



Greetings!

To assist you in reporting to your department colleagues, please see the summary (below) of the last Representative Assembly meeting. All hyperlinks are intact.

WELCOME + A REVIEW OF THE FA's STRUCTURE AS AN INDEPENDENT UNION

- SMC's Faculty Association is an independent union, representing all faculty who work at SMC in our credit and noncredit programs. That includes instructional and non-instructional faculty.
- Currently, that is about 1200+ faculty members. Relatively speaking, that makes us a big union
- Our union structure is incredibly effective:
 - We have a dedicated role for the FA Executive Secretary (Melissa Pardo)
 - Four officer positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary) to which members are elected every two years.
 - Currently, those four officeholders are: President - Peter Morse; Vice President - Elaine Roque; Treasurer - Kym McBride; and Recording Secretary - Diane Arieff
 - The fifth officer is in a non-elected position, appointed by the president and approved by the RA: that is the role of Chief Negotiator - Matt Hotsinpillar
 - The FA also has an Executive Committee of around 18 members, who are approved each year. They are recommended by the President and presented to the RA
 - Finally, the FA's largest body is our Representative Assembly, made up of members from all departments of the college, serving two-year terms. Each area is guaranteed at minimum one FT and one PT representative.
 - Note: PT reps are paid to attend Rep Assembly meetings & serve in this role.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FA REPRESENTATIVES AS A COLLECTIVE BODY

- The RA as a whole has a number of responsibilities, outlined in our [Bylaws](#), including approving the FA's annual budget in October, approving recommended appointments to the Executive Committee, upon recommendation of the Chief Negotiator and Negotiating Council, approving topics for negotiation and the "Sunshine Letter" which is presented to the district in Spring.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF FA REPRESENTATIVES AS INDIVIDUALS

- Communicate to your departments about the topics discussed at the RA meetings.
 - Forward the summary of the meeting minutes that are emailed to you after each meeting; highlight items you think may affect your colleagues directly.
 - Request from your chair a five-minute time slot reserved for you at your department meetings to report on what's happening

- You are in a good position to be a liaison. Be the point person for department colleagues who have questions about anything related to compensation, benefits or working conditions. This *does not* mean you have to know all the answers. But you can serve as the friendly conduit between your colleague and Melissa, who will connect them to the right person: (pardo_melissa@smc.edu)
- Direct colleagues to the [FA website](#), an excellent resource and repository of answers to the most commonly asked questions.
- Report to FA leadership on issues that you've heard about in your department: whether they are narrow concerns or issues wider in scope (e.g., payroll, incorrect assignments, lack of support in managing situations with students)
- In coordination with FA leadership, participate in organized actions to raise awareness of union concerns.

THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION [WEBSITE](#)

- Visit us at: www.smcfa.org. The site is designed to be a useful resource for all faculty, with a mix of more permanent types of information, along with news updates, video messages, and other material that changes more frequently.
- Please log on and explore it yourself. Briefly, here are a few key features:
 - GLOSSARY: a list of key terms and acronyms relevant to FA business, with definitions – typically, these are ones that come up in FA discussions and that are valuable to understand. If you have ever found yourself wondering what “SCFF,” “COLA,” the “reserve,” or faculty “load” might be referring to, visit the glossary. New entries continue to be added. If you can't find what you're looking for and want to make a suggested addition, please write to Diane: arieff_diane@smc.edu
 - FA TOOLKITS: these are set up like two virtual file cabinets, one for full-time faculty and the other for part-time faculty. Each toolkit contains a diverse collection of information, important links and more, divided into clearly labeled subtopics. Click open a toolkit and explore the contents inside categories like pay, retirement, unemployment, academic freedom, and more.
 - Take note of ever-changing items, like videos, news updates, and other announcements. You will also find the RA meeting calendar, as well as the agendas and summaries of minutes from past meetings.

COUNSELING CUTS & THEIR ONGOING CONSEQUENCES

- The Counseling Department serves all students, so cuts and reduced support for counselors has a college-wide impact in deep and concerning ways.
- Counselors report their department has “been devastated this year.” For a couple of years, since Fall 2023 they have tried to sustain a steady series of cuts. Each time it happens, nothing is restored later, so each cut becomes part of the new normal.
- By April, Counseling learned that by summer 2025, they were going to take yet another 5% cut. They also learned that after the departure of five full-time retirees, there would be no ‘back-fill’ – these outgoing faculty members were not going to be replaced.
- They received no additional information for fall 2025 until the end of July 2025. At that time, they learned that there would be a 45% cut to [SEAP funding](#) and another 5% cut to district funding. People who had dedicated their careers to SMC were rendered jobless. Counselors had no time to plan appropriately for how to cover even the most basic needs of our students for fall semester.

- Instructors may be referring students to Counseling, doing GPS referrals, and so on, but counselors now have very long waits because they are so radically understaffed and stretched thin.
- Why did it happen with SEAP? They were given very little information. Counseling has been kept in the dark, as Peter referenced during his comments to trustees at the [latest BOT meeting](#).
- Students are frustrated. They scramble to get into the phone queue for counseling help, but it closes ten minutes after it opens in the morning, due to overwhelming demand. Students now wait four or five hours. It's unworkable and it means even the most basic requests cannot be addressed.
- Counseling is understaffed. Students are terribly underserved. Morale is, understandably, very low.
- Fall is transfer season, the stakes for students are high, yet now the basic support they need from the Counseling Department is barely available.
- This whole picture represents a loss for the college's standing. SMC's Counseling Department was always one of the stand-out features of our college, and an envy of other institutions like ours; students knew they would get the support, guidance, and information here they could not get if pursuing their academic careers at other local CC's. It is painful to see the department undermined via these radical cuts, lack of long-term planning, and the ongoing information black-out that leaves hardworking counselors scrambling.

FACULTY WELL-BEING COURSE FOR FA REPS (Joelle Adams)

- Joelle shared a brief presentation about the Faculty Well Being initiative presented through the FA, a four-week long online 'course' that will start in Week 5.
- It is not for credit. It is an asynchronous course, unconnected to SMC. It's not therapy. It is entirely confidential. It's really for members of this Rep. Assembly to draw on these resources for our own resilience, balance and overall well being,
- Participants should plan on spending 4 to 8 hours total, or about 1-2 hours per week.
- Participants will receive a small stipend of approximately \$300.
- Joelle will conduct the workshop using principles of [transpersonal psychology](#). Faculty participants will explore topics like setting work boundaries, burnout, compassion, and more.
- Those who are interested should complete the [Declaration of Interest Form](#). Spaces are limited.
- If you have additional questions, contact Adams_Joelle@smc.edu and/or Pardo_Melissa@smc.edu

STATE AND COLLEGE BUDGET UPDATES

- The CA Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) website is a good resource for [up to date budget information](#).
- The way we are funded changed several years ago, and it is not in our favor. We currently remain in ["Hold Harmless,"](#) and up until this year, we have been able to receive [COLA](#) while in hold harmless. That is no longer the case going forward.
- Overall, expenses are going up but funding remains stable. That's a challenge, and it requires innovative approaches to the budget that do not undercut our core mission.
- Unfortunately, the narrative from Chris Bonvenuto's office has remained constant for years - a doomsday scenario. Board members accept it largely unchallenged, which codifies the belief in a doomsday

scenario for which the only antidote is a host of wide, arguably indiscriminate cuts that affect students and faculty most. (The undercutting of our Counseling Department being a case in point.)

- Business Services does not offer a range of possibilities for the Board and administration to explore, but always presents one single worst-case scenario. This curated approach to budget forecasting presents a skewed and limited picture.
- At the [most recent board meeting](#), after Chris's budget presentation, not one trustee had a follow up question. (View [Chris Bonvenuto's Budget Presentation to the Board here.](#))
- This kind of forecasting, in which financial distress is the central prediction and blunt, wholesale cuts are the only remedy, means that a concerted pushback against such a narrative is especially urgent. It is critically important that faculty do not take this narrative at face value. More nuanced and innovative approaches do exist that avoid radical reductions in SMC's ability to serve students reliably and competently.
- While it's true that financial times are tough, there is room for creative thinking about how we use available funds, how we might identify and take advantage of potential opportunities, identify and revise our budget priorities, and be smarter about where we tighten our belts. What has been happening with counseling, and its attendant impact on students, is a compelling example. The cuts have been poorly handled, short-sighted and damaging.
- Going forward, we need to hang tough, and be united. FA leadership will need your support, resilience, and unity during negotiations about the financial pieces of our contract.

FACCC UPDATES

- FACCC is the premiere lobbying body statewide for community college faculty. All of our representatives are FACCC members
- FACCC has a new President Dr. Oranit Limmaneeprasert (American River College) for the first time in four years and several new contract schools who have joined FACCC recently
- Latest updates on current legislation, from FACCC Government Relations Director, Anna Matthews:
 - **SB 241** (Cervantes), which is sponsored by FACCC, protects counselors, librarians, and non-instructional faculty from the encroachment of AI. It was scheduled for a vote on the Assembly floor on August 27
 - **AB 65** (Aguiar-Curry) would provide up to 14 weeks of leave of absence with pay benefits for an employee who is required to be absent from duty because of pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from those conditions. FACCC co-sponsored this bill. *Status update:* It was held back this session, but is expected to reappear next year.
 - **AB 1171** (Patel), a two-year bill sponsored by FACCC, establishes a statewide pathway to healthcare for community college part-time faculty. FACCC is in ongoing negotiations with Covered California and the Legislature to develop a plan and ensure effective implementation.
 - **AB 1400** (Soria) would establish a pilot program allowing a select cohort of community colleges to offer a bachelor's degree in nursing, expanding access for students in often underserved communities. FACCC supports this bill. *Status update:* It is now headed to the Governor for his signature.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

- Not much to report at this stage of negotiations. Thus far, we have dispatched with most of the non-financial items on our agenda. Two items below:
 - Article 29: We did come to an agreement related to faculty academic freedom, and expedited grievance procedures for when faculty report it is being violated.
 - Article 7C: We reached agreement on some much-needed updates to the language around faculty evaluations and clarification of evaluation timelines.

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In closing, whether you are a returning Rep or you are new to the Rep Assembly, **thank you** for your commitment to keeping the Association strong and our members informed. Please note that our next RA meeting is scheduled for **Thu. Sep. 25**.

Diane Arieff
SMCFA Recording Secretary | FA Communications

Connect with the FA on multiple platforms:

- ⇒ Visit [the FA's website](#)
- ⇒ Check out the [FA's YouTube Channel](#)
- ⇒ Follow us on [Instagram](#)