

PFF Negotiations Update

4/12/2007

Tentative Agreements (TA)

I am happy to announce that the PFF and the District have signed tentative agreements (TA) on the following contract articles:

Article 6 Union Rights: The new language in this article clarifies the transfer of bargaining unit data from HR/Payroll to the PFF and also clarifies the process by which full-time and part-time faculty can take release/reassigned time when working as elected officers for the PFF.

Article 9 Leaves: The new language in this article not only restores summer load banking, it further assures the fairness that load bank leave is offered to all tenured faculty members and also clarifies several sabbatical leave procedures and the catastrophic leave bank language.

Article 12 Department Chairs/Directors: The new language allows TERB (Tenure and Evaluations Review Board) to develop and test an evaluation process for department chairs. TERB will facilitate evaluations on selected department chairs during the spring and fall 2007 semesters as a trial run process. These evaluations will not become part of the chair's personnel file. We believe this is the best means to attain the appropriate evaluation criteria for the Department Chairs.

Article 16 Benefits: The District and PFF have agreed to keep both full and part-time benefits at their current level of coverage. With the alarming increase in rates (PPO increasing by 23%; Kaiser increasing by 14%), this is a significant gain. Some new language was also added that allows part-time faculty to qualify for health care coverage if they work an average of 50% load over 4 semesters.

Article 20 Working Conditions: The new language in this article secures part-time faculty office space in the new Natural Science building and opens up a dialog with the District to assess the needs for expanding part-time office space in the future.

Article 26 Distance Education and the Impact of Technology: This article has been completely rearranged and re-titled. The new title will be: *Broadcasting and Recording Instruction* and will focus mainly on Palomar College produced television courses and how faculty members are reimbursed for producing and teaching these courses.

Remaining Articles

Article 4 Workload and Calendar: The PFF and the District are currently negotiating reductions in workload for several disciplines and departments and the clarification of other workload language. The PFF is currently in the process of constructing a counterproposal. We expect a positive resolution on this article soon.

Article 8 Course Maximums: The new language in this article clarifies the process by which course maximums are established and maintained. It also transfers some language about online instruction from article 26. The PFF is currently waiting for the District's counterproposal but are optimistic about closure soon.

Article 17 Evaluations: The PFF and the District are currently negotiating evaluation appeals language and expect to come to an agreement on this issue soon.

Article 27 Child Development Center: This is a new article that may or may not be added to the contract during this round of negotiations. A taskforce is currently working on removing Child Development Center language from all other articles, so as to incorporate them in one article to increase clarity. This is a monumental task and may not be completed until the re-opener round of negotiations in the fall.

Article 15 Compensation: Since this is the major money item article it is always held until the end of negotiations except for the early release of the full COLA, which the PFF successfully secured early in this round of negotiations. Compensation has many sections: full-time faculty matrix, part-time faculty matrix, full-time overload matrix, release/reassigned time and stipends and a potential Special Early Retirement Program (SERP) more commonly known as the “Golden Handshake”. Here is an update on each of these items:

Full-time faculty matrix, part-time faculty matrix and full-time faculty overload matrix: The District agreed to fund an outside agency to conduct an objective evaluation of both the full-time faculty salary schedule and the part-time faculty hourly schedule. The full-time salary schedule analysis compares Palomar to 14 other single college districts while the part-time hourly schedule analysis compares Palomar to 5 other geographically proximal colleges in the area. Both analyses are complete and both clearly demonstrate the need to adjust each of the matrices. At the beginning of negotiations the District asserted their motivation to produce a fair and equitable faculty compensation package and to determine the steps to attain that package. The PFF is currently in the process of generating its compensation proposal. It will be fair and equitable and will expect the District to make great strides in securing the end goal. With the combination of the equalization money, the bond, and a healthy ending fund balance, the PFF is optimistic that an excellent compensation package can be secured.

Release/Reassigned Time and Stipends: Several faculty members have requested an increase in release/reassignment time or stipends. Both negotiating teams are in the process of hearing each faculty member present their individual needs. A request for increased release/reassignment time and stipends will be part of the overall compensation process and is close to being completed.

SERP: Many rounds of discussion have ensued over this issue and with the data from a feasibility study done by an outside agency, it has become clear that this is not the year for a SERP. There are just too many factors working against this process and the District has concluded that any gains would be marginal at best and could even end up costing the District. The PFF will reevaluate this issue during re-openers in the fall to see if the situation changes enough to make a SERP possible next year.

The PFF will continue to fight to improve the working conditions of both full and part-time faculty members at Palomar College. Please support us by joining the union if you haven't already and volunteering to serve on committees, workgroups, and taskforces. If you have any questions about the contract or negotiations, please don't hesitate to contact me at rmorrisette@palomar.edu.