

# Stockton Federation of Teachers Local 2275

Quarterly Newsletter



2020 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter



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## Get Involved

In this column, we'll keep you apprised of ways you can become more active with the Union. In this issue, Emari DiGiorgio, Vice President, introduces and encourages members to subscribe to SFT Local 2275's new YouTube Channel.

# Fighting for Safer Working Conditions for our Members Amidst a Pandemic

*Rodger Jackson, President of SFT Local 2275, addresses the myriad issues surrounding work from home requests not being honored.*



As this issue comes out, we have just completed our first month under the new operating conditions dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is appropriate to take some stock as to where the Union is at the moment. Much of what I might have to say is already familiar territory from previous membership-wide discussion and our meetings thus far. One of the most distressing, ongoing issues we have had to address has been the way our SFT professional staff colleagues have been treated. It is an understatement to say that many professional staff are frustrated, angry and downright afraid. While faculty (although not faculty librarians mind you, and so much of what I say applies to them as well) have been able to choose whether to be on campus or not, this has not been so for many professional staff. We have several members whose job does not, as far as we can tell, require their physical presence on campus and who have made their case to Human Resources, and yet they are still being forced to come in. These determinations have been made regardless of whether staff members have health conditions that put them in the Center for Disease Control's "high risk" category.

The administration continues to assert its legal right to determine what constitutes an acceptable workplace modification, whether

or not it makes sense to anyone else. For example, in one of the more egregious cases we have been addressing, there are two members who, because they do fall into this category, are not allowed to interact with students. Rather than have them work remotely from home, which they have consistently demonstrated they can do, management insists they drive into campus, report to their office, shut the door and conduct all their work via Zoom. They drive to campus to complete the same "non face-to-face" work they could do, and were doing, from home. This is a classic case of management refusing to use their discretion to make a member's life easier in these challenging times without any loss of productivity. When management is confronted with our concerns, they point to the number of cases where they have permitted alternative arrangements, without acknowledging that many of these are not ones where they have any discretion because state or federal guidelines dictate the accommodations.

The eloquent statement expressing faculty support for professional staff sent to administration earlier this week did generate a response from Vice President Davenport. She thanked everyone for their views on the matter, expressed Upper K wing's sympathy for the challenges we all face, and stated that Upper K wing would be willing to reconsider

requests if they were re-submitted. We have not had much luck thus far in that process. Members are still being put through multiple layers of review and analysis in what seem increasingly like an effort by management to wear people down.

On the plus side, Stockton has permitted faculty to select whether they teach face to face (F2F), on-line, or hybrid. This was not a trivial matter and not necessarily the case at all our sister institutions. We would argue that this was the wise approach. What is sad in all of this is that there are many faculty who have chosen to teach on campus, myself included. In doing so we have helped meet the administration's goal of providing at least some sense of normalcy (emphasis on "some") for the students who wanted to have classes in person or who are living here on campus. As we are frequently reminded in the statements from management, we are all in this together and we must come together to find solutions. We strongly believe that there is much more that management can do when it comes to our professional staff and librarian colleagues.

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*Rodger Jackson, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
President SFT Local 2275*

# On the Importance of Local Elections and Getting Involved

*The president of the Stockton University College Democrats, Florie Hulbert, introduces us to the student club and discusses the importance of local elections.*

We all know how important the upcoming presidential election is for determining how the country responds to issues such as racial justice, economic inequality, COVID-19, the Supreme Court, equal access to healthcare, democracy, and many many more issues. However, local races are just as important as the upcoming presidential one. We often don't realize how many things from our daily lives are impacted by representatives at the local and state level. School boards play a role in allocating how tax money is delegated towards different education funds, local prosecutors impact what the criminal justice system looks like in our communities, and state senators and assembly representatives shape how our state responds to issues like COVID-19. Local officials also impact policing standards and public safety and ordinances on alcohol and marijuana. Additionally, elections to Congress shape what policies the national government will focus on, confirmations of federal judges, and how the federal

budget is allocated. A large portion of local elections are decided by small margins which gives extreme weight and power to your vote. This means your vote can make a large impact, and there's more at stake in November than just the presidential election. It's important to ensure that you're exercising your right to participate in the political process by also getting informed and voting in local elections. To check your voter registration status [click here](#). For information on your local and state representatives [click here](#).

Stockton University College Democrats represents Democrats and other civically engaged students on the Stockton campus. Though many of our members do identify as Democrats or progressive, membership is open to all students, and we encourage all students to be civically and politically engaged. The club is student run with the goal to promote student involvement in the political process and provide a space for students to talk about current events. We

engage in the community through service projects, attending civic meetings, and in many other ways. This semester the club will be helping to elect Democratic candidates up for election in November through virtual phone banking, registering voters, and other ways. We will also be holding a debate with the Stockton University College Republicans later in the semester to highlight opinions held by club members and talk about policy issues directly affecting students.

Meetings will be held every Monday at 8pm through Zoom. The link is available through Ospreyhub or email [hulbertf@go.stockton.edu](mailto:hulbertf@go.stockton.edu).

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*Florie Hulbert  
Stockton University  
Senior, Political Science and  
Mathematics Majors  
President, Stockton University  
College Democrats*



## Future Pay Day Parties Survive Necessary Budget Cuts in the Wake of Furloughs

*Stacey Rose, Treasurer, discusses necessary budget cuts resulting from the furloughs impact on dues, but reassures us this does not include any cuts to future Pay Day Parties (CHEERS!).*

Writing letters (words I believe they are called) about numbers seems counterintuitive. Translating what those numbers mean to our membership is important.

It's important to remember we have several fixed costs that remain largely unaffected by the global pandemic. Our dues to AFT New Jersey and the Council of New Jersey State College Locals (Council) are the greatest expense we have, but we receive many benefits from them. This includes state and national support for job actions, negotiations for the master and local agreements, grievance, and discounts.

If any of you are like me and love a sale, coupon, or clearance item, please check out the member benefits from AFT: <https://www.aft.org/member-benefits> As a member, you have access to a variety of exclusive deals and discounts.

It is important to note (for me at least) I am not ringing the death knell on the Pay Day Parties. They will make a triumphant return, hopefully in some form this academic year. We have continued to fund that line because we know how special they are.

The furloughs served as the harbinger of budget cuts though.

They directly impact the dues we receive from you. To be good stewards of these funds, we have reduced our budget by 6% this year.

Finally, it's important we thank you. The furloughs, the pandemic, and the constant calls for dexterity don't go unnoticed. Thank you for continuing to be members and supporting us (yes, I mean financially. I am the Treasurer). It allows us to continue to serve you.

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*Stacey Rose, MA  
Stockton University  
Treasurer SFT Local 2275*



## A Reminder from our Grievance Officer, Nazia Kazi

*Nazia Kazi, Grievance Officer, reminds our members to alert their Union of any violations to current Contracts and Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) negotiated on your behalf.*



The grievance process available for SFT2275 advocates on behalf of our members in case of a violation of any state-wide or locally-negotiated contract or memorandum of agreement. Please visit the SFT website to review the many active contracts and MOAs.

If you believe that a violation of any of these contracts or MOAs has occurred, reach out to me as your Grievance Officer or any union officer to determine which course of action may be taken. It's helpful if you have thorough documentation of the suspected violation. It is always our goal to reach amicable resolutions when possible before resorting to the grievance process.

A formal grievance will be filed when there is a clear violation of a contract or MOA and an informal resolution cannot be reached. Any union officer involved in a grievance will be sure to keep the matter as confidential as possible. You can learn more about the grievance procedure in the Master Agreement on the SFT website.

As always, supervisors and managers should never directly negotiate with any professional staff or faculty member regarding compensation. The Union is here to negotiate on your behalf regarding compensation and conditions that are not explicitly mentioned in an existing agreement.

As our members navigate a chaotic environment during the pandemic, we would like to remind you that your Union officers want to hear from you about health and safety issues that arise, even when they are not explicitly covered in our existing agreements. This is a rapidly-shifting work environment for many of our members, and the more we know about the novel employment-related matters facing all of you, the better we will be able to advocate for you in the future.

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*Nazia Kazi, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
Grievance Officer SFT Local 2275*

# Local Negotiations Update for Summer 2020 and Agenda for Fall 2020

*Tina Zappile, Lead Negotiator, highlights the work of the negotiating team over the summer.*



The local negotiating team had a busy summer! I want to recognize the hard work and time given by each member of the team, in alphabetical order: Emari DiGiorgio, Rodger Jackson, Tara Luke, Adam Miyashiro, Anne Pomeroy, Kerri Sowers, and Tina Zappile.

It was important this year to continue meeting over the summer, as we faced many urgent issues that needed to be resolved before the fall semester began.

Once the university's reopening plans became more clear in mid-late summer, we recognized the need to enforce the 2006 On-line Courses agreement for on-line courses in the fall of 2020. At that time, many of you had already started the hard work of prepping on-line courses, most for the first time. This is exactly the kind of work that the 2006 On-line Course agreement was designed to compensate! We recognize that prepping an on-line course for the first time requires additional time and resources above and beyond what is normally expected to teach your courses. That was the initial intent of the 2006 agreement and Article 34 of previous Master Agreements. From testing out new technologies, to designing new assignments, and identifying new resources, prepping on-line courses takes additional time, especially to do it well. It was

also clear to us that what we were doing in the spring of 2020 was not on-line teaching, but rather we were all doing our best in a crisis to deliver courses that were designated mostly as in-person or hybrid. Let me be clear, you deserve the highest praise for the incredible job you did in the spring of 2020! The same way that you deserved to be compensated for planning your fully on-line course(s) in the fall of 2020. Why did we agree to sunset this 2006 agreement, after you are compensated this fall? Article 34 in the new 2019-2023 Master Agreement was completely rewritten, and negotiations for on-line courses were pushed down to the local level for the first time. That means that when we negotiate a new local agreement on on-line courses, it will have added protections such as being subject to binding arbitration and the PERC terminal process, should both sides be unable to come to an agreement at the table. We will continue to advocate for our position that prepping and delivering new on-line courses requires additional time, and that time should be adequately compensated by the university.

This summer, we successfully negotiated two new local agreements with added protections for professional staff and faculty "in the time of Covid-19" that will continue until 2026. We

started advocating for protections in May, with several issues we identified as critical for professional staff and faculty. For professional staff, we negotiated for a new transparent process for temporary reassignments and a new requirement that all levels consider the impact of Covid-19 for evaluations and reappointments. For faculty, we negotiated for a two month delay in tenure reconsideration in the 6th year with new dates added to the personnel calendar, a new requirement for all levels of review to consider the impact of Covid-19 on tenure and promotion, a new two-year window for programs to change their standards to recognize impact of Covid-19, an additional opportunity for faculty to change their faculty plans, and new language clarifying the decoupling of tenure and promotion where appropriate.

I do want to take this opportunity to review the purpose and difference between faculty plans and standards for tenure and promotion. In the faculty Covid-19 agreement, programs are granted authority to change their standards because standards are the sole criteria for tenure and promotion. Faculty plans are \*not\* the criteria for tenure and promotion. Faculty should only be evaluated on whether they meet/exceed Program, School, and University standards for tenure

and promotion, not whether they meet their plans. At the same time, faculty have the responsibility to ensure their plan accurately reflects the work they are doing to meet/exceed the standards for tenure and promotion. Faculty plans have always been fluid, and faculty have always had ownership over these plans, now with added flexibility to change them later in the 4th year in case plans change due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To that end, we encourage other bodies, such as Faculty Senate, to take up the issue of updating School and University standards to reflect the Covid-19 pandemic and complement our new local agreement(s).

Our agenda for this fall is equally busy. Over the summer, we consulted with the labor lawyer who works with the Council of NJ State and Locals on a draft agreement on Intellectual Property, modeled on what was presented to the state when the new Master Agreement was negotiated. Many of you have

already reached out offering your assistance on this issue, and we will be getting back to you shortly as we prepare to move forward.

Over the summer, we designed a new faculty retirement incentive plan that takes advantage of the state's new specifications for employees enrolled in the Alternate Benefit Program (ABP). You can check out [New Jersey's ABP Fact Sheet from May of 2019](#) for more information. We started negotiating a new local agreement in June, with the intention to release it before mid-September. Unfortunately, this was not prioritized by the administration to the same degree and negotiations will continue into the fall. Please stay tuned for an update on this important issue for anyone considering retirement.

Finally, as you are aware, Section 1 and 2 of our local agreement on faculty leadership expire on July 2021. At this time, the Task Force on Faculty Leadership is preparing

to hold campus-wide meetings very shortly to invite your input on these incredibly important positions. We also invite your input, and to that end we will be at these meetings listening to you. These positions are critical to how we do our work. Before we agree to any significant changes, we want to make sure they reflect our members' interests. The Task Force includes the lead negotiators for both SFT and management, and both sides have been equally represented throughout its work over the summer and into this fall. Once the Task Force holds the open meetings, we will meet with management to negotiate positions in Section 1 and 2, plus the Honor's Director (the only position in Sections 3 and 4 that was moved to the extended deadline of July 2021).

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*Tina Zappile, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
Lead Negotiator, SFT Local 2275*



## Very Timely Issues Facing Professional Staff at Stockton University

*Joe Everett, Vice President of Professional Staff, highlights the SFT's success in securing a fair procedure to govern reassignment of Professional Staff whilst battling administration on other fronts.*



For professional staff at Stockton, our tumultuous season is ongoing. After navigating the recent furloughs (which are not yet completely settled), we have moved on to helping staff through the COVID-19 era in a multitude of ways.

Chiefly, we have supported members in their requests for safer workspaces and/or alternate work arrangements. We have consistently pressured administration for transparency and what we see as sensible allowances to support staff members. We've had some victories, but also some setbacks in this effort. So much work has been done on this front that it is difficult to adequately capture it all.

One highlight is our success negotiating a new COVID-19 related MOA for professional staff. The

MOA creates a fair procedure to govern the reassignment of staff to different departments and protects employees during the reappointment process, amongst other things. Information about the impact of this new agreement will be disseminated in upcoming weeks.

We have a number of other outstanding professional staff concerns that have frustrated us since long before the pandemic. Chief amongst them is the issue of Reclassification procedures. Presently, there is still no process for staff to apply for Reclassification. Administration has resisted negotiating this with us and we continue to strategize about how to proceed.

Of course, there are always other member issues and questions that arise over time. SFT Professional

Staff members should always feel welcome to email me at [joseph.everett@sftunion.org](mailto:joseph.everett@sftunion.org) with any concerns or questions. Professional Staff have shown themselves to be dedicated, flexible, and indispensable members of the Stockton community during these uncertain times. Rest assured that your value is known, our Union is strong, and we will continue to stand together.

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*Joe Everett, MSW  
Stockton University  
Vice President of  
Professional Staff SFT Local 2275*

# SFT Local 2275 Secures Several “Sweet” Victories for our Adjunct Faculty

*Maxine Patroni, Vice President of Adjuncts, describes SFT Local 2275’s recent achievements for our incredibly talented Adjunct Faculty!*

As we enter the fall 2020 semester, life at Stockton may look a lot different than previous academic years. I feel fortunate to be teaching remotely and learning how to help my students thrive in the virtual classroom, and especially now, I feel grateful to be part of the Stockton Federation of Teachers (SFT).

Since SFT began representing adjuncts, we have improved salary, benefits, and workers’ rights. We are covered by a grievance procedure and are guaranteed the right to union representation. The strength of our union relies on the strength of our membership. I wholeheartedly thank our adjunct members for helping to enhance working conditions, and I encourage those, who aren’t already part of SFT, to join.

To ensure we can continue to negotiate better conditions for our adjuncts, we ask that, if you are not already, to become a full member.

We need your full support to effectively negotiate for fair

working conditions and to retain the benefits we have already gained. Contingent faculty have only one voice on campus, and that is the Union. The greater our numbers, the more the state must respond to our demands.

The power of our union helped secure the following:

**New Contract 2019-2023:** As of January 2020, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals and the State of New Jersey agreed upon and are working under a new contract. Primary advancements include a pay raise each semester through September 2022, course cancellation compensation, documentation for unemployment insurance, compensation for training, and much more.

**On-line Teaching Compensation:** If you are teaching or have taught a fully on-line course at Stockton, you are entitled to 1 Teaching Credit Hour (TCH) of pay for designing your class. If you have

not received this compensation before, you should have filled out the form and submitted it to the school sponsoring your course by September 30.

**Google Suite? Sweet!:** Get organized this academic year! All SFT members receive free access to Google Suite with their membership. Tools and services include: Gmail account, Word, calendar, Google Chat/Hangout, Google Drive, and much more.

**Adjunct Opportunity Fund:** Interested in attending a conference or completing research? Though internal funding opportunities are on pause this semester, this program offers adjuncts a chance to apply for funds to support academic and creative work.

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*Maxine Patroni, MFA  
Stockton University  
Vice President of Adjuncts  
SFT Local 2275*



# Committee on Political Education (COPE) Endorses Levi Fox, Adjunct Faculty Member

*Brian Tyrrell, Committee on Political Education (COPE) Director, announces SFT will endorse and financially support one of our own members, Adjunct Faculty, Levi Fox.*

The Committee on Political Education (COPE) for the SFT Local 2275 voted unanimously to endorse and financially support Levi Fox in his effort to win a seat on Somers Point City Council in this fall's election. We will support Levi to the tune of \$1,000 this fall, roughly one tenth of what is typically needed to win such a seat.

Levi serves as an Adjunct Faculty member and full-time SFT member at Stockton. He serves on the Historical Preservation Commission and previously served on the Economic Development Advisory Commission in Somers Point.

With regard to the Stockton Federation of Teachers Local 2275, Levi states:

*"As an adjunct faculty member and a longtime member of the Stockton Federation of Teachers, I recognize that society has a vested interest in promoting the higher education of all members of the community who desire to pursue it, as I recognize the vested interest that strong unions have in promoting the well being of all their members."*

COPE funds do not come out of union members' dues, but rather only from additional contributions by generous members who understand the SFT needs to be engaged politically. If you are interested in helping the cause by giving anything out of your weekly paycheck, even \$2.00, that would be greatly appreciated. Contact myself at [Brian.Tyrrell@SFTUnion.org](mailto:Brian.Tyrrell@SFTUnion.org).

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*Brian J. Tyrrell, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
COPE Director SFT Local 2275*



# Introducing the SFT Local 2275's YouTube Channel

*In this column, we'll keep you apprised of ways you can become more active with the Union. In this issue, Emari DiGiorgio, Vice President, introduces and encourages members to subscribe to SFT Local 2275's new YouTube Channel.*

The Stockton Federation of Teachers has finally entered the Aughts and created a YouTube channel ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uca8KF4oJskFXLuXV\\_gCA6jQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uca8KF4oJskFXLuXV_gCA6jQ)). Subscribe today and check out our recent virtual programs, including webinars on the October 1st [Healthcare Switch](#) and [Work Modification Requests & Leave Options](#) and our two summer teach-ins on [Decolonizing the Curriculum](#) and [What It Means to Defund the Police](#).

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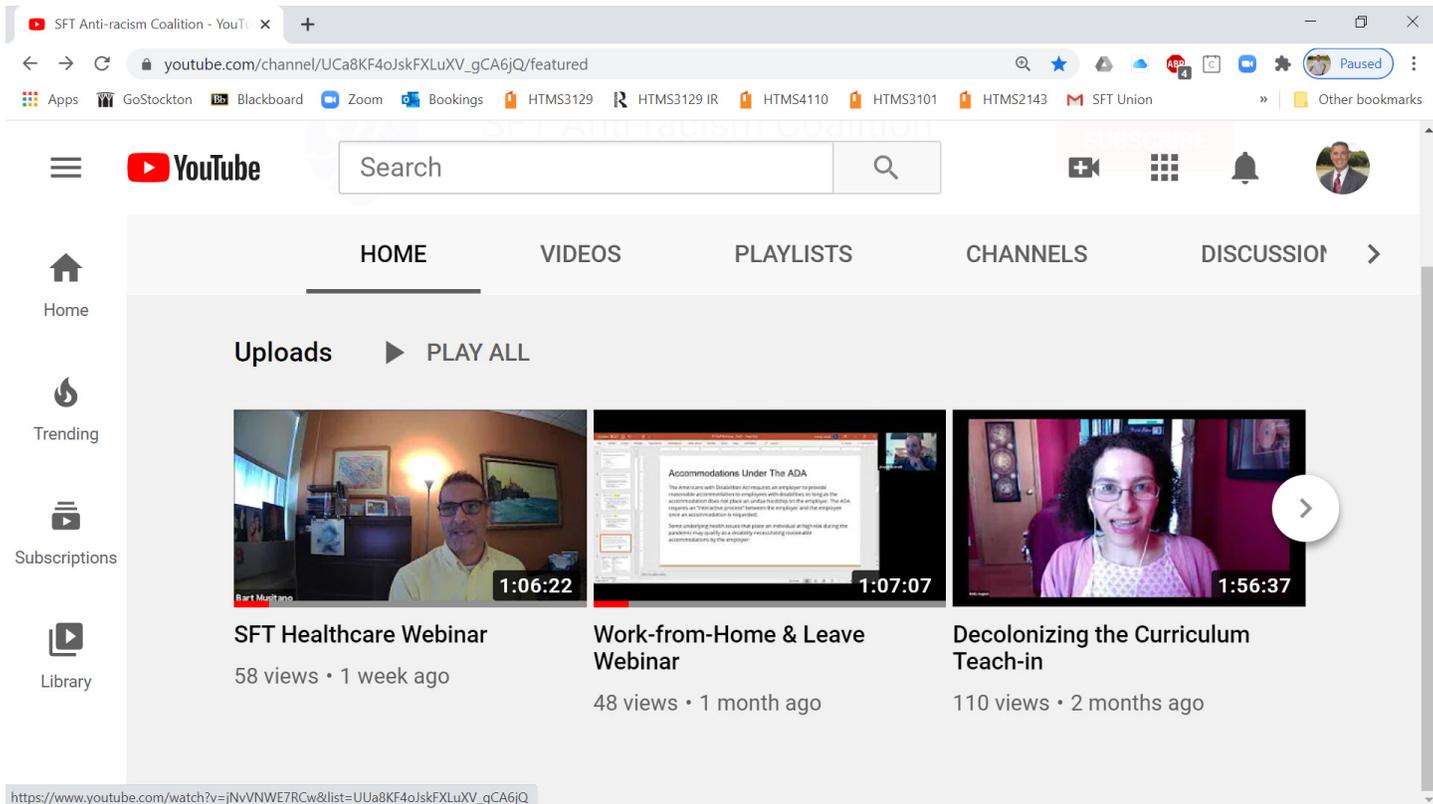
*Emari DiGiorgio, MFA  
Stockton University  
Vice President SFT Local 2275*

# Thanks for Reading!

This newsletter was produced through the generous contributions of our Executive Committee and Friends. If you have any questions, comments, contributions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the lead editor, Brian Tyrrell, Communications Director for the SFT Local 2275, at [Brian.Tyrrell@SFTUnion.org](mailto:Brian.Tyrrell@SFTUnion.org)

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*Brian J. Tyrrell, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
Communications Director  
SFT Local 2275*



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNvVNWE7RCw&list=UUa8KF4oJskFXLuXV\\_gCA6jQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNvVNWE7RCw&list=UUa8KF4oJskFXLuXV_gCA6jQ)