up the tab!*** Take a break from finals, grade finals, lament finals, or

finish with finals! Or meet a colleague there. Just tell them you teach at Gavilan. **Offer good May 23-29** during open hours at both locally-owned businesses. And pick up some books while you're there!

More money for CA schools!

Gov. Jerry Brown acknowledged California will take in \$6.6 billion more in tax revenue than once thought over the next 13 months, but reiterated his call to extend tax increases to avoid deep budget deficits in future years. Brown's revised budget proposal pegs the deficit at \$9.6 billion through June 30, 2012. The plan would eliminate 5,500 state jobs and 43 boards and commissions.

Brown's new budget assumes that trend will continue and projects the state will also take in \$3.6 billion more in the next fiscal year.

Because of California's Proposition 98 guarantee, the state would owe K-12 schools and community colleges about half of those revenues. Brown's plan envisions schools getting about \$3 billion more next year than they are getting this year. Brown's January budget called for an extension of higher sales and vehicle tax rates, as well as a retroactive extension of higher income taxes, all for five years. The governor is still calling for the 1 percent sales tax extension and the 0.5 percent vehicle license fee extension after June, when the rates are slated to decrease. But he is requesting that the 0.25 income tax surcharge be delayed until 2012, though it would last until 2016. The move acknowledges the state's income tax surge this fiscal year, as well as the political difficulty state leaders would have faced by hiking the income tax retroactively by several months. Taxpayers have withheld income taxes since January assuming a lower rate than Brown was proposing.

He said he wanted the voters to weigh in on the tax increases "as soon as possible." Assembly Republicans last week issued a plan that they say would balance the budget without tax extensions. The GOP proposal relies on a revenue bump smaller than the one Brown projects, as well as a roughly 10 percent reduction in state worker compensation and depleting special funds for mental health and childhood development. Brown is still calling for the elimination of redevelopment agencies, which he originally believed would net the state \$1.7 billion. He has scaled back his approach to enterprise zone tax credits for employers, which he originally wanted to eliminate. Instead, he will seek to limit the credits to new hires. (Sacramento Bee)