

Contract Negotiations Update

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The Union and the District met again on December 1st, which was the fourth negotiating session for this "very first" contract that will determine your compensation, benefits and working conditions at Victor Valley College. In legal terms, the contract will be known as a "collective bargaining agreement" (aka "the CBA" or "the contract").

So far, negotiations have proceeded in a constructive and mutually respectful manner. Although we have not yet dealt with the difficult issues of salary and health benefits, the Union is cautiously optimistic that negotiations will continue in the same positive atmosphere.

A tentative agreement has been reached on the "District Rights" article—which is a restatement of the District's authority under state law. Of course, all "district rights" will be limited by the remainder of the contract that is ultimately ratified by both parties. That is the essence of collective bargaining—placing restrictions upon the otherwise unilateral and unfettered powers of the employer.

The article on "Union Rights" continues to be negotiated but it appears likely that agreement will be reached within the next several negotiating sessions.

Dialogue at the negotiating table has revealed management concerns that were a bit astonishing to your negotiating team. For example, the District was apprehensive that the Union might place personal ("ad hominem") attacks against administrators or trustees on campus bulletin boards. Union negotiators made clear that it might accuse the Governing Board or management with being "unreasonable" or "arbitrary," but it has no interest in describing particular individuals as being (for example) "stupid" or "dishonest."

The Union and District have made substantial progress on a contract article to protect the confidentiality and contents of your district personnel file. It appears very likely that we will reach a tentative agreement on that issue at our next negotiating session. A "tentative agreement" remains tentative until the entire contract has been negotiated. It becomes "final" when the contract is ratified by union members and the District's Governing Board.

AFT Part-Time Faculty United—the union you have elected to negotiate your compensation, benefits and working

conditions—is insisting that part-time faculty members be represented in the shared governance process at Victor Valley College. A substantial portion of last Thursday's session was devoted to a discussion of this

issue. The Union is proposing that the contract include a "statement in principle" that part-time faculty members be included in all shared governance committees and activities.

The next negotiating session will occur on December 15th. Topics will include Evaluation of Part-Time Faculty, Leaves of Absence, Working Conditions and Union Rights.

If you have comments or suggestions regarding the contract being negotiated, you may direct them to Don E. Peavy, President, at (760) 245-4271 x2125 or don@vvcpters.org.