



President's Report

Optimism One

The only diploma in my office is my A.A. from Modesto Junior College. I was a student here from 1990 to 1991. After high school, I worked for a year and half building, painting, and installing mailbox stands, doubtful that higher education was for me. My middle brother was the first in my family to ever go to college, but he was the smart one. My other brother and I were just expected to get jobs.

When I enrolled at MJC, though, prompted in part by the prospect of doing manual labor for the rest of my life, something special happened. I got inspired. I got encouraged. My self-esteem and confidence blossomed each semester as I realized that I was capable of not only academic pursuits but academic excellence. And before I knew it, I was earning my first college degree.

Because I was a mid-year transfer, I didn't participate in commencement at MJC. However, I have now walked for three subsequent degrees, and each time, I felt all the love, support, and camaraderie from my family, my peers, and my professors. This is why I go to MJC's commencement. Yes, it's hot, and, yes, the speeches sometimes seem too long, but I want to give what I once received. I want to celebrate our students as they accomplish what we once accomplished. I want to see the fruits of our collective labor. ~Op

Negotiations Update - Brian Greene

Our second to last negotiations session of the semester was Friday, April 3, and it focused on full-time faculty health benefits. The renewal rates for 2026-27 were recently released, and they show roughly a 10% increase for the Blue Shield PPO base plan and roughly a 7% increase for Kaiser. These increases are in line with expectations, and it was reported that they are on the low end of increases seen across the state this year.

As a reminder, we are in the final year of a three-year agreement that capped YCCD medical benefits contributions at \$2,200 per month. The increases will put the base plans over the cap by \$181 (Blue Shield) and \$78 (Kaiser) starting in October. Given overall inflation and the COLAs received by the District since the cap was negotiated in 2023, increasing the cap and maintaining existing coverage is clearly warranted.

While benefits are an important topic for most faculty, it is one of several prominent areas that YFA is committed to making progress on this round. The others are lab parity, Tier 3 retiree benefits, and trailing median. With lab parity, we want to reduce the inequity in compensation for lab classes as compared to lecture and activity classes. Addressing the Tier 3 issue involves improving retiree health benefits for faculty hired starting in 2013. Fixing trailing median requires shortening the lag in our compensation model (the trailing portion of the calculation) to stay closer to our target of median in the state. All four of these items are reasonable and necessary to maintain competitive compensation in order to attract and retain the best faculty possible.

The final negotiation session of the semester is scheduled for April 17, and we hope to report meaningful progress after that date.

Outside the CBA: Regular Substantive Interaction (RSI)

You've heard the news by now: MJC passed its accreditation follow-up, which is cause for great celebration. Between the Academic Senate, the Instruction Office, and our Distance Education experts, the coordination was focused and successful.

What needs to be said, however, is that RSI is still being negotiated. Yes, we have an MOU for the current academic year that requires MJC faculty teaching online to get trained in RSI and then reviewed. What cannot happen, however, is for RSI, or the lack thereof, to be used as justification for a less-than-satisfactory evaluation. In Article 6: Evaluations, RSI does not yet exist. Therefore, if RSI is used punitively in your current evaluation, please get in touch with your Vice President/Grievance Officer: Derrick Wydick at Columbia College or Erin Black at Modesto Junior College. They can talk to your deans and/or attend your evaluation meetings to ensure that our contract is being honored.

Calendar

- Wed., Apr. 15, 3-5 p.m. - YFA Rep. Council
- Fri., May 1, 5 p.m. - Commencement at CC
- Fri., May 1, 6 p.m. - Commencement at MJC