

## What's Inside?



**WHERE WE STAND:**  
2016 Starts Well for  
AFT Guild Members!  
**PAGE 2**

**Retiree Corner: Why  
Union Membership  
Matters Now More  
Than Ever**  
**PAGE 2**

**Looking Back and  
Moving Forward**  
**PAGE 3**

**The Most Underreported  
Story of the Year: The  
Disappearing Middle  
Class**  
**PAGE 4**

**What's the Latest?  
Pensions, Proposition  
30 Extension and  
ACCJC**  
**PAGE 5**

**Where's the Love?  
The Fundamental  
Problem with SLOs**  
**PAGE 5**

**AFT at Climate Justice  
March**  
**PAGE 6**

**IN BRIEF: Teachers  
Unions and Democracy  
/ Unions and the  
Middle Class / Robert  
Reich on the Supreme  
Court / Organizing in  
Wisconsin After Scott  
Walker**  
**PAGE 11**

# 2016 Brings Record Economic Settlements!

*By Jim Mahler  
President, AFT Guild, Local 1931*

**O**ur Resource Allocation Formula-driven economic settlements that were implemented in January represent the greatest economic package in perhaps the history of each District. In the SDCCD, revenues available to employees via the RAF exceeded \$19 million, the greatest increase in the 102-year history of the District, fueled by COLA, robust growth, a huge base allocation increase, and an additional \$9 million from the enhanced non-credit apportionment equalization. The GCCCD also experienced a historic increase of over \$4 million in RAF distributions. Here are the highlights of these increases your union negotiated for you and your colleagues.

### For SDCCD Classified Staff:

- 5.722% across the board salary increase. In addition, increased the percentage between salary steps H-I, I-J, J-K from the current 1.35% each to 3.50% each.



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- Educational Incentive program for Office/Technical employees increased by two steps.
- One Office/Technical employee was upgraded from a 45% to a 50% position with benefits.
- Expansion of early retirement health benefits so that all classified staff can now retire at age 55 or older, with only 15 years of service, and still receive fully paid health coverage until their 65th birthday.
- All classified staff (food service, maintenance & operations, and office/technical) are now all on the exact same salary schedule.

### For SDCCD NANC Employees:

- Increased all pay rates to \$10.00/hour to comply with the new minimum wage law, then increased all rates across the

*Continued on page 7*

# WHERE WE STAND

## 2016 Starts Well for AFT Guild Members!

By Jim Mahler  
President, AFT Guild, Local 1931

As we begin 2016, we have a lot to be grateful for during this fiscal year. The Community College system as a whole received nearly \$1 billion in new revenues for this 2015-16 year, including \$62.3 million earmarked for new full-time faculty hires, the first new monies earmarked to address this chronic shortage since the early 1990s.

A generous base allocation increase, coupled with COLA and

growth increases provided virtually every district in the state with a record increase in revenues. As the cover story mentioned, this equated to over \$19 million in new resources for employees in the SDCCD and over \$4 million in new resources for employees in the GCCCD.

We are also well on our way to hiring more full-time faculty in both Districts as a result of the new full-time faculty resources CFT was at the forefront of negotiating into the State budget.

Unfortunately, this burst of sunshine was quickly clouded over by the

Governor's January budget proposal for the 2016-17 fiscal year: a meager 0.47% COLA, and 2% growth (which many districts won't be able to make). Those are the only new on-going revenue streams he is proposing at this time. No additional resources for new full-time faculty hires, nor any of the part-time categoricals such as office hours, equity pay, or healthcare are included in Brown's proposed budget. As everyone knows, that 0.47% COLA won't go very far to pay for incremental step and column, healthcare, and PERS/STRS pension

*Continued on page 6*

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## Retiree Corner: Why Union Membership Matters Now More Than Ever

By Mary Rider  
1931 Retiree Chapter

Most retired union members were in high school or college at the height of pro-union sentiment and expansion during the 1960s and 70s. The majority of AFT 1931 retirees were grateful to be union members and viewed membership dues as well worth the security and benefits provided. However, based on the decision in the Friedrichs vs. CTA case before the Supreme Court, paying dues may soon become an option rather than a privilege.

During my 30-year career in education, I took the concept of "academic freedom" and "freedom of speech" to heart. I wrote numerous letters to the editor, spoke at governing board meetings, marched for justice, and questioned authority. I knew the union would protect my freedom of expression when I observed the "Emperor had no clothes." An interim college president told me I had jeopardized my career by publicly questioning District practices. That incident and others became the faculty rallying points that led to the resignation of a dysfunctional district administration. It was the power of union solidarity that enabled positive change to take place.

Judy Quinton, a retired ECC adjunct faculty member, recalls that prior to merging with AFT 1931, SDCCD Continuing Ed faculty was represented by AFT 4239 San Diego Adult Educators. In the 1980s, 90% of the CE faculty was adjunct, with no job security, vision or dental care, and personal leave was almost nonexistent. The SDAE bargaining team negotiated a priority rehire plan for long-term adjunct, dental and vision benefits, and seven days of unrestricted personal leave. These benefits would never have been realized without union intervention. Additionally, STRS language providing CE adjunct faculty with the highest earnable income was negotiated. The factor affects permanent pension benefits.

Gary Gleckman, another retired ECC faculty colleague, provided an additional testimonial to the power of the union:

Back in the Eighties when I became active in the union, teachers were prohibited from being part in the Medicare System. In those dark ages, many retired

*Continued on page 7*

# Looking Back and Moving Forward

By *Susan Morgan*  
Professor of ESL in Continuing Education,  
Miramar College

In 1949 I was born in Homestead, Florida, one of the poorest rural farming cities in America. At that time a makeshift school bus was our home. We had four children in our family and all of us were one year apart, and I was the youngest. I know firsthand the breadth and depth of poverty and hopelessness. I also know how educational opportunities can transform your life.

In 1965 when I was in high school, Monday through Friday from 3 to 9 and all day Saturday, I worked at the largest non-union grocery store in the South, Winn Dixie, for \$1.45 an hour. During those years I heard about the dangers of trade unions and how if we were to unionize we would all lose our jobs and I believed it. In addition, at Sears in Chula Vista I was the first female Tune-Up Specialist they hired and was also told about the horrors of unions and how we would all be out of work if we even discussed a union, and I believed it. However, in addition, I worked as a code welder at NASSCO, and as a union representative I saw for the first time how a strong union can improve working conditions and raise important issues for contract language that affect your day-to-day workplace. As a side note, during World War II my

mother was an airplane mechanic and she appeared in several military publications as a Rosie the Riveter wartime worker.

In 1972 I taught in the first Women's Studies Program in the country at San Diego State University. The following year, I taught the first Woman's Studies course at City



AAP  
Susan Morgan's Mother in WWII

College in 1973. Those years helped me understand how life could be different if you collectively worked together. Yes, sometimes it looked like making sausage and it was not easy, but it was certainly worthwhile and taught me the value of meaningful and collective work.

I have been teaching ESL in CE in our District since 1982 and have seen lots of changes in our union representation. I received my ESL contract in 1985 and have been working with fellow teachers that

are 90% hourly, and that is a huge, unfair disparity that needs to be seriously addressed at the national, state, and local levels. Fortunately, the economic conditions of California have improved and we are making some progress in this regard.

Back in the day when CE was in a separate union, we were very isolated from the rest of the District's union representation and we were always told that we were at the mercy of management, i.e. powerless, and it was true. One high-level manager in CE once told me that the managers operated on the mantra of, "Take liberties with all and if you get caught just ask for forgiveness." This managerial arrogance and union powerlessness translated into a high level of job inse-

curity for almost the entire faculty, and classified employees and the workplace had a high level of stress and favoritism. We paid union dues and had representation that was very weak, and most of us heard how the union leadership said that in CE we are in fact beggars to management. In terms of the day-to-day workplace it was an atmosphere of every-employee-for-themselves, and the notion of an esprit de corps was non-existent. Many years ago, one CE union leader wanted to join the AFT

*Continued on page 9*

# The Most Underreported Story of the Year: The Disappearing Middle Class Who Will Tell the People?

Those of us in union circles have become all too familiar with legal and corporate assaults on workers' rights, pensions, pay, and even the public sector itself. But it is becoming abundantly clear that the assault on labor and workers' rights has resulted not just in the weakening of unions but in much greater economic inequality and an endangered middle class. Nonetheless, the public's awareness of this is not nearly high enough as yet to generate sufficient outrage to address the problem.

As educators it is our job to teach our students to think critically and evaluate information with an informed skepticism. Unfortunately, however, much of the American media landscape fails to give the public the information it needs to truly understand our current economic and political reality. How so?

Project Censored recently released their list of the most underreported stories of 2015. The number-one story on their list features the news that 2016 will be the year when half of the world's wealth will be controlled by the top 1%. More specifically, they document how:

According to the Oxfam report, the proportion of global wealth owned by the 1 percent has increased from 44 percent in 2009 to 48 percent in 2014 and is projected to reach 50 percent in 2016. In October 2014, a prior Oxfam report, "Even It Up: Time to End Extreme Poverty," revealed that the number of billionaires worldwide had more than doubled since the

2009 financial crisis, showing that, although those at the top have recovered quickly, the vast majority of the world's population are far from reaping the benefits of any recent economic recovery. Even more staggering, the world's richest eighty-five people now hold the same amount of wealth as half the world's poorest population. "Failure to tackle inequality will leave hundreds of millions trapped in poverty unnecessarily," the report's authors warned.

This news was not just delivered with a sigh. In fact, Oxfam paired it with a 9-step "Even it Up" campaign that could address the problem:

1. Make governments work for citizens and tackle extreme inequality.
2. Promote women's economic equality and women's rights.
3. Pay workers a living wage and close the gap created by skyrocketing executive rewards.
4. Share the tax burden fairly to level the playing field.
5. Close international tax loopholes and fill holes in tax governance.
6. Achieve universal free public services by 2020.
7. Change the global system for research and development and pricing of medicines so everyone has access to appropriate and affordable medicines.
8. Implement a universal social protection floor.
9. Target development finance at reducing inequality and poverty,

and strengthening the compact between citizens and their government.

According to Oxfam, "taxing billionaires just 1.5 percent of their wealth 'could raise \$74 billion a year, enough to fill the annual gaps in funding needed to get every child into school and to deliver health services in the world's poorest countries.'"

This would seem to be a fairly reasonable response to a socially catastrophic global problem, but both the news of this shameful landmark and Oxfam's campaign were met with the collective equivalent of a yawn by the corporate media. As Project Censored observes:

Corporate coverage of the two Oxfam reports has been minimal in quantity and problematic in quality. A few corporate television networks, including CNN, CBS, MSNBC, ABC, FOX, and C-SPAN covered Oxfam's January report, according to the TV News Archive. CNN had the most coverage with approximately seven broadcast segments from January 19 to 25, 2015. However, these stories aired between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m., far from primetime. Other coverage focused on Obama's push for tax reform. CBS and MSNBC ran segments with this focus four times between 1:00 and 4:00 a.m., January 20–21, 2015, with the exception of one MSNBC story, broadcast on February 2, 2015, at 12:00 p.m. ABC covered the story once on January 19, 2015. FOX also covered the story once on January 19, 2015,

*Continued on page 8*

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# What's the Latest? Pensions, Proposition 30 Extension and ACCJC

There were some big developments in California public education news over the holiday break, all of it largely hopeful.

## Pension Busting Ballot Measure

We can all breathe a little easier for the time being that there will not be a big, expensive political battle over our pensions next Fall. Looking at awful polling numbers, funding problems, and a bad electoral landscape in 2016, Carl DeMaio and Chuck Reed announced that they would not be going forward with their pension busting ballot measure.

While that is certainly good news for now, we must remain vigilant as they will be looking to reintroduce their effort to gut the pensions of teachers and other public sector workers in 2018.

## Proposition 30 Extension

Last Fall, there were worries that two competing ballot measures to extend Proposition 30's taxes on the rich would both go forward, making it hard for either to pass. The good news is that proponents of both the measure supported by CFT and its allies and another measure backed by SEIU et al. got together and crafted

a compromise measure to avoid an electoral collision. The compromise measure would keep the taxes on high earners going for another 12 years while dropping the sales tax, with the revenue going for education and health care services.

As we all know, the relatively good budget times we are seeing now are almost completely due to Proposition 30's big revenue boost and if we were to let 30 expire, California education would soon be going back to the future with new cuts and fee increases. The compromise measure's backers have done what they can

*Continued on page 10*

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# Where's the Love? The Fundamental Problem with SLOs

As the dark clouds continue to loom over the future of the ACCJC, it is worth taking a moment to ponder not just what went wrong with a rogue accrediting agency, but also what might be wrong with the fundamental assumptions driving the evaluation of education today.

Recently, in the *New York Times*, Robert M. Wachter, a professor, author, and interim chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, published a thoughtful piece that goes straight to the heart of our current dilemma when it comes to

determining what quality professional work looks like. In "How Measurement Fails Doctors and Teachers" Wachter notes that:

Two of our most vital industries, health care and education, have become increasingly subjected to metrics and measurements. Of course, we need to hold professionals accountable. But the focus on numbers has gone too far. We're hitting the targets, but missing the point. . . .

Education is experiencing its own version of measurement fatigue. Educators complain that the focus on student test

performance comes at the expense of learning. Art, music and physical education have withered, because, really, why bother if they're not on the test?

At first, the pushback from doctors and teachers was dismissed as whining from entitled and entrenched guilds spoiled by generations of unfettered autonomy. It was natural, went the thinking, that these professionals would resist the scrutiny and discipline of performance assessment. Of course, this interpretation was partly right.

*Continued on page 10*

# AFT at Climate Justice March

*After the Climate Talks in Paris last December, environmental community and labor activists participated in San Diego's own climate justice march in mid-December.*

*Members of unions from all over San Diego marched along with a strong AFT contingent. The struggle for climate justice continues.*



AFT 1931 and United Domestic Workers Members with Environmental Caucus Banner



AFT Interns Joe Heide, Ita Flint, and Celeste Clerk, with the AFT Banner

## *Where We Stand* continued from page 2

increases. CFT will continue to lobby hard for funding of these items to be included in the final budget, which will be signed in June.

To make matters worse, the resources we currently receive from Proposition 30 are set to expire soon. The sales tax component will expire this year, and the additional income tax on high wage earners will expire in 2018. Currently, both Districts receive approximately 15% of their operating budget from Proposition 30 funds.

In an effort to put us on more solid financial footing, CFT is part of a statewide coalition committed to getting a Proposition 30 extension ballot initiative qualified for the November 2016 elections. More details on this will be shared later as soon as the

coalition has agreed on the precise language of the new measure. There is general agreement that this new measure will include the additional income tax on high wage earners, but it will *not* include the regressive sales tax component. Signature gathers will be coming soon to a supermarket near you.

The other dark cloud on the horizon is the upcoming US Supreme Court ruling on *Friedrichs vs. CTA*. Depending on the severity of their ruling, public sector unions will have their ability to collect union dues dramatically curtailed. Stay tuned for much more information from us on the fallout from this ruling, and what we can all do to best prepare for it.

As we begin the 2016 legislative session, we will be reintroducing as

a co-sponsor with CTA AB 1690 (Medina) our part-time faculty job security bill. Recall that last session, this bill died in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Our hope this year is to overcome that final hurdle and get it on to the Governor's desk for his signature.

Lastly, to end on a positive note, it is now looking as though all of CFT's legal, legislative, and political action efforts are starting to pay big dividends as the Board of Governors has now directed the Chancellor to seek a new accreditor for the community colleges! That means ACCJC will hopefully sooner, rather than later, be a distant, although painful, memory.

Wishing you the best of luck in the New Year! 🍀

## Retiree Corner *continued from page 2*

teachers could not even afford or qualify for private coverage due to either cost or prior conditions. It was quite probable one's first post retirement illness could lead to bankruptcy, regardless of the size of the pension/benefit. With the support of the union and over the opposition of those who were shortsighted in not wanting to contribute to Medicare, or were fortunate to qualify for Medicare due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., disability, previous non-teaching), AFT actively worked to change federal legislation. Today, thousands of teachers have the opportunity to have a fulfilling retirement without the fear of medical bankruptcy.

The appreciation, protection and expansion of union membership is more important now than ever before. AFT 1931 retirees acknowledge the work-life benefits and support the union provided. We will be on the front line to preserve its continuance. 



AFT Local 1931 Retiree Caucus

## Settlements *continued from page 1*

board by 9.55%. Lowest pay rate in any classification is now \$10.96/hour.

### For SDCCD Faculty:

- Added one 2.75% step to bottom of Classes 2-6 of adjunct salary schedule.
- Increased adjunct faculty salary schedule across the board by 8.0%.
- Increased contract faculty salary schedule across the board by 5.0%.
- All salary advancement rules now align between CE and college.
- Increased 18 partial CE contracts to 100%.
- Increased College Adjunct Faculty Office Hours funding pool by 150%.
- Decreased College Contract Counseling Hours from 33 to 32.
- Decreased College Laboratory assigned hours from 20 to 19 in spring 2016, from 19 to 18 for fall 2016.
- Increased the number of 11-month contracts for college faculty department chairs.
- Provided 5 hours of non-classroom pay for each completing student in Independent Study 290 courses.

- Increased compensation stipends for CE Program Chairs and Assistant Program Chairs.

### For GCCCD Faculty:

- Across-the-board salary increase on all adjunct faculty salary schedules of 4.60%.
- Across-the-board salary increase on all contract faculty salary schedules of 2.00%.
- Elimination of all “extra-pay” and “substitute” salary schedules. All adjunct/overload/substitute assignments now paid at same rate of pay.
- Increased the percentage on all adjunct faculty salary schedules between salary Class II and Class III from 2.0% to 5.0%.
- Increased the percentage between steps 15-16 on the contract faculty salary schedule from 2.00% to 2.60%.
- Increased the percentage between steps 16-17 on the contract faculty salary schedule from 0.53% to 1.40%.
- Made an additional payment of 0.5% toward adjunct faculty-dependent healthcare costs.
- Increased Head Coaching Stipends to \$7,000 for all sports.
- Provided 10-month Chair/Coordinators with a stipend in consideration of their unpaid work during the summer and winter breaks. 

## Middle Class continued from page 4

questioning Oxfam's motives for releasing the report just before the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Sadly, just since October, several more key stories about the intensifying level of economic inequality have also emerged briefly before being overwhelmed by the endless closed feedback loop of Trump and Terror. All of them only underline the grim truth in the Oxfam report.

First, the *American Prospect* relayed the news of a recent study done by the Institute for Policy Studies that illustrates that our nation's wealth gap is wider than believed:

Not only do the top one-tenth of 1 percent of Americans own more than most Americans put together, but the nation's top 20 richest people own as much wealth as the entire bottom half of U.S. earners. That's a sliver about 15,000 times smaller than the already superrich one-tenth of 1 percent.

Put another way, the 20 individuals who possess more wealth between them than 152 million Americans can fit together comfortably inside one Gulfstream G650 luxury jet. And just who are these 20? Not surprisingly, the list includes the likes of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates; billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch; casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, and Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett.

This was followed a few days later by yet another report (this one by the Pew Research Center), which had concluded that we had reached the tipping point where most Americans were no longer middle class:

Americans have long lived in a nation made up primarily of middle-class families, neither rich nor poor, but comfortable enough.

This year, that changed, according to the Pew Research Center.

A just-released analysis of government data shows that as of 2015, middle-income households have become the minority. The trend is so firmly established that it may well continue; Americans have experienced "a demographic shift that could signal a tipping point," Pew researchers concluded Wednesday.

Thanks to factory closings and other economic factors, the country now has 120.8 million adults living in middle-income households, the study found. That compares with the 121.3 million who are living in either upper- or lower-income households.

"The hollowing of the middle has proceeded steadily for the past four decades," Pew concluded.



"Anyone turn in the Middle Class?  
We've lost it."

And middle-income Americans not only have shrunk as a share of the population but have fallen further behind financially, with their median income down 4 percent compared with the year 2000, Pew said.

Around this same time, news broke of another Oxfam report that the world's richest 10 percent are responsible for half of carbon emissions as national and global inequality has risen:

[The] poorest half of the global population—around 3.5 billion people—are responsible for only around 10 percent of total global emissions attributed to individual consumption, yet live overwhelmingly in the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Around 50 percent of these emissions meanwhile can be attributed to the richest 10 percent of people around the world, who have average carbon footprints 11 times as high as the poorest half of the population, and 60 times as high as the poorest 10 percent. The average footprint of the richest 1 percent of people globally could be 175 times that of the poorest 10 percent.

So putting this all together, 2016 marks the year where we learned that global plutocracy is becoming more and more firmly entrenched and that the beneficiaries of that very system are not just responsible for an immoral level of economic inequality and human suffering but also for speeding us toward an apocalyptic end to the climate crisis.

Why this news appeared as a blip on the radar screen rather than

*Continued on page 9*

## Looking Back *continued from page 3*

and spoke in favor of it, but many of our CE union leaders said, “We will lose our collective voice in CE” or “The AFT is more interested in your dues than in you” or “You will be forgotten because the college faculty won’t care about you.” It just seemed to me that these hollow arguments were more about their fears about their loss of leadership and control than about what would happen to the rank and file. However, since joining with the AFT, I have experienced and observed just the opposite. The AFT union president and board have worked tirelessly to bring up our CE standards in language and pay and benefits. In particular, there has been an all-out effort to improve the pay and benefits for the hourly employees, and I completely agree with this. In CE are we where we need to be? No. But are we moving in the right direction? Yes. The AFT leadership is trying to make up for the many *decades* that we spent as the “redheaded stepchild.” The AFT President, Jim Mahler, and the board understand that the District’s Board of Trustees play a key role in how our District operates, and they have put much energy and support to see that our District’s Board of Trustees are educators who have a sense of social justice with an eye to building a community college district that builds on our strengths and challenges all of us to do our best.

When I graduated from high school, I had never taken a college prep class because my counselor told me, “You would make a good secretary.” As a result, I began my education in the community college system at Porterville Community College in the San Joaquin Valley in California.

Since that time, I have earned three master’s degrees and it continues to be a privilege and honor to teach for our District. I am very proud to call myself a member of AFT 1931. Bringing dignity and respect to the workplace takes time and effort, and I commend the AFT leadership on their tireless efforts and successes in working towards that goal for



Susan Morgan's NAASCO Welding Card and Ship Buckle

all District employees. Will the struggles continue? Yes. Will we continue to make progress? Yes. Are there still too many disparities in CE? Yes! Progress is rarely ever fast enough and I wish it were much, much quicker! However, I am proud to say that I am truly astounded and appreciative at how far we have come, and I expect the AFT to continue to build on the tremendous accomplishments thus far. 

## Middle Class *continued from page 8*

dominating the media landscape is no accident. When the same oligarchy that benefits from our rigged system own the corporations that run our mass media, it is not surprising that bad news for the vast majority of us is not worthy of occupying the heaven of the spectacle for more than a fleeting moment.

With corporate news coverage like this, it's hard to be too critical of the average American voter for being led astray by the use of divisive cultural issues in the service of what Thomas Frank has called “backlash populism” that ignores economic privilege while obsessing over the sins of a mythic “cultural elite.”

If both parties are pigging out at the corporate trough and courting donors from the top 1% while our information system is owned by that very same elite who don't consider their growing domination of the global commons news, how are regular folks going to get the tools they need to draw an accurate cognitive map of power?

The answer to this question is that unless they are staying up all night to monitor obscure cable news, most people are being left in the dark about just how bad things are getting and why.

All of this makes our jobs as educators and union members much more difficult but crucially important. If our education system does not produce a citizenry capable of thinking critically enough to negotiate a media landscape that frequently does not serve them or their interests well, then who will? In an era of imperiled democracy, our essential task has to be to produce educated, engaged citizens rather than passive consumers. 

## Where's the Love continued from page 5

But the objections became harder to dismiss as evidence mounted that even superb and motivated professionals had come to believe that the boatloads of measures, and the incentives to “look good,” had led them to turn away from the essence of their work. In medicine, doctors no longer made eye contact with patients as they clicked away. In education, even parents who favored more testing around Common Core standards worried about the damaging influence of all the exams. . . .

This discussion sounds a lot like the debates we have had in departments across community colleges in California with regard to the virtues or lack thereof associated with quantitative measured outcomes or student learning outcomes not so fondly known as SLOs. What Wachter says about the mania for measurement in the medical and education fields is spot on, and I suspect it will sound familiar to anyone who has read some of your AFT's earlier critiques of Taylorism in academia that we published in previous editions of the *AFT Advantage*:

Thoughtful and limited assessment can be effective in motivating improvements and innovations, and in weeding out the rare but disproportionately destructive bad apples.

But in creating a measurement and accountability system, we need to tone down the fervor and think harder about the unanticipated consequences.

Measurement cannot go away, but it needs to be scaled back and allowed to mature. We need more targeted measures, ones that have been vetted to ensure that they really matter. . . .

Whatever we do, we have to ask our clinicians and teachers whether measurement is working, and truly listen when they tell us that it isn't. Today, that is precisely what they're saying.

And, as Wachter is careful to point out, it is not just critical unionists or resentful professors sounding the alarm, but some of the very folks who brought us the measurement systems and the accompanying technocratic ideology that justifies the current hegemony:

Avedis Donabedian, a professor at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, was a towering figure in the field of quality measurement. He developed what is known as Donabedian's triad, which states that quality can be measured by looking at outcomes (how the subjects fared), processes (what was done) and structures (how the work was organized). In 2000, shortly before he died, he was asked about his view of quality. What this hard-nosed scientist answered is shocking at first, then somehow seems obvious.

“The secret of quality is love,” he said.

Our businesslike efforts to measure and improve quality are now blocking the altruism, indeed the love that motivates people to enter the helping professions. While we're figuring out how to get better, we need to tread more lightly in assessing the work of the professionals who practice in our most human and sacred fields.

Amen to that. 🍷

## Latest continued from page 5

to make the measure palatable for Governor Brown, who is yet to support it but he has also not said he would oppose the measure. Let's hope the Governor decides to see his legacy be a good one for education funding so we can pass the extension and continue to more fully fund education.

## ACCJC Still on the Ropes

Most of us cheered the news in recent months that a California Community College system panel recommended that our state's colleges seek an accreditor other than the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). After ACCJC's setback in a San Francisco lawsuit, this was another blow to the credibility of Barbara Beno and company and now, just this January, the Department of Education rejected their appeal of the DOE ruling that the agency was not meeting Federal standards. While it may happen more slowly than many would like, it appears that the excesses of this rogue agency may finally be leading to its eventual replacement. 🍷



“You can take early retirement, Ms. Cook, but not for another ten years.”

## Teachers Unions and Democracy

“Teachers unions are strong champions of American public schooling, which undergirds our democracy. The 19th-century educator Horace Mann, who advocated fiercely for the common school system that became America’s experiment with public education, made this point metaphorically: ‘A republican form of government, without intelligence in the people, must be, on a vast scale, what a mad-house, without superintendent or keepers, would be on a small one.’ While some critics claim teachers unions have a detrimental effect on academic achievement, careful studies actually find higher achievement in states with strong teachers unions.”

*New York Times, 1/12/16*

## Unions and the Middle Class

“Our main findings are that the decline in union coverage accounts for 35 percent of the falling share of middle-class workers and that the combination of the shrinking share of union workers and the reduction in the union equality effect explains almost half of the decline in middle-class workers. To the extent that union-induced wage increases spill over from union to nonunion workers and that union advocacy produces economic and social policies that benefit the middle class, our results understate the impact of the weakening labor movement on the hollowing out of the U.S. middle class.

Making America a middle-class country once again will require policies that raise median earnings and incomes and that bring more workers and households into the middle class. Increasing union coverage is important for both, as well as for possibly increasing economic mobility.”

*Center for American Progress, 1/13/16*

## Robert Reich on the Supreme Court

“The Republican Court’s agenda is all about disempowering the majority and further empowering a privileged minority at the top. That’s why they opened the floodgates to big money in politics in ‘Citizens United’ in 2010 and ‘McCutcheon v. FEC’ in 2014. It’s why they gutted the Voting Rights Act in ‘Shelby vs. Holder’ in 2013. It’s why they’ve almost closed the door to class actions against big corporations, in ‘AT&T Mobility v. Concepcion’ in 2011, and ‘Comcast v. Behrend’ in 2013. And it explains their anti-union agenda.

The Republicans on the Supreme Court don’t care about legal precedent (several of their decisions fly directly in the face of previous Court rulings). They don’t worry about legal activism (they’re the most activist court since the Warren Court). They don’t give a fig even about the consistency of their own opinions (don’t even try to figure out how Alito, Scalia, Thomas, and Roberts can square their recent opinions with several of their former ones).

Their goal is to permanently entrench the powerful in America. Not coincidentally, this goal is shared with those who were behind their nominations to begin with, who have subsequently wined and dined several of them, and who have found the plaintiffs and sponsored the litigation that’s got all these cases onto the Court’s docket. Who are they? The Koch brothers and their billionaire allies.”

**Robert Reich blog 1/14/16**

## Organizing in Wisconsin After Scott Walker

“Many thought Governor Scott Walker’s anti-union Act 10 would be a death sentence for Wisconsin’s public sector unions. They’ve been given a high hurdle to clear: every year they have to recertify the union with yes votes by 51 percent of the bargaining unit. Not voting counts as a ‘no’ vote.

But teacher unions around the state, while objecting to a law that ties two hands and a leg behind their backs, have taken the law’s obstacles and turned them into organizing opportunities.

Recertification grants a union legal recognition to bargain with its district—but only over the one topic Act 10 allows, wages. And increases are legally capped at inflation, around 2 percent. Some public sector unions have opted not to recertify, seeing it as pointless when bargaining is so limited.

But half the state teacher locals *did* recertify this year, including many of the largest districts, such as Madison, Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Racine.

The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission conducts the votes. This year unionized workers could vote by phone or online, for a two-week period November 5-25.

‘We like doing it,’ said Milwaukee Teachers Education Association Vice President Kim Schroeder. ‘It’s a constant reminder that the system is made for us to fail. Even when the rules are stacked against us, we can still win.’

... Teacher unions in Milwaukee, Madison, and Racine, Wisconsin, too, have kept membership above 70 percent—and that’s with a law that virtually prevents them from bargaining, and requires them to recertify annually.

Members there have voted to rejoin multiple times, because the unions fight for what they care about: defending public education.”

*Labor Notes, 2/16/15 and 7/30/15*

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