

# RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT POWER STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

## ENDORSEMENTS

Council for Racial & Social Justice, April 11  
Palestinian Arab Muslim Caucus, April 10, 2024  
Department Representatives of CFA-SFSU, April 3 & 4, 2024

## RATIONALE

This resolution derives from the key elements of high participation negotiations detailed in *Rules to Win By: Power & Participation in Union Negotiations* (2023) by veteran labor organizer/negotiator Jane McAlevey and labor lawyer Abby Lawlor. Presenting and analyzing evidence from multiple contemporary negotiation cycles and a study of the historic practices of labor unions, the authors conclude that high participation negotiations not only win better contracts but strengthen worker organization as a whole, enabling workers to enforce their contracts, and also serve as a tool for mass-scale political education. Following many years of practice, McAlevey concludes that “to build maximum power, every single step of the negotiating process—from information requests and member surveys to offering counter proposals and ultimatums at the table—must be made into an opportunity for organizing through intentional mass participation. The informed, invested, and conscious worker organization built by structured high participation negotiations is then also ready and willing to exercise the power lying behind its demands, to move a stonewalling employer, to deflate the fiercest union busters, and to turn the words on the page into conditions enforced in practice” (6).

The following resolution advances tools that, in the words of McAlevey & Lawlor (2023: 67): “transform a union from low participation to high participation by way of contract negotiations. High participation influences everything: winning better contracts, building or maintaining high membership, unionizing more workers in a union’s industry or across a labor market, and developing a robust political mobilization structure so that workers can get more from elected politicians than does the corporate class.”

WHEREAS, contract negotiations don’t happen in a vacuum but are embedded in broader contexts of the labor market, public opinion, community organizations, and the political sphere; and

WHEREAS, some highly effective unions conduct preparatory work called *power structure analysis* that goes beyond narrow corporate analysis of the employer to ask:

- Who holds power including other employers, trade associations, media institutions, politicians, other unions, etc, and which are the employer connected to and how?
- Which institutions are the workers connected to and how?
- Exactly how strong is the workers’ own level of organization and how are workers engaged? and

WHEREAS, highly effective unions directly engage with the workers to conduct and communicate the process of power structure analysis in order to educate workers and tap into their many connections to challenge and win over the power holders to their cause, and

WHEREAS, Article VII Section 1 states that “The Board of Directors acts to carry out the business of CFA on behalf of the membership and the Assembly, in consultation with the Chapter Presidents Council, the Council of Lecturers, and the Council for Racial and Social Justice between Assembly meetings, subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, the laws of the State of California, and policies and directives of the Assembly,” and

WHEREAS, Article III of the Bylaws states that “Authority for the governance of the CFA is ultimately vested in its members. CFA Officers, members of the Board of Directors, committees, representative bodies and staff are responsible to CFA’s membership, as are local chapter Officers, boards and representative bodies. The Assembly is the primary governing body of CFA and is the direct representative of members. The Assembly has primary authority to set broad policy for CFA, adopt budgets and authorize action on behalf of CFA;” therefore be it

RESOLVED that CFA Board of Directors is encouraged to explore ways to expand broad power structure analysis in preparation for future negotiations with high worker participation.