



Greetings!

To assist you in reporting to your department colleagues, please see the summary below of the last Representative Assembly meeting, held on **Mar. 26**.

### **RECAP OF RETIREMENT AND BENEFITS CONFERENCE: MARCH 20, 2026**

Kudos to the FA's own Melissa Pardo, along with Kim McBride and Mario Martinez, in collaboration with three FACCC staff members, who so capably oversaw the planning and execution of the conference, which was, by all accounts, a success. Some highlights:

- An informative panel of recent retirees with Mitra Moassessi and Tom Peters
- Workshops from CalSTRS on “Knowing your retirement system” for early career faculty and a “close to retirement” session
- A CalSTRS presentation on the importance of finding a way to make voluntary contributions into a retirement vehicle such as a 403b plan
- HR and FA presentations on retiree benefits and active faculty leaves
- The FA will put together a resource page to be available soon, linking to presentation materials. It will post on the [FA website](#). Stay tuned.

### **UPCOMING VISITS TO THE RA FROM CA STATE SENATE CANDIDATES**

- The FA has invited two of the top-polling candidates in the State Senate race to speak to the RA. These meetings will be in a hybrid format, to accommodate the many attendees who will come to campus, and those who want to log on remotely. Both speakers will be there in person and we encourage you to attend in person if you can – we look forward to seeing you.
  - Noon, April 9th: [John Erickson](#) (West Hollywood councilman)
  - Noon, April 30th: [Mike Newhouse](#) (Venice community leader)
- Both speakers will be prepared to field your questions.
- Our objective is to hear about issues of concern to our faculty from the top candidates in what has turned out to be a crowded race. At the end of the process, we can discuss whether to endorse a particular candidate.

### **RECENT BOARD MEETING RE SMC PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH**

- Peter summarized the timeline that was established for the search. So that the process proceeds efficiently, the objective now is to have the final public forum for faculty to be scheduled some time around the start of fall semester – i.e., shortly after the end of summer.
- Different stakeholders at the college (Academic Senate, Management Association, etc.), put forth nominees to be members of the search committee. The FA put forth our President and Vice President. Once the committee is finalized, we will update you with that information.
- When the three different search firms were interviewed by the board at the outset, there were some significant differences in how each one describe their approach to recruitment. The firm chosen by the college has significant national and statewide experience. Their approach and experience suggested their capability to cast a wider net and secure a better candidate pool.

- Once the formal advertisement goes out, the firm expects an 8-week window of recruitment for them to field candidates.
- This firm completed a successful search at Foothill College, and are completing a search for Mira Costa.
- Ideally, this would could have begun a few months earlier and been concluded in summer. But given when it officially began, there is little chance that it can go faster than the current projection. The question going forward is about the pace of transition to new leadership.
- The updated and finalized timeline for each step of the search should come out next week, and we will update you accordingly.

### **SPRING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**

- The faculty walkout during Dr Jeffery's presentation was organized by the Department Chairs to bring attention to the administration's opaque and ineffective decision-making processes, whether it is the mishandling of the budget or the proposed layoffs of classified and management colleagues.
- The AAUP (Mike DeCesare, professor of sociology and Senior program officer at the AAUP's Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure and Governance) presented a workshop focused on academic freedom, highlighting academic freedom rights in teaching.
  - "Free pursuit of truth - and its exposition." Read the complete AAUP [Statement of the Principles on Academic Freedom](#)
  - Check out their [FAQs on Academic Freedom](#), too. It may answer a number of your questions.
  - You have academic freedom rights outlined in the college's board policy and administrative regulations, as well as formally agreed to in our contract, where you have a clear path to have your concerns addressed
  - If you are experiencing pressure on your academic freedom from any direction - students, management, or elsewhere – please come directly to the Faculty Association with your concerns. We'll assess the situation and tell you frankly what we think. At that point, you have a set of options available as your next step.

In closing, *thank you* for the work you do to keep the Association strong. Please note that our next RA meeting is scheduled for **April 9**, which will include the scheduled visit by State Senate candidate John Erickson.

Diane Arieff  
SMCFA Recording Secretary | FA Communications

**PS:** Invite your colleagues to visit the [FA's YouTube Channel](#), where we post short videos on a range of topics relevant to faculty.