

BARGAINING

INSTRUCTORS AND STAFF STAND UP FOR BETTER CONTRACTS

STORY BY LAURA CANIDA
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Tensions are rising at Clackamas Community College as three unions enter the holiday season without contracts after months of bargaining.

Dozens of faculty, staff and members of the associations walked en masse into the college Board of Education meeting on Nov. 13 carrying posters that said how long they worked for the college and creating a packed board room.

Some stood behind the board members as Jane Littlefield, a college instructor and librarian, read a prepared statement during public testimony.

"I speak today on behalf of over 500 college employees, to ask you for help," Littlefield read, as members of the other two associations stood beside her. "We are looking to you to encourage college administrators to do the right thing for faculty, staff, and the students we serve and settle our three bargaining contracts."



Instructors Adam Hall, Amy Warren and Matthew Warren attend the Nov. 13 Board of Education meeting.

For the full-time faculty, the bargaining process started on Valentine's Day this year. According to numerous faculty members and staff, bargaining should have been over by now since the current three-year agreements expired in June 2019.

The three unions are Full-Time Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Classified, which represents employees in areas like financial aid, IT, registration janitorial and campus services.

Each union is asking the administration for different things, but none has agreed yet on raises. Each union has said they have come together to show support of one another, something that doesn't typically happen.

Collective bargaining is a process that involves negotiation between an employer, which is Clackamas Community College, and a group of employees, which is the two teaching groups and the classified college staff. Their contracts regulate salaries, working conditions, benefits and more.

According to the part-time faculty association president Leslie Ormandy, this is only the second time in the history of the college that all three associations have joined together.

Union representatives said that one of their main sticking points is getting raises that would compensate employees for increases they voluntarily gave up a decade ago to help the college.

"We are jointly demanding the college do what it assured us 10 years ago it would do when all three associations gave up their salary increases to see the college through the great recession," said Ormandy, a part-time instructor in the English department. "We were assured that once that difficult period passed, the college would make us whole."

Union representatives said that the top 15 college administrators gave themselves 10 to 20 percent raises last year, but are only offering the unions raises of around three percent in the first year of their three-year contracts.



Members of three unions, Patty DeTurk, Jane Littlefield and Beth Hodgkinson, stand in front of the board.

Lori Hall, executive director of College Relations and Marketing, said for fiscal year 2019-20, the board approved a 2.7% increase. "There were some significant increases given to some administrators as a result of a market study completed in 2017 and implemented in fiscal year 2018-19." Hall did not provide additional information on the "significant increases." Ormandy also said part-time faculty want to be paid the same as full-time faculty for teaching the same classes.

According to the most recent contract, part-time

faculty who are new to teaching at the college earn roughly \$2,700 for teaching one 4-credit lecture course. Ormandy said the 368 part-time instructors that she represents are also asking for health insurance for people who work half-time. Last year, 87 out of the 368 part-time employees were offered health insurance who worked above the 540-hour threshold. Part-time faculty have asked for a 7% raise in year one of their contracts.

According to Becky Fidler, vice president of the

Classified Employees Association and co-chair for the bargaining team, "Contract negotiations is a process; it takes time to come to a fair agreement. Throughout the bargaining process, classified staff have sustained their roles of making sure that our students come first, and continue to provide high quality services to all."

The contract that applies to classified staff represents 198 full-time employees. They are negotiating several articles in their contract, including those that pertain to hours and work conditions, wages and benefits and retirement. Classified staff have asked for a 4.75% raise in year one of their contracts. Pay for classified staff ranges from approximately \$21,000 at the bottom of the pay scale to \$108,000 at the top.

Kathryn Long, full-time faculty president and a member of the bargaining team, said workload has increased as the college has cut full-time faculty positions in the past 10 years.

"Years past, there were 160 FTF; currently there are approximately 136 FTF," said Long, who teaches English as a Second Language. "But even though we've decreased our numbers, the types of work that we're doing has increased, like things related to Guided Pathways and stuff related to assessment and accreditation."

Long said that full-time faculty have asked for a 7.7% raise in year one of their contracts.

"The administration has offered 2.9%, which doesn't even account for the recent huge jumps in inflation," said Long. "The 7.7% adjusts for increases in the cost of living in recent years and brings our compensation in line with that of comparable institutions. We did make these huge sacrifices 10 years ago, each association. From that time, we worked harder with fewer resources, and we agreed to make the sacrifices because we love what we do and we love our students."

Full-time faculty starting pay ranges from roughly \$56,000 for a new full-time instructor to \$87,000 for an instructor at the top of the salary scale.

Every one of the three unions' contracts are viewable

Photos by Jordy Villagomez and Andrew Griffin

online at clackamas.edu.

College administration officials said they were not available for in-person interview requests, but wrote via email, "We are currently bargaining with all three groups, and we highly value the staff and faculty in all the associations. The bargaining process takes time and this year is taking longer than usual, but we are making steady progress. We are committed to working with each association to reach agreement. We are also committed to closing bargaining as soon as possible so it does not impact students and learning. There are challenges we also need to consider, such as increased costs associated with PERS and inadequate state funding."

Each association continues to meet with the administrative bargaining team. Part time faculty and classified associations have opening bargaining sessions; they both met as recently as Monday. Full time faculty have closed sessions and will meet again this Friday, Nov. 22.



Instructors Nicole Rosevear and Kathryn Long stand behind college president Tim Cook and board member Dave Hunt.