

## **COMPENSATION CONCLUSION – PUBLIC GOOD**

***AFT 2121 Bargaining Team member Malaika Finkelstein presented this statement in Factfinding on June 6, 2016***

We are a community college – supposed to be here for the people of San Francisco. That includes “traditional” college students and people who would otherwise have no access to higher education. We refer to “vulnerable” students – meaning the ones who have to fight to come to school and stay here – poor students, immigrants, people with disabilities, veterans, people (disproportionally people of color) who face all sorts of challenges to get education. We’re an urban school, that’s what we do.

But recently, our ability to serve the community has decreased. Enrollment is down, the services we offer have been reduced, and breadth and diversity of class offerings is down.

So where do we go from here? Guy Lease has said that the downsizing of the college has already happened. Although the District has discussed some plans towards growth, their concrete action have contributed to shrinking the school.

What have they done to accomplish this so far? They’ve held back \$60 million in the reserves. That means money isn’t available to pay employees or keep classes open.

They’ve kept faculty salaries low. So low, in fact, that at the end of this contract, under their proposal, we’ll be making in dollar amounts what we made in 2007 (plus the 2015-2016 COLA). In this ridiculously expensive city.

So what happens is that faculty leave. It’s harder and harder to attract or keep good teachers. We’re degrading the quality of

education at CCSF, as well as the availability. The faculty who do stay often can't afford to live in San Francisco.

Our special trustee Guy Lease gave us a great example of why it's important for educators to live in the communities they serve. He lives in Tahoe and comes down here, I think 4 or 5 days a week. He told you that Skyline College is nearby, and our students just went there. Skyline College is actually in San Bruno, about an hour away by bus. It's faster if you drive, but most of our students don't have cars.

Guy Lease can't be expected to know these details – he doesn't live here. When educators don't live in the communities they serve, they can't possibly understand the issues and concerns of the community.

Guy Lease and Ron Gerhard made it sound like CCSF students just chose to leave and transfer to other schools, but there hasn't been any real tracking of what happened to those students. We know that other schools have not picked up as many students as we've lost. In fact, other Bay Area Community Colleges have also lost students. So those students, some are probably working and have chosen not to go to school. But some, it seems, have just dropped out.

City Supervisor Eric Mar asked the City Budget and Legislative Analyst for a report of what it would look like if CCSF closed. This report was published in September 13, 2013. Excerpts from this report are Exhibit 10. They show that it's not so easy for CCSF students to just enroll in other schools. Other schools simply don't have all the programs we have, and when they do, those programs are often impacted. No other place in the Bay Area has the extensive noncredit programs that we have. Even in credit, students can't necessarily get to other schools, or afford them.

This means there's an increased urgency to keep students. It's not just about our funding, it's about access to education. If we downsize, we will not meet the educational needs of the community.

Why have students left? Our administration has closed classes, even when there are students trying to register. They've forced departments to cancel classes, programs, and in a few cases, entire majors. The transfer degrees in Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, and Music are gone.

They say they have to close classes to save money. But they haven't just gone class by class and closed the small ones. They set an arbitrary target percentage of cuts and ordered departments to match it. Visual Media Design was ordered to cut 8% in Spring 2016, and that meant cutting classes that were fully enrolled. The Computer Science program has been growing, but they were ordered to cut as well.

The District understands, in theory, that enrollment matters. It's been common practice for many years to report summer enrollment in whichever semester will most benefit the college. Summer 2016 and summer 2017 enrollment will all be pushed toward the 2016-2017 academic year, since that's the year we need to report high numbers to protect funding. But in the same 2016-2017 year, Administration plans to cut classes. They have ordered a 5% cut per semester, irrespective of how much damage those cuts will do.

When students can't get into classes, they leave. This is what we call a death spiral – fewer classes means fewer students, which means less funding, which means fewer classes.

Administration has failed to fix the buggy registration system. Some students literally can't get through the computer system to enroll. It's so bad it prevents students from enrolling. Doug Orr mentioned

last time how enrollment dropped in Economics when the computer system decided that a whole group of students who had already passed calculus still needed to take Algebra 1. The BOT is aware of this, it's not a new story.

At one point, administration enforced a payment policy in which students were required to pay before their financial aid had come in. Faced with massive student protest, administration changed that policy.

The single-stop counseling office, which is specifically designed to connect students with the services that will help them stay in school, has been closed.

As of summer 2016, the financial aid office at the main campus has been closed. Instead of a human financial aid counselor, students are being offered a video.

The Civic Center Campus was closed in Spring 2015, with only a few days notice to the community. This campus served the mostly poor and immigrant community of the tenderloin. Classes were eventually re-started at a nearby location, but who knows how many students we've lost in the meantime.

CCSF students call these "push-out policies". These are ways students are forced out of CCSF.

The point here is not to rehash past grievances. The point is that administration has some control over enrollment. It's not just these big external forces that we can't touch driving our funding down. Administration could, if they chose, fix the registration system. They could reverse their decision to kill the transfer degrees, and when we talk about our workload proposals, we'll explain that we have a specific contract language that would make that happen. They could

stop cancelling classes when those classes are growing. They could prioritize enrollment, prioritize students, and prioritize education. So far administration has chosen to continue damaging enrollment, and has rejected AFT's proposals that could allow us to change course.

You've heard the District say that we're in a fiscal crisis. They're half right. We HAVE been in a crisis. Now we're on our way back out of it. And if want to continue climbing out of this hole, we need investment. We need growth. We need enrollment. The District's own plans show it that it can be done. Their enrollment management plan will have us add enough new students to cover the loss of stabilization funding.

The money is there. It's about priorities and choices. They're sitting on a \$60 million fund balance. Think of it this way – suppose you had a child, and you saved money over years to send that child to college. Your child is now getting ready to apply for college, but you say: no, that money has to stay in the bank. We'll need it in the future if you have to go to college someday. That's the situation we're in. We're being told to sit on the money, even though the need is now.

The purpose of that money is not to sit in a bank account. That would be wasteful. That money should be working for us, leveraged for growth. That's its purpose. Especially when you look at local Prop A. That was never intended to be a rainy day fund. That money was supposed to go directly to educate students.

And the state-level stability funding? That wasn't supposed to sit around, either. Ron Gerhard said that one of the purposes of the stability funding is to build reserves for future lean times. But the actual text of the bill, SB 965, says that the bill would “stabilize funding for the next four years *as the college works to restore student*

*enrollment* and maintain accreditation.” The point is to maintain and build.

But the District would have you believe that public higher education is not worth investing in. Education is seen as costly. It doesn’t “pay for itself”. The fact is, it more than pays for itself in the long run, in terms of people who can earn better wages, get better jobs, be more educated, more skilled, better citizens, healthier, more fulfilled as human beings, in more innovation and invention and art and beauty and humanity.

They tell us that the shrinking of the college has already happened. It’s a done deal. The economy and the accreditation threats, these giant impersonal forces, have taken our students away. Now we have to shrink the employee pool around the smaller student base. We don’t agree. Tim pointed out that once the accreditation threat is behind us, enrollment will increase. But we also see that enrollment is partly within control of administration. And we CAN increase enrollment, if we choose.

But the public has a vision of CCSF growing and thriving. Prop A passed by more than 70%. The people of San Francisco voted to tax themselves to keep CCSF open and accessible. It was not intended to pad the fund balance, it was supposed to serve students. This is what the people of San Francisco decided to do. And now this administration is trying to exercise veto power over the voters of San Francisco.

We see a groundswell of support for Free City. Free City will help our enrollment, and therefore our finances, but that’s not the only reason the people of San Francisco are excited about it. People are excited because Free City promises access to education. The support for Free City shows that people want CCSF more accessible, able to serve more people.

San Francisco, as Guy Lease said, wants to do the right thing. We voted for parenting leave and sick leave for all San Francisco workers. We raised our minimum wage. We voted to support City College of San Francisco with Prop A. We voted, over and over again, to do the right thing. So let's do the right thing.

One thing I like about this room is the Mission statement on the wall. It's our old Mission Statement, from before the ACCJC made us change it. It includes academic excellence and "dedication to community", "life-long learning". On this side of the room, we're all been here long enough to remember when this mission statement was official policy of CCSF. It was the right thing, and it's still the right thing, and it's still what our community expects and demands from us.

So how do we make it happen? How do we invest in students? Not by hiring administrators, cutting classes, or increasing the fund balance.

Instead, we make sure we have top-notch faculty, and that we can keep them here. We help them feel connected to their communities, make sure they have the bandwidth to develop as professionals, to be responsive and innovative. We pay them enough that they can afford San Francisco rents.

Our vision is investment in growth.

Our proposal is fair and reasonable. Faculty have taken cut after cut throughout this recession, while our workloads have increased. We've been the ones fighting to keep enrollment high this whole time. Faculty have run a volunteer enrollment and outreach campaign. We've been recruiting for our classes. But we're the ones who have not been restored.

The District can afford it. The money is there; this is an issue of priorities.

Our proposal is sustainable. If administration were to choose to grow the college, they could do it. Their own enrollment plan shows it can be done.

This is what's good for the communities of San Francisco and the Bay Area. We don't stay stuck in the spiral where cuts reduce enrollment and require more and more cuts. We choose to do this differently. We use the money we have to invest in our school. We make a commitment to growth. That provides increasing opportunities for education.

A year from now, this could be whole different picture.

We could have raised faculty pay to a level that will allow us to pay rent in the Bay Area. Faculty who have worked so hard and given up so much over the last 9 years could see a lift.

We could be increasing enrollment and funding. We could serve more students, a broad range of students.

We could attract and keep faculty who are talented and dedicated.

We can do all of it. Starting with this contract.