

Stockton Federation of Teachers Local 2275

Quarterly Newsletter



2021 3rd Quarter



President's Update - 2

Pulling Back the Curtain

Treasurer's Update - 3

Pecuniary Predictions Portend Prosperity

Grievance Update - 3

Reaching Out to Your Grievance Officer

Negotiations Update - 4

How We Negotiate; Agreements, Bargaining, and Transparency

Professional Staff Update - 6

Help Create a Staff Senate

Events Update - 6

SFT Fun Day at R&J Farms!

Adjunct Update - 7

AFT QCC FAQ: Questions From Adjunct Faculty About COVID and the New Normal

COPE Update - 8

Vote early, vote often (over multiple elections please)!

They've Arrived - 8

A New Grandbaby to Celebrate!

Pulling Back the Curtain

President of SFT Local 2275, Emari DiGiorgio, welcomes you behind the scenes to illuminate the often invisible work of the Union and to remind you that we are, in fact, here for you.

I distinctly remember the first meeting I attended as a new faculty member. Faculty, faculty librarians, and professional staff piled into the old A-wing auditorium and the SFT president launched a Star Wars-themed presentation, wherein management was aligned with the Empire and the Union with the Rebels. In retrospect, that analogy was only helpful to a point because at no time does Luke or Leia or the entire Rebel Alliance have to work alongside the Emperor, the Sith, and the Clone Army.

What I'm trying to say is that one way to unite is against a common enemy, but another is to band together in the interest of taking care of and uplifting each other. That's the Union I have come to know and love at Stockton, and I realize it's not entirely visible to everyone.

This column is a peek behind the curtain.

Our Union officers (and peers) listen to impassioned and outraged emails, to tearful stories over the phone, to well-researched arguments, to you. Our Union takes this collective voice and advocates across campus, whether it's a search for a new Provost, a Middle States Committee, or UROC. Our Union also reaches out beyond the University to build alliances with other trades and educators, community members, and the government.

Our Union sits with you if you've had a negative response during the personnel or reclassification process. They are a sounding board and rebuttal help. Our Union intervenes if discipline is on the horizon, explains the process, and defends your job and wages. Our Union seeks equity and transparency, asks Management and HR for clarity on



official and unofficial policies. This has been particularly important to ensure our safety during COVID-19. Our Union asks Management (and each of us, truly) to remember we are real people trying to survive a pandemic, that we deserve grace and compassion.

Our Union takes you seriously, even if the issue is outside of our purview.

Our Union takes you seriously, even if the issue is outside of our purview. Our Union helps members file Campus Hearing Board or Title IX complaints and EEOC discrimination charges. Our Union demands that you are paid fairly for the work that you do, whether you're chairing your program or chaperoning students

over Spring Break.

Our Union is finding new ways for us to gather in-person and online. Our Union is a literal and metaphorical shoulder.

In the first three months of my term, I have been awed by our Union, by the number of people who care about each other and Stockton. Much of the work the Union does is quiet and without fanfare. No fists or chants at the negotiation table, no bullhorns in K-wing.

It is my hope to invite more people behind the curtain, to see what we do and to be part of this grand and honorable production.

--

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

Pecuniary Predictions Portend Prosperity

Stacey Rose, Treasurer, details her efforts to wrangle efficiency from an unruly budget. With smart decision-making she turns a would-be deficit into near-term stability.

It feels strange to say, but the pandemic has given me more confidence about our financial stability. Despite the reduction in our dues income (Thanks furloughs!), we were able to apply for supplemental funding, receive refunds, and maximize the benefits of being a part of AFT (Hello, Zoom subscription!) to ensure we have a healthy financial outlook.

Right now, we are dealing with pandemic-related supply chain issues causing shortages and price increases. Ordinary items, like the candy for the office or purchasing a new computer for Sue, have become a

more expensive challenge. However, we are committed to minimizing any disruption to you, our members.

We've also had to reimagine our PayDay parties, balancing the need to be physically distant while still maintaining social closeness. While our events will be fewer, they will be larger to promote safety.

Finally, I am continuing to find ways to re-evaluate our finances. At the start of the pandemic, we switched payroll processors. This switch has cut our payroll processing costs in half. We have officially switched from a debit card to a credit card;

this switch provides us cashback in the form of a statement credit, reducing some of our expenses. It's small efficient changes like these that allow us to smartly reallocate funds.

While many things have been unpredictable, one thing I think we can safely predict is financial stability for the union.

--

*Stacey Rose
Stockton University
Treasurer, SFT Local 2275*



Reaching Out to Your Grievance Officer

If you have an issue that requires the Union's attention, you should know how to begin the process. In this article, Nazia Kazi, Grievance Officer, details the early steps in an official grievance.

The grievance procedure is in place to ensure that all of our agreements are being appropriately observed. If you suspect you have a formal grievance (or an unfair labor practice, which can be a violation of state or federal employment law), please contact me at Nazia.Kazi@sftunion.org

For privacy reasons, I ask that you use my SFT email address and, whenever possible, contact me from a non-Stockton.edu email address. If you wish, you can easily set up your own SFT email account by contacting [Phil Polsinelli](#) or you may reach out to me through your personal email

address.

If you know which section of an agreement has been violated, you can include that in your message to me, along with any documentation concerning the matter, to help the process along. If you are unsure whether an agreement has been violated, I can help locate the relevant section and see whether you have a formal grievance on your hands. Be sure to contact me as soon as possible after the possible violation has occurred. With grievances, timing and documentation are of the essence!

If we are unable to locate a particular agreement that has been violated, the Union may still be able to intervene to advocate on your behalf. In recent months, we have assisted members navigating COVID safety issues, university-wide communication protocols, and have helped members locate and interpret the relevant agreements in a number of matters.

--

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

How We Negotiate; Agreements, Bargaining, and Transparency

Have you ever been curious about the process of negotiations? Lead Negotiator, Tina Zappile, takes you behind the scenes to show you how the sausage is made.

First, I'd like to announce the '21-'22 negotiations team in alphabetical order: Emari DiGiorgio (GENS), Rodger Jackson (ARHU), Tara Luke (NAMS), Anne Pomeroy (ARHU), and Kerri Sowers (HLTH). I want to thank Adam Miyashiro (ARHU) for his service on the negotiating team for the last several years and wish him luck in his new role in the union. We will miss you!

Local Agreements Website

As a reminder, our local agreements are located at <https://www.sftunion.org/local-agreements>. We frequently update this page with newly signed agreements and archive old agreements once they expire. This section of the SFT website is updated by Robert Castillo (CTLD), who I want to thank for his service. We recommend that this is your first step to find Stockton's local agreements!

SFT's Approach to Local Bargaining

For members, bargaining is a big part of what unions do, yet most of you are not involved in that process. A lot of the work that we do might seem invisible. While SFT does bargain with our administration in closed sessions throughout the year, we are constantly seeking your input throughout the bargaining process.

Transparency is important, we recognize that, and it can take different forms. It might be us reaching out to you directly to ask questions, some of you have received those emails over the last few years from members of our negotiating team. It might be us asking a small group of members to review drafts of agreements that directly pertain to their job(s) which. As we did this with the new staff agreement for performance-based promotions and the new HR application for staff

reclassification.

It might be us keeping in close contact with some of you during the bargaining process to ask for input on counter-proposals. In '20, we worked with several individuals on issues that came up with faculty leadership positions. It might be us sending out a member-wide survey to ask for your views and hear about your experiences in certain roles. We used this for all of the faculty leadership positions, where we pored over the results to gain insights about how to proceed in the bargaining process.

Finally, you might notice that our negotiating team members represent different schools and experiences and are all involved in campus leadership. We rely heavily on the networks that each of our team members has built to connect informally to many of you. We do our best to listen to you and we will continue to do so. While we cannot always deliver on what every single member would like, we carefully weigh the information

available to us at the time to make the best decision possible given our goals, principles, and constraints.

What is the structure of bargaining at our university? We have been meeting via Zoom since March '20 and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. We recognize that we have to model what safety in the workplace looks like, virtual meetings are just one of the ways in which we are doing that in '21-'22. Shortly after March '20, union leaders around the world were discussing best practices in digital bargaining. We used many of those sources to set our ground rules and make virtual meetings as fair (and secure) as possible. Once the ground rules for the actual meetings had been established, we scheduled a series of 5-8 "table sessions" with the administration where we all met together. However, a lot happens outside of those meetings, as well.

What is the process of bargaining at our university? The bargaining





process starts when one side issues a demand to negotiate, after which a first draft will be made. Typically, the side that issues a demand will put together the first draft, but that's not always the case. When there is greater collaboration on an issue, the decision about who will write the first draft might be different. Once a first draft is circulated, the other side then meets to review it, makes decisions about what to accept and what to counter, marks it up accordingly, and then sends it back as a new draft. That same process continues until an agreement is reached. Table sessions include a mix of formal bargaining and informal discussions where we learn more about each other's interests and positions. This continues after meetings through emails and hallway conversations (or Zoom conversations if you're not on campus).

Principles that guide us are numerous, the primary one being "good faith bargaining". This means that neither side can backtrack and take back what they already agreed to in the most recent draft of a tentative

agreement. Others certainly apply too, but at this point, if you're still reading and you're interested in this topic, you might want to take it to Google Scholar to read more. And then contact me or Emari to ask about a position on the negotiating team! But in all seriousness, we are happy to talk more about what guides our negotiations at the local or the state level to anyone who's interested.

Staff Performance-Based Promotions

After more than a year of being delayed, the administration has finally agreed to negotiate a replacement MOA for the one that was set to expire in a few years. The old agreement is now considered expired, and the new one is in effect. Improvements to the agreement include greater clarity on who does what in terms of starting the process and putting together a file for promotion. Firstly, the criteria for promotions were updated to be more fair and equitable to all professional staff, regardless of title. They were also revised to be more clear and

more easily measurable.

'21-'22 Agenda

As of the printing of this newsletter we have not met with the administration and set an agenda for negotiations. We do know that a priority item is creating a new program and local agreement for Diversity ABD Fellows. These positions are for ABD faculty who might transition into a full-time faculty position once they complete their degree. We will keep you updated as things develop and the new Provost has a chance to get settled into her position.

Intellectual Property (IP)

Like last year, until we have a local agreement in place for IP, the administration has agreed to continue to use ARTICLE XXXIII COPYRIGHT OWNERSHIP from the '15-'19 Master Agreement. 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.

Feedback on Faculty Leadership Positions

One of our primary goals in '21-'22 is to solicit feedback from our members on the series of new faculty leadership agreements that are in place now for the first time. We will reach out and gather information starting in early Spring 2022. At that time, we will ask for your input and cooperation so that we have as much feedback as possible.

--

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

Help Create a Staff Senate

Maria Spade and Lauren Fonseca are working hard to form a Staff Senate at the University. Now is the time to get involved and help create a committee that speaks with your voice, here's how...

This past year has been challenging for everyone. Professional staff have faced many obstacles and voiced numerous concerns which the union has worked hard to address. Unfortunately, the union cannot assist with all of the concerns that are raised. It is because of this that members of The Professional Staff Advisory Committee met with Lauren Fonseca, Tutoring Center Specialist/Coordinator of Academic Support, to discuss how we can collaborate to make the Staff Senate a reality. Lauren is leading the interest group for Staff Senate with the hopes that this can become a reality before the end of the academic year.

In early September, a handful of interested professional staff members met with our colleagues at TCNJ to discuss how they formed their staff senate and the types of issues they have addressed. They also

shared their constitution and gave us permission to use it as a guide for our own founding documents which we've placed in a Blackboard course. Staff members from any union are welcome to examine them, just email Lauren Fonseca (lauren.fonseca@sftunion.org) for an invitation to contribute to our constitution.

In addition to the Senate interest groups, the Professional Staff Advisory Committee met to see how they can assist staff members. The Professional Staff Advisory is a new committee within the union and it is designed to help and support our professional staff members. We met for the first time this year and will be planning a series of workshops and training sessions to help the professional staff learn about important union topics. To help ensure that we can have as many staff as possible attend the sessions,

we will be holding them in different formats, such as informal brown bag sessions and formal workshops.

We are looking forward to building up the Professional Staff Advisory Committee and assisting with the formation of the Staff Senate. If there are any staff members that would like to be a part of the SFT Professional Staff Advisory Committee or assist with the startup of Staff Senate, please contact Maria Spade (maria.spade@sftunion.org) or Lauren Fonseca (lauren.fonseca@sftunion.org).

--

*Maria Spade
Stockton University
Events Manager
SFT Local 2275*

SFT Fun Day at R&J Farms!

The pandemic has altered much about how we work and socialize, one of the things that has been greatly missed by our members are our payday parties. Being able to get together with our SFT friends over a yummy meal was always a good time. Since we are not quite ready to hold indoor events yet, we knew we had to devise another way to meet up with our SFT friends.

Earlier this month we hosted our first SFT Fun Day at R&J Farms. SFT members and their families joined us on the farm for some pumpkin picking, corn mazes, a barbecue luncheon and some great music from the faculty band.

We look forward to being able to



resume our payday parties and especially honor those that have retired during COVID. In the meantime, we will continue to look for safe and fun events we can sponsor so our SFT friends and family can still get together. If you have any ideas for safe outside events, please let us know. You can email Maria Spade (maria.spade@sftunion.org) with your ideas.

- Maria Spade

AFT QCC FAQ: Questions From Adjunct Faculty About COVID and the New Normal

Maxine Patroni, Vice President of Adjuncts, provides a recap of the important issues discussed at our first-ever Adjunct Virtual Chat.

Many adjuncts have not taught a face-to-face course at Stockton University since before we left for spring break in March '20; returning to campus with new policies and protocols prompted a lot of questions from our adjunct community. To address these questions (Q), comments (C), and concerns (C), the Stockton Federation of Teachers held its first Adjunct QCC Virtual Chat on Monday, September 20th at 6:00pm. Nazia Kazi, SFT Grievance Officer, Sue Burrows, SFT Office Manager, and I discussed and answered questions ranging from contact-tracing for COVID-19 on campus to whether students need to inform the University if they have COVID. Below are some questions, answers, and resources we wanted to share with you.

What is it like to return to face-to-face teaching at Stockton this fall 2021 semester?

Adjunct faculty teaching virtually this semester asked about the general experience of being back on campus. While the University is following CDC guidelines, those of

us holding class at Stockton noted challenges such as: students not wearing masks properly, lack of or vague notifications/reasoning from students who are missing class for medical reasons, and lack of universal testing for COVID-19.

When an area of campus is exposed to COVID-19, what goes into the deep cleaning process?

John Fritsch, Assistant VP of Facilities Management and Plant Operations Division of Facilities and Operations, said that they ask everyone in the area to leave for about 30 minutes while they fog the office/area – he said the fog sits for about 5-10 minutes. Custodial will then disinfect the area with EPA approved chemicals, especially on high-touch surfaces.

Do adjuncts who teach fully online have to be vaccinated?

Yes, even if an adjunct only teaches online at Stockton, they must be vaccinated (unless they have a religious or medical exemption). The reasoning is that the University has

no way of knowing if the adjunct comes to campus for an event, meeting, or other circumstance.

What are contact-tracing protocols and are students/faculty mandated to report that they have COVID or have been exposed?

If you have questions such as this and beyond, take a look at two resources: [Stockton's Return to Campus FAQ](#) page and the [University Resilience Operations Committee's \(UROC\) page](#).

We plan on hosting another virtual QCC chat in mid-October to continue our discussion about pressing concerns on campus, teaching during the pandemic, and anything else you bring to the conversation. Hope to see you there!

--

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



Vote early, vote often (over multiple elections please)!

Brian Tyrrell, Committee on Political Education (COPE) Director, reminds you that elections are very important to the Union. Do your part and vote.

November 2nd is upon us, and I can't impress upon you how much your vote counts. This has been a particularly contentious election. The race for state senate and assembly is particularly close this year, so your vote matters more than ever.

In most election years, campaigns begin to pick up steam around September. This year, that momentum began in May. Your COPE committee has been attending functions since the spring semester. Levi Fox, Erin O'Hanlon, Rodger Jackson and Emari D'Giorgio each should be thanked for their tireless efforts in this regard. Thanks as well to all those members

who have come out to support our union at these political functions. Your participation helps promote the interest of the Stockton Federation of Teachers.

So regardless of your political affiliation, get to the polls on November 2nd. Support union interests and support the working class.

--

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



A New Grandbaby to Celebrate!

Pam Cross introduces Grayson Michael Miller Rivera, son of Assistant Coordinator of Field Education in Social Work, Hilda Rivera Rodriguez.

Congratulations to our colleague Hilda Rivera Rodriguez, Assistant Coordinator of Field Education in Social Work, who has welcomed a new grandson to our SFT family: Grayson Michael Miller Rivera.

The deets: Baby Grayson was born on 9/9/21, 8lbs. 6oz, 21 inches.

You know this picture made our Sue Burrows' day, week, month! What a cutie!

--

*Pam Cross
Stockton University
Executive Committee
SFT Local 2275*



Welcome to the SFT Family
Grayson Michael Miller Rivera!