

From the California Faculty Association  
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## **CFA HEADLINES**

**January 12, 2010 · Weekly news digest from CFA**

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- Extension given in the 65% subsidy of COBRA costs
- Elections being held for CTA state delegate to NEA Representative Assembly

### **LINKS OF THE WEEK**

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### **IN FOCUS**

#### **- AB 656 APPROVED BY REVENUE & TAX COMMITTEE**

In a historic vote that demonstrates CFA's growing political might as well as the increasing public support for higher education, Assembly Bill (AB) 656 was passed Monday by the state Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.

AB 656 – authored by Assembly Majority leader Alberto Torrico and sponsored by CFA – seeks to create a dedicated and stable funding source for the three segments of California public Higher Education by assessing an extraction fee on oil and natural gas taken from California land and waters.

While numerous oil severance bills have come before the legislature previously, AB 656 is the first to be approved by a policy committee. What's more, AB 656 has cleared two policy committees – the Assembly Higher Education Committee also okayed it – and now goes to the Appropriations Committee.

“Today, this committee has cast a critical vote towards improving California’s future,” said CFA President Lillian Taiz, a professor of history at CSU Los Angeles. “Our higher education system fuels our economy and every sector of life in California benefits from a strong public university system. We all need to invest our fair share in the state’s future.”

Monday’s hearing drew crowds to the Capitol. Dozens of faculty, staff and students from throughout the system attended to show their support and hundreds of anti-tax protestors clad in red t-shirts were on hand to decry the bill.

“We saw in last week’s budget announcement and in Monday’s hearing that higher education is now a major part of the public and political discourse,” said Taiz. “We must continue to ensure that lawmakers and the public remember the value of our public colleges and universities.”

## **THE STATE BUDGET AND THE CSU**

### **- GOV’S BUDGET PLAN WOULD INCREASE CSU FUNDING**

On Friday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger revealed his proposed budget for the 2010/11 fiscal year.

The CSU portion of the plan includes the restoration of \$305 million to the CSU’s 2010/11 budget. The budget would provide \$60.6 million for 2.5 percent enrollment growth if the state receives a threshold amount in federal aid for other state programs.

Even if these increases were to be approved by the legislature, the CSU’s level of state funding would remain well below 2007/08 level.

CFA President Lillian Taiz said of the governor’s proposal: “We are pleased his budget has made higher education a priority for the state. This budget makes a start toward restoring the draconian cuts that higher education has experienced for many years.”

To view the Governor’s proposed budget for the CSU, go to:  
<http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/pdf/GovernorsBudget/6000/6610.pdf>

### **- PLAN ALSO WOULD HIKE FEES, REDUCE PENSIONS FOR NEW STATE WORKERS**

While there were positives to be found in the Governor's budget proposal, there were also cuts and other cost-saving measures that could have a negative impact on faculty as well as the CSU system as a whole.

The plan calls for yet another 10% student fee increase. The governor estimates this additional fee hike would generate \$390 million. This increase comes on top of the massive 32% increase enacted in the last year.

CFA President Taiz said of the proposed fee hikes, "CFA has long opposed increases to student fees and will continue to fight to make sure that our institutions remain affordable and accessible to working class students and their families."

The governor's budget plan also proposes to change the pension plan for new state workers. This proposal, which would include the CSU, would require state workers to pay a 5% greater share of their annual pension contributions.

## **- GOVERNOR'S PAY CUT PLAN WOULD NOT AFFECT CSU**

In the governor's budget plan released last week, he proposed a five percent reduction in salaries of some state workers.

However, this proposal **does not apply to the CSU.**

Even if it were enacted, this change would apply only to employees in the executive branch of state government and non-elected statewide officers. The CSU does not fall into this category.

## **THE FACULTY CONTRACT**

### **- JUDGE HEARS UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE CHARGE ON CHANCELLOR'S \$31M GIVEBACK**

Prior to the holiday break, Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) Administrative Law Judge Anne Weinman heard CFA's Unfair Labor Practice Charge stemming from Chancellor Charles Reed's voluntary giveback of \$31 million in CSU funding last year.

CFA Director of Representation Bernhard Rohrbacher made the union's case.

To view CFA's opening statement in the case, go to:  
<http://calfac.org/allpdf/PERBOpening%20Statement.pdf>

CFA asserts that the CSU administration engaged in bad faith bargaining in the salary negotiations last year when Chancellor Reed chose to voluntarily reduce the CSU budget by \$31.3 million dollars. The charge goes on to state Reed then falsely claimed in numerous communications to bargaining unit employees that he had been required to implement the budget reduction.

Earlier this year, PERB issued a complaint against the CSU Administration in response to CFA's claims.

CFA still faces an uphill battle with this charge, due to the intricacies of California public-sector labor law which is very permissive when it comes to employer misrepresentations.

The two sides will next deliver their post hearing briefs on March 1, 2010.

## **- FACT FINDING POSTPONED BY ADMINISTRATION DUE TO ILLNESS**

The Fact Finding hearings scheduled last week between CFA and the CSU Chancellor's Office were postponed due to illness of the chancellor's chief negotiator, John Swarbrick.

The two sides are seeking to resolve the economic portions of the 2008/09 faculty contract that were reopened due to the state budget crisis.

Fact Finding is the final stage in the bargaining process commonly known as the "statutory process," spelled out in California's higher education labor relations law.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **- REINTRODUCED FOUNDATION TRANSPARENCY LEGISLATION CLEARS FIRST HURDLE**

Last week, state Senator Leland Yee (D-San Francisco) reintroduced legislation aimed at bringing greater transparency and accountability to California's embattled colleges and universities.

Senate Bill (SB) 330 – which is co-sponsored by the California Faculty Association and the California Newspaper Publishers Association – is a reintroduction of last year's SB 218, and would update the California Public Records Act (CPRA) to include auxiliary organizations that perform government functions at the University of California, California State University, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

The bill will require foundations and other auxiliary non-profits connected with the state's public universities and colleges to make their handling of money and other operations more transparent and accountable to the public.

On Tuesday, SB 330 cleared the first hurdle of the new legislative cycle when it was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

John Travis, Chair of CFA's Political Action/Legislative Committee, testified before the committee that "The time has come to bring greater transparency and accountability to our

public colleges and universities. Because of state funding cuts to public higher education, we must ensure that what money the system has is spent as it was intended – in the classroom educating students.”

## **- EXTENSION GIVEN IN THE 65% SUBSIDY OF COBRA COSTS**

All CSU lecturers who lose health benefits because their work drops below a six-unit time base are eligible to continue their health benefits under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA). COBRA-ing one's benefits is expensive, as it requires paying both the employee and the employer contributions to the premiums. (See page 19 in the Lecturers' Handbook.)

See the Lecturers' Handbook at:

[http://www.calfac.org/allpdf/lecturers/lecturershandbook\\_Sept2008.pdf](http://www.calfac.org/allpdf/lecturers/lecturershandbook_Sept2008.pdf)

Previous federal legislation provided a 65% subsidy of COBRA costs, but only for those who lost all of their work, only if work was lost by 12/31/09, and the subsidy only lasted for nine months.

But on December 24, 2009, Congress extended the Federal Recovery Act to those who lost all of their work between September 1, 2008 and February 28, 2010. In addition, Congress extended the duration of this 65% subsidy to 15 months.

To qualify for this subsidy, you must be “involuntarily terminated” which in the CSU includes lecturers who are not reappointed to ANY work. So if this applies to you, then before February 28, 2010 talk to your campus benefits or human resources office about how to apply for COBRA and then how to apply for this subsidy.

Please visit the Dept. of Labor web site at: <http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html> to find out more about this COBRA subsidy. There is also more information available in the Lecturer Crisis Guide #2 at: <http://www.calfac.org/lecturers.html>

## **- ELECTIONS BEING HELD FOR CTA STATE DELEGATE TO NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Any CFA member wishing to run for a CTA state higher education delegate position to attend the annual NEA Representative Assembly (July 30-July 7, 2010 in New Orleans, LA) must complete the Declaration of Candidacy form, featured in the December issue of CTA's California Educator publication. The declaration form is also available on the CTA website at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org) under My CTA.

The 2010 NEA Representative Assembly will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Completed forms must be submitted to the CTA Service Center Council for Higher Education (4100 Truxel Road, Sacramento, CA 95834) by 5 p.m. on Thursday, January 29, 2010.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Jan 15-16**

CFA Joint Councils Meetings

**Jan 18**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – CFA Statewide offices closed

**Jan 26-27**

CSU Board of Trustees Meeting  
401 Golden Shore Long Beach Ca

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