Negotiations on Reopener Begin
Negotiations between your AFT 6157 Bargaining Team and the District are underway. We have a slightly different crew this year with Barbara Hanfling, Fabio Gonzales, Mark Newton, Randy Pratt and Jory Segal.

In the first two meetings, the District team showed little interest in detailed discussions and shared very little information on contractual concerns; they just hinted that there was more to come. Well, in our third meeting, your AFT bargaining team received an unprecedented counterproposal that emphasized the District’s disinterest and lack of real commitment to negotiations.

Bombshell
Remember that this negotiations session is a reopener on the last year of a three-year contract. We are supposed to be settling salary, benefits and a limited number of items for the 2016-2017 academic year. However, our District appears to have proclaimed that they now want to negotiate salaries and other items which cost money in arrears. Meaning, the District has made a strong statement that it will not consider most monetary proposals until August 2017. Yes, you are reading correctly. District is not planning to begin negotiations for a substantive portion of the contract until after the contract expires, which will be June 30, 2017. We are thinking about how this tact can be classified as good faith bargaining.

Two words: NOT ACCEPTABLE. We will try and help the District see why this position is outrageous and why they must change their stance. Our effort will likely require help from AFT 6157’s membership. If District is persistent, these negotiations may get ugly.

What is Good?
Before the monetary bombshell a little progress was made on grade reporting; and District is looking into our Golden Handshake proposal. Also, there is progress on 11 month contracts for a hand full of faculty who were left out in one of last year’s bargaining successes.

Other information:
- District property tax revenues have increased another 6.40% to date this year. Everyone predicts that number will climb still further in this fiscal year. Said differently, our district is richer than it has ever been – by far.
- The District claims virtually all money for this fiscal year has already been allocated. We don’t believe them and have requested information showing us where and when.
• Included in monetary discussions will be the ½ hour additional office hour for adjunct faculty.

Really?
• The District did bring new language to help faculty understand what an office hour was and what type of activity we should be doing during that time.
• And, they also brought to the table language that would steer faculty disagreements over the class scheduling process in their department (an administrative function) back to the bargaining teams to resolve…. 

Elephant in the room.
• The huge white elephant in the room remains the soaring costs of medical benefits and the District’s interest in moving to a more cost-efficient Joint Powers Plan.
• District proposed both faculty and classified unions put everything else aside and sign on to this new plan immediately.
• We don’t pull items out of negotiations so that district gets done what is important to them, and then they tell us to wait until next year before they will discuss money. Left shaking our heads too…

There is sure to be more to come, so stay tuned. As always, your negotiations team will continue working and fighting for a good and fair contract for the faculty members.

Jory, Randy, Mark, Fabio, and Barbara