

**United Faculty Update**

Michels, Jeffrey &lt;JMichels@contracosta.edu&gt;

Tue 3/31/2020 4:20 PM

To: ufjeffmichels@gmail.com &lt;ufjeffmichels@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: 'uf@uf4cd.org' &lt;uf@uf4cd.org&gt;

**UNITED FACULTY OF 4CD****Tuesday Talk**

Dear Colleagues:

*Happy Spring Break!* I hope this email update finds you well and spending some time off-line this week. This switch to remote teaching is a lot of work!

You will have seen today's email from Interim Chancellor Gene Huff. It's looking more and more likely that we'll be out for the whole semester, but as decisions are being made on administrative and pedagogical issues, a good many questions from a union standpoint still remain to be answered. We met with District leadership this morning and will continue working throughout this week. So you know, here are some the issues we are raising:

**Compensation:** Should faculty who are doing extra work on this transition receive extra pay? Part-time faculty, especially, are in no sense compensated for redesigning classes mid-term! We didn't insist on extra pay from the start because, like most faculty bargaining units during this crisis, we did not want to seem to be holding our district hostage, as if we would not step up and do the work if we were not paid extra money. Faculty WANT to serve students, and extra pay was not the first thing on anyone's mind. But as we go forward, we think this is worth discussing. Of course, we also have our three-year agreement, which we want to protect, and there are formula-driven provisions that could mean significant ongoing pay raises for our part-time faculty (and full-timers too, especially for summer and overload). It's a complicated puzzle, especially with so much anxiety over the economy and what the "May Revise" of the Governor's budget will bring. But faculty should know that we are starting these conversations.

**Benefits:** Our District-wide Benefits Committee met remotely last Friday. We mostly discussed new options (Health Savings Accounts, High Deductible Plans, Accident Insurance) that will likely be presented to employees next year in addition to all our existing plans, which will not be changing. But the UF also raised questions about how we might expand access to health insurance, especially for part-timers, during this crisis. We asked about a special open enrollment and perhaps expanded options if part-timers not currently on district benefits might like to join. We asked about ways we might cover copays or increase our copay reimbursement plans. We did not reach any agreements, but the District did show a willingness to explore options, and we will follow up.

**Extended Leave Options:** What will happen, we have asked, if a faculty member is unable to successfully complete a class remotely? Some subjects and some classes may simply require face-to-face interactions. While the Academic Senates and management will work through a process for deciding which classes might need some alternative to remote-instruction, as well as student options, the UF is concerned with faculty pay and load issues. We would like to negotiate some way for a faculty member to take Disaster Leave without using up Sick Leave. District "quarantine" policies may already address this, but we have asked to review options, looking to be sure our faculty do not suffer financially during this crisis (and have maximum flexibility to make up assignments if necessary).

**Flex:** We want to affirm that all the work faculty are putting in to make the transition to online instruction counts for flex credit, and we'd like to explore the option of faculty "banking" flex credit that could apply to next year as well.

**Hiring:** The District has indicated that ongoing recruitments will be reconsidered and that some may be delayed during this crisis. While we share concerns about next year's budget and the economic impact of the current situation, we also want to be sure that colleges are making good long-term decisions and not sacrificing positions (or shrinking schedules for that matter) unnecessarily. So while this is not a specifically negotiated item, we are keeping faculty hiring on every discussion list for now.

Those are a few of the issues the UF is pursuing. If there are other workplace issues you think we should be addressing, please send a reply to this email or call the UF Office: 925-680-1771.

In solidarity,

Jeffrey Michels  
United Faculty Executive Director  
Cell: 925-330-2125