

Here is a brief report of our CCCFT General Membership meeting on 5/29/14 from 4:00 to 6:00.

In attendance: David Buchthal, Sharon Saxton, Jill Jund, Jonathan Goff, Paul Glezen, David Ortiz, Danielle Powell, Louise Spiegler, Chris Byrne

This was the (very informal) agenda.

- Food and Friendship
- 2015-2016 calendar
- New website info
- Reflections on this year
- Planning for next year

We spend the first half an hour or so, just talking informally. There was, however, a good deal of conversation about the challenges of teaching online classes and especially of the need for a Proctoring Center where students can take tests and exams. We also talked about the possibility of the College contracting with an online proctoring service. Connected with this was a discussion about the need for a fulltime E-Learning Director. We wondered together how we might push the college to develop more a more robust support system for online teaching overall especially since, as enrollment grows but classroom availability does not, it seems likely that faculty will be asked to do more and more online teaching in the future.

Regarding the 2015-2016 calendar. As most people know, one of the proposals has a 2-week spring break. Rosemary has told us that the library says that this will incur a cost for Cascadia, perhaps as high as 10K, since we will be out of synch with UWB and we would have to bear the cost of keeping the library open for our students. (This is different information that we received from Sunny B. when we established the 2014-2015 calendar.) In any case, we have polled faculty via Survey Monkey; at the time of this writing (Sunday 6/1) 31 respondents have said they prefer a 1-week break in 2015; 8 respondents have expressed a preference for a 2-week break. With this in mind, we will, in all likelihood, agree on the 1-week break option in our JCAC meeting on 6/2. (Info to follow on that).

Dave Shapiro presented the new, in-development, CCCFT Website on the AFT Statewide web hosting site. (If you are reading this, you've found it.) Getting this set up has taken some time and it is still very much a work-in-progress. So far, our CBA, Constitution, and some JCAC reports on there; also, lots of information that gets automatically uploaded by AFT and AFT-WA can be found. In the coming weeks and months, more information and resources will be put there for members to access. The site currently does not support threaded discussions, but that is something we will continue to look into.

We spent about 10 minutes reflecting on the year that has passed, using the list of aspirations generated in our first General Membership meeting of the year as a way to consider what we've achieved and what we still have to do. While we noted that we have had some successes, most of what we set out to achieve is still in progress.

We then had a very rich discussion for the last half hour or so of the meeting thinking together about where we'd like to see the Union and College headed in the coming year(s).

Dave S. reminded folks that we will be opening negotiations on our 2015-2018 contract. He mentioned that AFT-WA encourages Unions to do what they call a "contract campaign" to solicit as much information as possible from the membership about what we'd like to see in a new CBA.

A few things we talked about included:

- Lower class caps (especially for some classes whose caps were raised in the 2012-2015 CBA)
- A more robust role for the Union to play in promoting teaching excellence and recognition for teaching excellence at the college
- Ways to promote professional development that not only helps us improve as teachers but also enables us to manage our workloads more effectively

And then, for the last twenty minutes, we mostly talked about climate issues at Cascadia, in particular, challenges faced by faculty of color, especially those who teach courses that raise issues of race, class, and gender. There was a general agreement that institution has failed to respond effectively to these challenges and has consistently allowed inappropriate and even unsafe behavior on the part of some students to continue, even after this has been communicated time and again over the years.

We explored some ways the Union play a role in supporting any and all faculty who feel disrespected and unsafe in the classroom. Some of the suggestions that came up included:

- Establish, via our CCCFT Constitution, a Human Rights Chair on the Steering Committee. This position would be the "point person" for faculty who experience discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. In such cases, the HR Chair could be a direct link between the CCCFT and the chair of the Washington State Human Rights Commission, enabling us to provide a much clearer and likely more robust response to incidents than our current disciplinary process establishes.
- Make sure the Union works with the Cascadia Conduct Officer to ensure that there is a better understanding of the disciplinary process for all parties involved.

- Establish, through the Union, a phone/email tree so that faculty who are experiencing inappropriate behavior in the classroom have an ally to call upon easily and immediately.
- Create a “job shadow” system so that faculty who are teaching the 150 classes (and other such challenging courses) can have a fellow faculty member visit their class in the first few weeks of classes as means of developing stronger support structures throughout the college

It was communicated, in no uncertain terms, that Cascadia’s statewide reputation as a workplace for faculty of color is not good; we have a lot of work to do as a college and a Union to improve that; everyone agreed that this is an important task and one that we are committed to.

The meeting ended at 6:00.