Dear Faculty, we begin this newsletter with words from our new Co-President, Lawrence Hamilton Lawson.

We are best when we listen to each other, learn from each other, grow together, mature together, and fight together. Union means together. Joined. Aimed at the same goals. Moving in the same direction (even if a few fish are swimming sideways). Goals like safe working conditions. A safe campus. A vibrant campus. Access to resources to help us grow professionally. A decent wage and health benefits. An enrollment process that drops barriers for students to get into our classes. Admin that understand and support faculty and the educational experiences happening in our classrooms. Faculty that support the staff that helps our college operate.

My mother transferred to a Union print shop when I was very young. I remember the Union not because she showed my brother and I any sort of pamphlets or swag—but because we suddenly got to go out to McDonald’s a few times a month on Friday nights. I still vividly remember sitting in my Mom’s truck joyfully digging through my Happy Meal. Just as I vividly remember standing in line outside my elementary school a year or so earlier waiting for free cheese, rice, and other government-provided staples. A Happy Meal may not seem like a lot, especially if you grew up comfortable, but it was a lot to me and it meant a lot to me and it still hits me when I take my daughter to McDonald’s for a vanilla cone (our weekly pandemic ritual) and see a picture of a Happy Meal on the menu. It reminds me of where I was—how we could afford to eat out sometimes—and where I am now. All of it because of Unions—my Mom’s and now mine.

I know we’re not fighting for Happy Meals here. But we are fighting for happy. For content. For health. For respect. For our contract. For parity. For our emergency funds. For our students’ learning conditions. For our working conditions.

I will never not fight for any of that because I know some of that support reaches a member’s kid and maybe that kid is also really excited about the Friday night meal they get to have with their Mom because someone values their Mom’s work enough to pay them decently in return for it.

Unions are amazing. And life-changing. Unions work because of you, and I am honored to help lead ours as part of an amazing team.

Lawrence Hamilton Lawson (he/his)
Associate Professor, ESL at Palomar College
Co-President, Palomar Faculty Federation AFT 6161
RPCV Ukraine 05-07
We’re grateful to have a full eBoard serving our faculty!

This year we welcome back Barbara Baer, Co-President; Joel Glassman, Treasurer; and Executive Board members Anastasia Zavodny, Barbara Hammons, Bill Jahnel, Patrick O’Brien, Martin Japクト, Mercedes Tiggs, Andre Pitts, and Shelbi Hathaway.

A new academic year also means new PFF Executive Board Members. Elected in Spring ’22 for the next two years are Lawrence Hamilton Lawson, Co-President (FT, ESL), and Executive Board members Russell Backman (FT, English), Alyssa Vafaei (PT, DRC), and Tanessa Sanchez (FT, Child Development). Board members serve two year terms to represent the faculty needs on Union matters. Please say hello to our new eBoard members and let them know any issues or concerns that they can bring back to the board.

Ombuds Bill, Anastasia, and Alyssa are currently sorting their areas and responsibilities. Katy Farrell and Patrick O’Brien continue as Grievance Officers. The Negotiations Team includes Lead Jenny Fererro, Co-Presidents Barbara and Lawrence, Will Dalrymple, and PFF’s Executive Director Debbie Forward. Nicole Siminski joins the team to work on Class Caps.

Want to serve with us? We have places for PFF members to represent on campus committees, so please connect with us to find out more. Please join our meetings on the 2nd (Zoom) & 4th (Hybrid from MO-111) Thursdays, 4-6pm, when school is in session. You can find out more about all of us at www.palomarfacfed.org/about-us.

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L to R: Lawrence Hamilton Lawson, Alyssa Vafaei, Russell Backman, and Tanessa Sanchez

Negotiations

Your PFF Negotiations Team worked all summer to finalize the last year of the 2019-2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). We are thrilled to announce that we wrapped up the 2021/22 reopeners with numerous gains for faculty and movement towards part-time parity. Highlights of the gains include increased part-time faculty compensation for office hours and shared governance participation; improved part-time health care benefits; restructuring of the way department chair reassigned time is calculated (no more weird matrix!); improvements to reassigned time positions and stipend calculations; and providing language clean-up and clarification throughout several articles. We also signed an MOU for a 6.56% COLA to all faculty salaries and applicable stipends retroactive to 7/1/22. Additionally, the class caps negotiations team worked with the District throughout the summer to clean up the master class caps list, finishing the AMBA, L&L, and SBS divisions. Please visit the PFF website for detailed negotiations updates!

Next up: negotiating a new three-year contract for faculty covering 2022-2025. This means that we will negotiate a new CBA that covers the three-year period. Both parties will mutually agree which Articles and Appendices need attention, and anything and everything in the CBA is potentially open for negotiation. In the following two years (2023/24 and 2024/25), Article 15: Compensation (including Appendices F, G, H) and Article 16: Benefits will be reopened each year for renegotiation. In addition, each party can choose to reopen up to two additional articles for renegotiation. We have already negotiated Article 16 for the new three-year contract, and plan to start full contract negotiations immediately. This will likely continue throughout the fall and into the spring. We are also continuing our class caps negotiations on a regular basis.

PFF’s Official Safety Statement

The Palomar Faculty Federation reaffirms its commitment to a safe environment for all members of the Palomar College Community. PFF Executive Board and Staff hold themselves to the highest standards of professionalism, and they expect the same of all of its members. Our professionalism includes, but is not limited to, the responsibility to advise the District immediately of any condition which a reasonable person would consider unsafe (Article 13.4 in the CBA), adherence to equal employment and equal educational opportunity laws and regulations (Article 24.1), fidelity to and defense of the contract, academic excellence (Article 24.5), academic freedom (Article 3), and respect for students (Article 24.4). The safety of our students, faculty, and staff is the highest priority for the Palomar Faculty Federation, and we are, and always will be, able partners seeking solutions when the safety of anyone in our Palomar community is at risk. Faculty members may contact PFF with any questions or for assistance.