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THE POWER OF A THANK YOU



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PHOTO BY TERREL EMERSON

Negotiations for part-time and full time faculty wages are continues

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Money makes the world go round, and it is no different when discussing faculty wages at Cerritos College.

For a number of months, faculty has been looking to get raises or opportunities to go back to school so they can get a higher education that would ensure a better pay.

At one of the last board of trustees meetings of 2015, Dianne Pirtle, sociology professor, was vocal in making sure that the board was aware of the issues brought up by faculty.

She was present once again and stood by the side of fellow professor Solomon Namala.

In the first board meeting of 2016 professors Mi-

chelle Lewellen and Solomon Namala spoke about the wages and brought charts he made to visually express the different wages the school's faculty can have.

The charts showed that professors would need to take a certain amount of units and essentially more than one degree to get to a higher salary.

For many faculty, going back to school and getting another degree is not an option.

They are not able to go back to school for a number of reasons.

Some of the reasons include not being able to afford going back to school and not having time to go back due to having to teach classes and earn a paycheck.

For psychology professor Michelle Lewellen, much like everyone else, she can't afford to go back to school, and isn't too happy about the current wages.

"I never thought I was going to get rich doing this job, I didn't think I was going to be wealthy, but I did think that I would be able to support myself," she said.

She continued by stating that taking on a regular teaching load is not enough to pay her mortgage and bills on her own.

"When you go to school, which costs money, you

get an advanced degree, which costs money, plus you bring all this knowledge to the school, you should be compensated for doing that.

"With the education I have and the service I have given to Cerritos, I should be able to support myself, by myself," Lewellen stated.

President of Cerritos College Jose Fierro spoke about the current status of the on going negotiations for faculty wages.

"Right now they're getting ten percent, full time faculty, over three years, but we haven't heard back.

"Negotiations are with the faculty federation, [...], there's a group of people that negotiate on behalf of the district and report to me and the board," Fierro said.

He went to discuss the board of trustees and how he felt they were handling the situation.

"The board I believe, has been quite generous on the package, ten percent over three years is a lot of money," he said.

Regarding the charts that Namala presented at the board meeting, Fierro agreed that the numbers were accurate, however felt that the full compensation was missing.

"What isn't fully accurate is that those are the basic salaries, so full time faculty gets the opportunity to teach above and beyond.

"Their salaries have the option to increase about 40% based on what they teach above their base," he stated.

Negotiations are still happening, and for Lewellen, she hopes they end well, not only for her benefit, but the school's.

She stated, "When you look at the nine local colleges, we (Cerritos College), are sitting at number seven, and what that means is that the six schools above us are getting the better faculty.

"So if we put a job announcement out for a geologist, and so does El Camino, if they get both jobs, they are going to go to El Camino, which means we don't get the talent here that we should get, because we are not compensating our faculty for the training and the knowledge they're bringing to Cerritos."

The board of trustees will be meeting on Feb. 3 and will continue the negotiations with the faculty federation.

Fierro is confident that they will work it out.



KARLA ENRIQUEZ/TM

President Jose Fierro presented a new scholarship in the board of trustees meeting. The plan is to help students pay for their college tuition or school books.

Helping students cross the bridge

Dr. Fierro plans new scholarship plan for incoming students

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"President Obama has been saying free community college for all the students, and I agree with that, but I don't agree that it should be free, I agree that you have to earn it by working hard, and if you work hard, it won't cost you," said Cerritos College President Jose Fierro. He presented a new scholarship

initiative that will give students the opportunity to earn a discounted education or a discount on textbooks prior to agreeing with President Obama's idea.

The initiative looks to help about 800 high school graduates with providing them, what he believes are robust services by covering the tuition or books (up to \$200 per term), based on performance.

"We'll give you all you need, we'll help you pick your schedule, and we'll cover the tuition, if you do well in your classes, if you meet with your counselor, [...]."

"We want to put support services around the students to make

them successful, rather than just giving them money," he said.

The purpose of the scholarship initiative is to increase graduation rates.

The highest time for students to graduate from Cerritos is six years and Fierro wasn't pleased with those rates. Only about six or seven people out of 100 graduate from Cerritos in two years, about 15 percent in three years, about 32 percent in four years, and 39 percent in six years.

He also plans to pay a lot of attention to first generation, low income, and underrepresented students to help increase their chances

for success.

The president continued by explaining the importance of a degree.

"That first degree makes a huge difference, if you actually get to the finish line and that associate's degree, their chances of going forward increase, and even if you don't, your income increases significantly, so for me that part is very important," he said.

Dr. Shin Liu, president of the board said, "I agree we should increase the part-time salary, our part-time faculty has office hours, it was one of the very few colleges, but I agree that we should do more."

SPORTS

FULL STORY ON PAGE 6

Cerritos College versus Long Beach City College



Campus Life

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3

Children and Franco Falcon enjoy a snowy day



NEWS

FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Dr. JoAnna Schilling prepares to leave Cerritos

