

# Stockton Federation of Teachers Local 2275

Quarterly Newsletter



2021 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter



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# How the Council of New Jersey State College Locals Has and Continues to Go to Battle

*Rodger Jackson, President of SFT Local 2275, describes, in the first of a two-part article, how the "Council" has won hard fought battles with the state.*



This month's column is the first part of a two-part series focused on educating our members about the Council of New Jersey State College Locals. Our local, Stockton Federation of Teachers 2275, along with ten other locals, comprises what we commonly refer to as "The Council". The history of the unionization of higher education in New Jersey is far too complex to capture fully, in even a two-part article. However, providing at least a sample of the Council's legacy is important for understanding it today.

A reasonable starting point is with the Council's creation back in the early 1970's. At the time most of the unionized universities and college faculty were part of the New Jersey Education Association's higher education affiliate, the Association of New Jersey State College Faculty (ANJSCF). However, there had been a growing dissatisfaction with this organization, both regarding its competence, as well as the view that it did not allow adequate autonomy at the local level. Members at Montclair, Kean, and William Patterson, voted to disaffiliate and along with the two newest colleges, Ramapo and Stockton, sought to establish the AFT as the statewide union affiliate. With the intent of creating a more responsive and effective organization these five locals organized the Council. The primary goals were to represent the members who had split from ANJSCF and then to engage in any subsequent bargaining with the state. Among the Council's founders were Tom Wirth and Ralph Bean of Stockton. If you look out at Solidarity Park you will see bricks in both their names.



Throughout the 70's and 80's, there continued to be challenges to the Council, both from the NJEA, which still resented the disaffiliation, and from the state, which wanted to destroy its effectiveness in advocating for its membership. In 1974, the Council was fighting for binding arbitration, protections for faculty governance, and academic freedom, but the state refused. To combat this, the Council engaged in statewide strike preparations that were on a scale not previously seen before by state employees. It forced the state back to the table and into a last-minute agreement. Still eager to crush the union, only ten months later the state tried similar tactics. This time the Council led a ten-day strike that drew state and national media attention and once again, defeated the state's efforts. This would not be the last time labor actions had to be threatened to force the state to respond; in 1979 there was a 1 ½ day strike, along with strike authorizations by the Council in 1981, 1989, 1995, 1998, and most recently in 2019.

The Council established, or fought to preserve, many of the rights we take for granted to this day:

dental and eye care programs, the 24-credit workload, across-the-board salary increases, salary increments, job protections, and grievance procedures. The battles were not just at the negotiating table, many issues needed to be fought for in the legislature. It was the Council that pushed back against the 1970 change in librarian status from faculty to non-faculty. Throughout the years the Council has worked to create job security for professional staff both through the protections guaranteed by the grievance process, and with multi-year contracts.

There are so many battles that the Council has fought and continues to fight for members; allow me to conclude with one of my first experiences. In 1995, the Council began organizing state college adjunct faculty and - in relatively short order - the 60% threshold had been reached, with the labor force signing cards requesting that the Council represent them. In a move that we have seen replicated so many times through the years and in all sorts of fields, management tried to shut it down by calling them "independent contractors" and directing their legal teams to

delay in every way possible. The Council put its resources behind the fight and in 1997 adjunct professors throughout the state voted overwhelmingly to join. I had just arrived at Stockton that year and I had close friends who were adjuncts. It was startling to see the change in treatment by management. Where the wages had been stagnant for years, there was an immediate increase; those increases have not let up over the past 24 years. Our most recent agreement will guarantee that Stockton adjunct faculty will be paid \$7100 for a course in 2022. In the year before I came to Stockton, when I was working at a non-union institution in upstate New York, as an adjunct, I was paid only \$1500 per course.

The battles are far from over and in our next issue Council President Tim Haresign will move away from the historical angle to provide a more current perspective.

--

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



# Investing in Our Greatest Asset, the Members of the SFT Local 2275

*Stacey Rose, Treasurer, reminds us that as a union our greatest asset is our members and this compels us to use our financial resources for the betterment of our membership.*

As a Union, our second largest expense (after dues to AFT and the Council) is people. We have a variety of expenses directly related to “the people”, the most vibrant part of our organization. These expenses are the best investment we make. They have the largest impact on our Union, our members, and the University. Here are the three primary uses of those funds.

Firstly, we have stipends. During the summer, we offer a half day of professional development workshops; members are eligible to receive a stipend for their full participation. We are brainstorming topics for this summer; please feel free to share ideas with us!

Next, are our quarterly payments. These quarterly payments are made to the members of the Executive Board (President, EVP, VPs of Professional Staff & Adjuncts, Treasurer, Secretary, Grievance, Negotiations, Events, COPE) and our accountant, who provides oversight to our finances, troubleshoots, and files our taxes (thanks Marc!). This expense is a large one, but is extremely

necessary. The Exec works every day to make sure our Master Agreement and local agreements are being followed. Often, things don't go as written in a signed and fully executed agreement. So, when there is a gap in agreements, when a situation has escalated, when there's an unexpected event (Showboat? Covid Pandey? Superstorm Sandy?), the Exec is there following every curve in the narrative and preparing a response, a counter response, a grievance, a mediation, an informal-friendly-you-have-definitely-messed-up-and-I'm-trying-to-be-cool-because-it's-too-soon-to-drop-the-hammer-meeting-with-a-manager. As a labor organization, we recognize how important it is to compensate people for the work they do. The quality of work my fellow Exec does far exceeds their compensation.

Finally, we have our biweekly payments. During non-pandey times, this includes our PayDay Party workers, who provide critical support in allowing us to effortlessly enjoy our time together as a Union. Our best expense in this category is Sue Burrows,

our Manager. Sue has been with us for 17 years (as of April 1st, because, well, it's Sue). She is our first and only Manager; Sue is often synonymous with the Union. The work she does is difficult to enumerate, but we are grateful she is here and for all of the things she does for us.

As the Treasurer, I want to remind everyone that the most critical expense we have is people. When you invest wisely in the people around you, your organization can only continue to grow and improve. Thank you, to all of you, for choosing to invest in us.

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Stacey Rose, MA  
Stockton University  
Treasurer SFT Local 2275





# Grievances, Pandemics, and the Power of the Union

*Nazia Kazi, Grievance Officer, reflects on how unions make the workplace safer, raising workplace safety concerns for the betterment of the institution and the community.*

I saw a report in September that found that nursing homes whose staff were unionized saw 30% fewer COVID19 deaths during the pandemic. These findings stuck with me as I navigated my first several months as Grievance Officer for SFT2275.

Serving as Grievance Officer during the pandemic has meant that the bulk of member concerns I've received have been pandemic-related. On the one hand, this has been a challenge: there is no clause in our Master Agreement on appropriate responses to a respiratory pandemic, nor is there much in the way of precedent. Nationally, many have remarked that OSHA was absent or weak for several months during the pandemic, investigating only a small fraction of employee complaints.

But I believe that the pandemic, as Charlotte Garden put it, "is highlighting how a lack of workplace power can make employees, their families, and their communities less safe, but it is also showing how unions can make a real difference when times are tough." The Union leadership here at Stockton has been clear: our Master Agreement's Article XXX on workplace safety applies in a moment like this. As Grievance Officer, I am tasked with ensuring that this section of the Master Agreement, like all others, is enforced.

The Brookings Institution found that Unions have been one of the most effective channels for raising workplace safety concerns, and that union members raise workplace complaints more than

non-unionized employees. My hope is that the pandemic has revealed just how important organized labor is, energizing workers to join unions where they exist and unionize where they don't.

As always, reach out to me at [Nazia.Kazi@sftunion.org](mailto:Nazia.Kazi@sftunion.org) if you believe a Master or Local Agreement has been violated.

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



## Local Negotiations Update for Spring 2021

*Tina Zappile, Lead Negotiator, discusses negotiations, staff reclassification, the new RARE Convenor, intellectual property, a brief annual overview as well as solicits feedback for setting the agenda for the upcoming year.*

### Negotiations

First, I want to recognize the work of the negotiating team in alphabetical order: Emari DiGiorgio (GENS), Rodger Jackson (ARHU), Tara Luke (NAMS), Adam Miyashiro

(ARHU), Anne Pomeroy (ARHU), and Kerri Sowers (HLTH). I also want to remind you that the local agreements page on our SFT website is continuously updated and maintained by Robert Castillo

(CTLD): <https://www.sftunion.org/local-agreements>. We recommend that this is your first stop to review local agreements!



### Staff Reclassification

We are thrilled to announce that the HR website has been updated with a new set of instructions and new application for staff reclassifications! This is long overdue. Our goal for more than a year has been for the administration to create a fair and clear process that meets the requirements of our Master Agreement. For reasons that remain inexplicable to us, the administration continued to drag their feet until very recently. This finally took a turn in our favor once we signaled that we were prepared to move forward to grieve their violation of the 90-day timeline for reclassifications and the need for an appeals process. Though this was technically not negotiated because management refused to do so over a year ago, SFT was included in the process and was given an opportunity to review drafts and submit recommendations for both the new application and set of instructions for reclassification and appeals. We consulted with several of our staff members to get feedback on early drafts and we appreciate the time that you took to provide comments and suggestions to the negotiating team, without which this would not have been possible. The new reclass and appeals application and process are loosely modeled after Montclair and Rowan and follow the requirements of the Master Agreement. Thank you again to all the staff who provided us with valuable feedback! You can find the new HR website for reclassification here: <https://stockton.edu/human-resources/reclassification.html>.

### New RARE Convenor

Our team moved quickly to negotiate a new RARE Convenor in April, immediately after the change to graduation requirements was passed by Faculty Senate and before final BOT approval on May 5th. We want to be clear that the new Convenor's MOA (which starts on July 1st) was negotiated to allow for this addendum and states: “\*New positions for similar graduation requirements may be added upon final approval by the

BOT”. Our approach to this new position demonstrated quick action on the part of the Union, working in cooperation with the Senate.

### Intellectual Property (IP)

I want to remind everyone that until we have a local agreement in place for IP, the administration has agreed to continue to use ARTICLE XXXIII COPYRIGHT OWNERSHIP from the 2015-2019 Master Agreement located on page 45 here: <http://www.cnjscl.org/AFT%20FT%202015-2019%20final%20contract.pdf>. Section A.1 identifies when the employee (i.e., you) is the sole owner, which generally includes all the materials produced for a course whether they are embodied in hand-written notes or a digital format. Please contact us if you have additional questions about this agreement and the implications it might have on your work. We are especially looking forward to working with our new Provost on this issue, given her extensive publication record in her field.

### Brief Annual Overview

Negotiations are winding down for the summer thanks to the hard work of the entire team over the last 20 months (most of whom did not receive compensation). Since January of 2020, the SFT negotiating team has worked on a total of 17 new agreements! We started with the NTTP agreement in January of 2020 and will end 2020-2021 with an MOA for a new faculty Director position for Murphy Writing at Stockton University. In addition to the series of new faculty leadership agreements, other important issues this past year have included the aforementioned new application and process for Professional Staff reclassification and the enforcement of the 2006 Online Course agreement for all eligible instructors. Additionally, we have established a new Faculty Transition to Retirement Program (2020-2024) that brings us in line with recent changes in state guidelines. We have continued to defend the COVID-19 MOAs for both staff and faculty as it has faced

various challenges. The negotiating team has worked continuously for the last 20 months to fairly represent you at the bargaining table, both locally and statewide.

### Moving Forward

One of our primary goals in 2021-2022 will be to solicit feedback from our members as many new agreements will be implemented for the first time. We have been hard at work, for example, ensuring that new NTTP contracts are not in violation of the new MOA in terms of assigned classes and overall workload. We will continue to reach out and gather information from all of you, and we ask for your input and cooperation so that we have as much feedback as possible for the next round of negotiations. If you can believe it, we will be back at the negotiating table on faculty leadership agreements as soon as Spring of 2022!

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



# Introductory Message from Incoming VP of Professional Staff, Tiffany Rice

*Tiffany Rice, Incoming VP of Professional Staff, introduces herself with a parable.*

Greetings Everyone! I am Tiffany Rice and I'm glad to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the SFT membership as your new Vice President of Professional Staff. I have been at Stockton and an SFT member for nearly seven years. I started my journey in 2014 as Complex Director within the Office of Residential Life and in 2020 I transitioned to a new role as a Student Success Coach for the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program. I have always admired our Union Leadership and I speak from experience when I say that they are committed to making our lives easier! It's what drew me to becoming a full member over five years ago and what has encouraged me to join their Leadership team.

I want you to know that I consider it a privilege to serve in this role! My goal is to not only address your concerns and solve them to the best of my ability, but also to empower you during these moments. I want you to know your rights at Stockton, how to exercise them, and where you can direct your colleagues and managers (when necessary) to learn about them too.

This may feel a little random, but please bear with me. I have thought a lot about the psychology behind elephants being tied to a tree. At a young age, they're connected to a tree by a 'string' that's strong enough to hold them in place. As they become fully grown, that same 'string' keeps them tied to that tree. Of course, the elephant is strong enough to break free, but it doesn't. That string has held them to the same tree for so long, that they've come to believe that this is as good as it gets. That the strength needed to set themselves free is more than what they possess.

In this story, we are the fully grown elephant and our Management team are the ties (string) that bind us to this institution (the tree). But as the story goes, if we don't know how strong and capable we are, we will constantly feel tied to the people, places, and things that do not serve us. I know that some of us are afraid of that string, afraid to disrupt what's been working for us, or afraid to speak up when we or others are being treated unfairly. I want to help you dismantle that way of thinking! I'm not saying that we can turn everything on its head,

with information that will make it harder for our managers to make our lives more difficult. I know that everyone isn't experiencing issues in their workplace, and that makes me happy! However, there are some who do not have that same experience and it's time for that to change.

I ran for this position not only to be an advocate for myself, but also for my colleagues! You are the professionals that I have spent the majority of my days working with and getting to know over these years. I have learned so much from many of you and have become a better professional because of it! I hope that you will consider reaching out to me if you ever have any questions. No conversation is too small or too large for us to discuss. Please send me an email, I'm more than happy to help! Stay safe and remember, you have a team behind you! Reach out via email at [tiffany.rice@sftunion.org](mailto:tiffany.rice@sftunion.org).

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*Tiffany Rice  
Stockton University  
Vice President of  
Professional Staff SFT Local 2275*





# Funds Available at Stockton to Support Adjuncts' Research and Creative Projects

*Maxine Patroni, Vice President of Adjuncts, describes the Adjunct Opportunity Fund the Union and Administration worked collectively to establish.*



Are you a Stockton adjunct working on a scholarly or creative project?

Typically, colleges and universities have little funding for adjuncts to pursue their research, passions, and crafts, but at Stockton, the Union and Administration worked together to create the Adjunct Opportunity Fund. This fund provides financial assistance for adjuncts who are working on their academic or artistic ideas. Individuals who apply for the grant are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 to support travel, living expenses, conference fees, equipment, and other necessities, so they can enhance their area of expertise.

In the past, some of the requirements for the online application have been employment at Stockton for the term in which the adjunct is applying, a detailed description of the project, a curriculum vitae, and approval from the dean. With the intended deadline for the fall 2021 proposal being September 16, 2021, this is a great opportunity to start planning ahead. Information regarding the Adjunct Opportunity Fund and call for submissions will be sent to adjunct faculty's Stockton email accounts in August, 2021. If you need any additional information to get started on your proposal early, please reach out to [grants@stockton.edu](mailto:grants@stockton.edu).

As always, if you have any questions about the Adjunct Opportunity Fund or Stockton Federation of Teachers, please email me at [maxine.patroni@sftunion.org](mailto:maxine.patroni@sftunion.org) at your earliest convenience.

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

## SFT Local 2275's Committee on Political Education (COPE) Endorses and Supports Three for State Legislature and One for Clerk

*Brian Tyrrell, Committee on Political Education (COPE) Director, announces support and endorsement for Mazzeo for State Senate, Fitzpatrick and Armato for Assembly, and Jiampetti for County Clerk.*

The SFT Local 2275 officially endorses for State Senate - Vince Mazzeo, for General Assembly - John Armato & Caren Fitzpatrick, all from District 2, and for Atlantic County Clerk - Lisa Jiampetti. We are confident that all three will support education in a way that reflects the goals of the union.

It will be a busy election season in New Jersey, with Governor Murphy running for reelection, the aforementioned legislative ticket of Mazzeo, Armato and Fitzpatrick (pictured below) and other state legislative races, as well as a host of other county and local races that are of importance to the Stockton Federation of Teachers.

The Committee on Political Education (COPE) will be releasing a full list of endorsements in the summer edition of the newsletter. In a typical year we would have candidates visiting pay day parties to address our members and allow for questions. We look forward to continuing that tradition when we next gather. For now, look for invitations to the political functions we are sponsoring for those candidates we endorse and support financially. If these are of interest to you, please reach out and I'll get you on an invite list.

COPE funds do not come out of union members' dues, but rather from additional contributions by

generous members who understand that 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*



## **The SFT Local 2275's Family is Growing! Pam Cross and the Union are Delighted to Introduce you to Lucas.**

*Pam Cross, the SFT Union's official bearer of baby news, introduces Lucas Abernathy to the family, and sends a special plea to send news of new SFT babies to keep the sunshine coming.*

Claire Abernathy and her husband Jay Fisher are thrilled to welcome their first child, Lucas Abernathy Fisher. Lucas was born on Wednesday, April 28, weighing 7lbs 4oz and measuring 20 inches long. He has already brought so much joy to our little family!

If you know of any new SFT babies, please let Pam Cross know at [pam.cross@stockton.edu](mailto:pam.cross@stockton.edu).

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*Pam Cross, Ph.D.  
Stockton University  
Executive Committee  
SFT Local 2275*



**Welcome to the SFT Family Lucas!**



## Support our Colleagues at Patterson University

*SFT Members,*

*As you may have heard our colleagues at William Patterson University are facing a push from management to fire faculty and professional staff. They need our support and one way you can do this is to log on to the link below and sign the petition which will be sent to Governor Murphy.*

*Thank you and we will keep you posted.*

[https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/saving-jobs-and-programs-at-william-paterson-university-2021?source=direct\\_link&](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/saving-jobs-and-programs-at-william-paterson-university-2021?source=direct_link&)

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

## Thanks for Reading!

This newsletter was produced through the generous contributions of the Stockton Federation of Teachers Local 2275 Executive Committee and our Friends. If you have any questions, comments or contributions you'd like to add, please do not hesitate to reach out to the lead editor, Brian Tyrrell, Communications Director for the Stockton Federation of Teachers 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*

