



FALL 2024 VOLUME 2

AFT GUILD 1931

Standing in Solidarity, Building Our Community



BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

Larissa Dorman-Cobb
Organizer/Trainer

AFT Guild, Local 1931 Members,

This semester, our union has continued our focus on community building through campus-centered events, union family outings and our commitment to offering an incredible calendar of professional development. We have identified new union leaders, met members who have attended our events for the first time and seen a dramatic increase in participation as a result of these efforts.

At the end of September, we hosted the Wave game with 170 AFT attendees! In early November, we hosted a Family Zoo Day and BBQ and had a whopping 650 AFT attendees! We will host the Gulls Teddy Bear Toss hockey game in early December! We hope that through these events we are showing our community of friends, family, and children the value of a union, not just for our amazing contract and support at the workplace, but also the way we build solidarity through connection.

With all the changes coming in our world politically, we hope that our union will be a place of comfort and empowerment, and will offer support for our most vulnerable communities. If there was ever a time to get involved, it is now! We will continue our focus on making our local UNION STRONG!!

The off Guild
The Union Starts With Me!

Union Strong Checklist

- Check your paystub regularly and track your leave balances!
- Know your placement on the salary scale and the rules on how to advance!
- Know who to contact for union-related issues!
- Contact your Union representative when management does not follow the contract!
- Read all Union related emails!
- Attend Union meetings (or "hang out" at the union, join Union committees and/or become a Union Fellow).
- Participate in Union social and on-campus events and bring your colleagues along!
- Work on your contract (goals/objectives) and meet on!
- Support labor and social justice organizations by attending their events and calls to action!
- Encourage your colleagues to join the Union!
- Vote on everything! (Election surveys, contract negotiations, general union elections, etc.)
- Advocate your students on labor and social justice issues, where that can have a positive meaningful impact.

Our Mission

The American Federation of Teachers Guild, Local 1931, is an open, active, voice, member-driven organization representing Community College Classified Professionals, Faculty, and Hourly Workers in San Diego County.

I Am My Union
I Am Union Strong

AFTGUILD.ORG

Member Spotlight



KELLY METZ-MATTHEWS

CONTINUING EDUCATION, MESA, WEST CITY
ESL ASST. PROGRAM CHAIR, ASST. WIOA COORDINATOR

Tell us a bit about yourself and your work...

Prior to teaching, I had a whole other career in communications leadership, training, and professional writing. Not long before my 30th birthday, I left my first career for something more rewarding; I went back to graduate school, started teaching in the university system, and eventually decided to pursue my PhD. My studies put in sharp relief how the most impactful work was happening in the community college system, and I knew that was where I wanted to be in the long term. In 2016, I started teaching English as a Second Language at Palomar College, and, only a few short years later, made my way to San Diego City College. At City, I taught both English and English Language Acquisition while also serving in a variety of non-instructional roles. In 2022, I landed in my academic home in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at the San Diego College of Continuing Education where I teach and serve as one of our ESL Assistant Program Chairs. I absolutely could not love this work more. Even really tough days--and we all have those--feel like a monumental privilege. If our lives are a culmination of hours, teaching in this time and space is, I think, a beautiful way to spend those hours.

What does union solidarity mean to you and why does it matter?

For me, it means community. I can't imagine where I would be without my community here, and the union remains foundational in that. I always know that there's a community of people behind me to answer questions, assuage my concerns or fears, offer mentorship and guidance, and forge ahead with me in challenging moments.

Any union stories you'd like to share?

My first truly in-depth experience with the union was at The Summer Institute (TSI) which our union sponsors and which I am fortunate to now co-direct alongside two peers. The community-building, growth, and professional learning I first witnessed at TSI felt--and still feels--contagious. I remain indebted to our union for supporting not only our personal and professional development, but also for giving us a space to build such a strong and lasting community of practice.



Soon-Ah Fadness
Professional Development Coordinator



Greetings from AFT Guild Professional Development and M&M Programs!

We have some exciting things to share from the first half of our semester:

Through M&M we have successfully paired over 100 Mentor/Mentees! Continuing Education has 13 Part-Time mentees which is incredible!

For Professional Development, we have hosted 6 events with over 75 attendees.

Finally, our Professional Development Program hosts Yin Yoga & Sound Bath sessions on the first Friday of each month.

Yin Yoga promotes balance and flexibility through passive holding of poses that stretch the deep connective tissues of the body. This will be followed with a sound bath that can help reduce stress and improve sleep quality and relaxation.

The final offering of the semester will be held at Grossmont College (future events will rotate between the colleges) Come and join us for an amazing experience!

- Friday, December 6, 3:30 - 5:00 pm
- Grossmont College, Building 100, Room 102A
- Registration is required: click [HERE](#)

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and look forward to all of the amazing programming ahead in 2025!

AFT GUILD FAMILY WAVE GAME: SEPT 2024



AFT GUILD FAMILY ZOO DAY: NOV 2024



UPCOMING: AFT GUILD GULLS GAME: DEC 2024





YVONNE SCHMELTZ
AFT GUILD MEMBER ADVOCATE

Since February 2024, we've had over 20 Classified professionals speak out in favor of a 32 hour work week at our SDCCD Board Meetings!

I wanted to take this moment to thank and acknowledge them for their advocacy on behalf of all of us AFT Classified Professionals.

It's no small feat to accomplish big things! None of this is possible without you!

So be sure to offer the folks below your gratitude, and prepare yourselves to step up to the plate this coming semester as we continue to push for what we deserve! If you are interested in getting more involved, please contact aftyvonne@gmail.com

- Ashley Burch
- Zenia Torres - community member
- Neill Kovrig
- Gerry Vanderpot
- Cynthia Suarez
- Masha Melnick
- Eva Arteaga
- Andrea Lopez Rivera
- Erica Zhang
- Brenda Torres
- Catherine Cannock
- Luisa Davila
- Natali Torres
- Eva Parrill
- Cathy Palestini
- Ron Zeiber
- Zoe Adler
- Mary I. Toste
- Sandy Hamel
- Jennifer Kennedy
- Alison Mona
- Dena Prater
- Terri Jackson
- Liza Abuyo
- Ellen Engels

Tina Solorzano Fletcher
Organizer & Membership Coordinator



It seems like we just began the Fall semester and it's quickly coming to an end.

During that time, AFT organizers have signed-up over one-hundred new members!

The newly designed AFT t-shirts have arrived. They are currently being distributed at each of the campuses. If you missed out, no need to fret, members can place an order now for delivery mid-March. You can go to https://stores.inksoft.com/aft_guild_1931/shop/home and place an order. I would like to thank Sean Bacon at City's Graphic Design for bringing the design to fruition.

I gave a membership benefits workshop for all the NANC employees at CE Mesa.

If your department would like a presentation, email me at aftTina@mac.com.



AFT's Campaign for Real Solutions for Higher Education Aims to Create a Better System

Higher education has been under assault for some time now. Hit hard by budget cuts, belt tightening, and unfavorable business models for decades, many two- and four-year institutions are starting to feel the strain. As resources have declined, tuition has increased for students, causing the national student debt crisis. Looking for a convenient target, the right has gone after not just academic freedom, but the very existence of some courses of study, and they've instituted laws in many states that restrict academic freedom. And to deal with increasing austerity budgeting, colleges have also, over the years, come to rely on an army of underpaid adjunct professors to teach their classes.

In response to this growing crisis in higher education, the American Federation of Teachers has launched the "Real Solutions for Higher Education" campaign to push for more access, affordability, and opportunity in America's institutions of higher learning. As the website for this effort explains:

The AFT's Real Solutions for Higher Education is a multiyear campaign that aims to make higher education truly affordable, creates opportunity for our students and strengthens our communities. As extremists attempt to undermine higher education by defunding our public institutions and eroding the freedom to teach and learn, we are championing real solutions to ensure that our two- and four-year colleges and universities are accessible and affordable for all students, fair employers for the faculty and staff who work on our campuses, and beacons of academic freedom, free speech and knowledge creation.

In order to fight the rising costs of a college education and make it easier for more people to get a degree without also acquiring a mountain of debt, the first element of the campaign involves fighting for increased public funding for higher education. More investment would help lower costs for students thus eliminating one of the biggest barriers to college. It would also help abate the casualization of labor and the growing tendency to see education as a mere commodity.

As the AFT argues, "Together, we must preserve higher education as a public good that supports knowledge creation, drives the economic prosperity of the communities and states it serves, strengthens civic and democratic institutions, and results in individual growth and prosperity." Colleges are not businesses and should not be treated as such.

To protect academic freedom and free speech on campus, the AFT points out that we must fight legislation that shuts down access to research and/or bans entire fields of study. In a democracy, it is essential that we educate our students to think freely and critically without having to deal with book bans, censorship, or any other form of harassment. This is an essential freedom that will allow them to "fully engage in a multicultural democracy."

Finally, this campaign aims to end contingent labor, improve job security, and ensure that all workers in higher education have a voice on the job. Combined with better funding for colleges, improved labor standards for employees would both set a model for the community at large and help create a better system of higher education. Our colleges and communities benefit when everyone is treated equitably and with respect. Access, affordability, and opportunity for all is not just good for higher education; it is essential for a thriving democracy.

For more on this campaign go here: <https://www.aft.org/realsolutionsforhighered>