

PACE

Professional Association
of Classified Employees

Monthly Newsletter
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Issue 13: August 2023

Professional Development



**Sub-Committee of
CSEA Chapter 408**

Monthly Newsletter

SISC OPEN ENROLLMENT CLOSSES AUG. 25

The annual open enrollment period for our general health insurance through Self-Insured Schools of California is now open and will close on Friday, August 25, 2023. Accounting Director, Leangela Miller, has emailed several notices to classified staff explaining the enrollment process and including the various plan options available to members. Please note, all plans have an increased rate from previous years. To find the plan you are currently enrolled in, please go to Banner Web, click on Employee > Benefits & Deductions > Health Benefits. Look through until you find the one listed as “Active”, which is your current plan.

During this open enrollment period, those not interested in changing plans from 2022-2023 do not need to take any action, as their plan will automatically roll over to the 2023-2024 plan year. If you are interested in changing plans, you will need to download the Election Form, place a check or “X” in the box of the plan you are choosing on the Election Form, initial under that plan choice, print your name, enter your Banner ID, sign and date the form, then turn into Payroll by placing the form in the Payroll mailbox in the mailroom or scanning directly to Jennifer Barycki at jenniferba@cos.edu. Payroll will accept either a wet signature or a digitally signed and dated document.

If you have any questions in regards to the plan specifics, please contact JoeAnna Todd at Buckman Mitchell, A Gallagher Company. JoeAnna’s phone number is (559) 635-3523 and her email address is JoeAnna_Todd@ajg.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

August

- 1 - Know Your Rights Training
- 10 - Adobe Training
- 30 - Last Wednesday Lunch



September

- 6 - Computer Skills Series: Canva
- 13 - De-Stress: Yoga
- 27 - Last Wednesday Lunch
- 28 - ROPES
- 29 - ROPES

UPCOMING EVENTS

IMPORTANT DATES

- August 11 Convocation
- August 14 Fall Semester Begins
- August 25 SISC Open Enrollment Closes
- August 28 CSEA CalPERS Webinars
- August 30 Last Wednesday Lunch
- August 31 Pay Day

BUYING YEARS OF SERVICE FOR CALPERS

You earn service credit for each year or partial year you work for a CalPERS-covered employer. It accumulates on a fiscal year basis (July 1 through June 30) and is one of the factors used to calculate your future retirement benefits. Your CalPERS retirement benefits are based on your: age at retirement, highest salary for a 3-year period, and years of service credit. To earn a full year of service credit during a fiscal year, you must work at least 1,720 hours in that year.

You may be eligible to request to purchase additional service credit online. It is recommended that you request to purchase service credit early in your career because the cost will be lower, and you can pay off your lump sum balance in full prior to your retirement to maximize your benefit increase. To request online, log in to myCalPERS. Go to the Retirement tab, select Service Credit Purchase followed by the Search for Purchase Options button. Here, you will be prompted to answer a series of questions to help determine which service credit types you may be eligible to purchase. You will also be asked to provide employment and service information for the requested period. Once all required information has been completed, you can view the estimated cost for any available purchase options and submit your request for review.

There are several benefits to requesting your service credit purchase online, including the ability to easily submit any additional required documents online, the ability to monitor the status of your request from start to finish, and automatically receiving the estimated cost information for eligible service credit purchases.

HELLO

Friends!

Let's give a warm GIANT welcome to the amazing new staff who joined our family last month!



Isaiah Felix

he/him
Custodian



Joseph Rodrigues

he/him
Custodian



Ramiro Silva

he/him
Custodian



SPREAD THE LOVE OR SHARE THE JOY



Have a coworker (or maybe a group of coworkers) that you would love to recognize? Do they go above and beyond for students? Are they an uplifting motivator to their peers? Let us give them a shout out and recognize that!

Or maybe you have a recent achievement or milestone you'd like to share with our community of classified employees? New babies, degree completions, engagements, marriages, professional awards and recognitions - we want to share in your joy. Let us know!

Professional Tip

Incorporating positive feedback letters and professional certificates into your personnel file is an excellent practice. Positive feedback letters highlight your contributions, skills, and accomplishments, providing concrete evidence of your value to the organization. These commendations showcase your teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving abilities. Moreover, including professional certificates demonstrates your commitment to continuous learning and skill development, positioning you as a proactive and adaptable employee.

Personal Tip

Living authentically has a profound positive impact on mental health, as it aligns one's actions, values, and self-perception, reducing the internal conflict and emotional strain associated with masking one's true identity. Embracing authenticity fosters a sense of self-acceptance and inner peace, enabling individuals to navigate life with greater resilience and emotional well-being. By openly expressing thoughts and feelings, forming genuine connections, and pursuing meaningful endeavors that resonate with their true selves, people can experience reduced anxiety, depression, and stress, ultimately cultivating a more harmonious and fulfilling mental state.

HIRING COMMITTEES 101

Participation in hiring committees is one of the key ways in which classified staff help to ensure the future success of our departments and the District as a whole. Human Resources has a document detailing the hiring procedures for each type of employee at COS. There is to be a minimum of one classified staff member on every hiring committee for a management position, and there are to be two or more staff members on the committee for every classified position, two of which are appointed directly by CSEA. Once the committee members are assigned, Human Resources guides the process through, in conjunction with the committee chair. There is a screening window, during which committee members must review the applicants' hiring packets for completeness and quality of content. At the end of the screening window, the chair will call a selection meeting with all hiring committee members to decide which applicants will be selected for interviews. All committee members will then partake in the initial interview process and following the conclusion of each interview, the hiring committee member shall independently complete his/her scoring for each candidate. After the interview process, this scoring shall be recorded on a scoring sheet, totaled and reviewed by the committee for a final decision by the hiring chair.

Please note that, while classified staff cannot dictate who the hiring chair selects, there should be some clear consistency with the rest of the committee's recommendations. If you feel or observe significant discord between what the committee voices and what the hiring chair elects to do, it may be prudent to make note of that and bring it to the attention of Human Resources and your union representatives. Managers and faculty committees currently get an additional party in their hiring committees that are intended to ensure equity in their hiring processes. CSEA is pushing for the same arrangements in our committees, but have been told that, "[a]n EEO officer would be ideal, but impractical" for classified committees. This means we must look out for one another to ensure equity for all and not favoritism for some.

ARE YOU AI-READY?

AI is rapidly reshaping workplaces across industries, revolutionizing tasks ranging from data analysis and customer service to manufacturing and healthcare. In customer service, chatbots and virtual assistants efficiently handle inquiries, freeing up human agents for more complex interactions. Data-driven decision-making is bolstered by AI's ability to process and interpret vast amounts of information, enabling businesses to gain insights and adapt strategies in real time. Off-loading small, detailed tasks to an AI tool can free up time for more technically demanding tasks. As AI continues to permeate workplaces, staying ahead of this trend is paramount for maintaining your value as an employee.

Employees who proactively engage with AI tools and technologies can enhance their skill sets and remain competitive in an evolving job market. By embracing AI-related training and upskilling opportunities, individuals position themselves as valuable contributors to their organizations' innovative efforts. Staying ahead of trends also allows you to help shape your office policies and practices proactively instead of reacting as issues arise, obviously also keeping in mind the safety and confidentiality needed for our roles.

NEGATIVE LETTERS, WRITE-UPS, AND OTHER UNPLEASANT DOCUMENTS IN YOUR PERSONNEL FILE? SEAL 'EM UP!

Did you know that derogatory materials placed into your official personnel file shall not be used in subsequent evaluations beyond a period of two years from the date of origin? Want to make sure that is the case? After 2 years, you may request that the documents be placed in a sealed envelope in your file. This ensures that the documents will only be opened and reviewed if the District needs to establish a pattern of behavior. But your supervisor cannot go back and refer to those documents on their own or use them against you if you have grown and discontinued the problematic behaviors addressed.

Additionally, nothing can be placed into your personnel file without your knowledge (you must be notified within ten days and allowed to insert a response letter). Also, records that your supervisor personally keeps in their own files or office that are not included in your official HR-maintained personnel file cannot be used in disciplinary matters. These policies protect employees from having secret records kept and used against them at work. You also have the right to review what is in your personnel file at any time, as well as the log of who has accessed your files and when.

HELP FUND THE PATH TO VICTORY!

Join the non-partisan CSEA Victory Club to help us raise vital funds to support classified-friendly candidates running for local, state and federal offices. Your membership will help support candidates who have received CSEA's endorsement based on their completed questionnaires, voting records and demonstrating strong support for issues of importance to classified employees.

These issues include:

- Protecting Prop 98 and increasing education funding
- Electing pro-education and pro-labor school board members and community college trustees
- Increasing pension and healthcare benefits
- Stopping the privatization and outsourcing of classified jobs to the private sector
- Standing up for working families

Join today and help us give classified employees a powerful voice in protecting our rights, retirement and job security. Contact treasurer Valiree Gonzalez to begin or increase your monthly contribution today!

CSEA RESOLUTIONS FOR CONFERENCE

Your elected Chapter 408 conference delegates for 2023 were President Katie Cain, Vice President Carolyn Franco, and Secretary Osiris Deleon.

Delegates voted on the following resolutions while attending this year's conference. There was a chapter-wide vote in July to inform the delegates' votes.

Resolution 1: Modernizing CSEA Governing Documents

- This resolution removed the use of gendered pronouns and replace with "the member" throughout CSEA governing documents.
- This resolution was PASSED!

Resolution 2: Pay Equity for Association President

- This resolution ensured the Association President is compensated at 40 hours per week for 12 months per year, regardless of the hours worked in their classified role.
- Before this resolution, if a member who worked part-time or less than a 12-month work year was elected as Association President, they were still expected to perform full-time work for the Association but were compensated through their employer for less than full-time work. In the summer months, such members would not be compensated at all.
- This resolution was PASSED!

Resolution 3: Change of Election Terms

- This resolution would have changed the governing documents to reflect the term of office for chapter officers to begin on July 1.
- This resolution failed.

Resolution 5: RUEB Nomination for LMHR Awards

- This resolution removed an additional step in the nomination process for Life Member and Honor Roll awards submitted by retired members that was not required for nominations submitted by all active members at the time.
- This resolution was PASSED!

Resolutions No. 4, 6 and 7 were withdrawn by the submitting authors and therefore are not reported for Conference action. Visit our chapter webpage at COS.edu for links to view the full resolution language, fiscal implications, analyses, and committee recommendations.

GIANT STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH:

Patricia Brito



- **Name:** Patricia Brito
- **Classification:** Administrative Assistant
- **Office/Department:** Educational Support Services and Language and Communication
- **Main Campus:** Visalia
- **How long have you been at COS?** 3 years
- **Have you held any other classifications at COS?** Clerical Assistant
- **Would you describe yourself as an introvert or an extrovert?** Extrovert with a sprinkle of introvert
- **What's the best way to spend a free weekend?** Eating great food with family or friends.
- **What is your favorite holiday and why?** HALLOWEENIE. I love the colors, spookiness and dressing up.
- **Who was your childhood celebrity crush?** Fran Drescher in the Nanny.
- **You have to sing karaoke. What's your song of choice?** Long Live (Taylor's Version) - Taylor Swift
- **What is your favorite hot beverage?** Sugar free vanilla latte with Pumpkin Cream Cold Foam
- **What is the best sandwich?** Beach Club on Sliced Wheat – Jimmy Johns
- **What would the title of your autobiography be?** A Hot Mess in Progress
- **What is your favorite thing about working at COS?** Getting to meet new people. The students, staff, and faculty are all amazing.
- **If you had a magic wand, what would you improve for classified staff at COS?** I would give all classified staff a discount at The Grind. IYKYK



MEET YOUR CSEA 408 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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MASTER AGREEMENT FEATURE

Article 13.6: Entitlement to Other Sick Leave:

Bargaining unit members shall be provided a total of 100 days each fiscal year which can be utilized upon exhaustion of other sick leave benefits provided in this Article. Such leave shall not accumulate from year to year and payment received for utilization of such leave shall be at the rate of fifty percent (50%) of the bargaining unit member's regular salary.

The District shall require a verification statement from the bargaining unit member's physician for entitlement to this section. The District may also require the bargaining unit member to obtain a second opinion from a physician of the District's choosing. The District shall pay the full cost of the second opinion.

So what does that mean?

If a classified employee exhausts their accumulated sick leave but still is not well enough to return to work, they are entitled to take up to 100 days of leave at half their normal rate of pay. Classified staff do not pay into disability insurance, so this is the District's alternative plan. If a classified employee exhausts their banked sick leave and the 100 days of half-pay, the employee is then terminated and placed on the 39-month rehire list.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Classified employees may be entitled to pregnancy and/or family care leave.

Source: Federal Family and Medical Leave Act; California Family Rights Act & California Education Code 88193

- Classified employees may be entitled to leaves of absence because of pregnancy or convalescence following childbirth. Leaves of absence for this purpose may or may not be with pay. Classified employees should reference their collective bargaining agreements to determine what specific rights are applicable to them.
- Classified employees may also be entitled to up to twelve weeks in a calendar year of paid or unpaid leave for care associated with the birth of a child, adoption, or placement of a foster child, or to care for a family member who is seriously ill. Health and welfare benefits must be provided during the leave on the same basis as if the employee were actively employed.

BENEFITS FEATURE

As our students and some of our own staff head back into classes this fall, CSEA wants to remind you of the great financial benefits available to members:

- CSEA Dependent Scholarships: Awards are granted in several categories, including some based on financial need, some based on academic achievement, and some may be based on exceptional circumstances.
- Member Career Grant: CSEA can help offset the cost of furthering your education. \$1,000 grants are awarded based on a combination of criteria, which includes financial need, career goals, community service, and participation in CSEA activities.
- Member Reimbursement Subsidy: This subsidy grant is available to members seeking funds to help pay for various opportunities that link them to the union, students, and/or the community.
- Member Student Loan Reducer Program: CSEA members with \$10,000 or more in student loan debt and who have completed a degree program can apply for this grant in the amount of \$500 to assist in paying down their student loan debt.
- Union Plus Scholarships: This scholarship is for members or their dependents attending higher education.

EDITOR INFORMATION

The PACE Monthly Newsletter is published monthly through collaboration with CSEA and PACE members. All articles are written by the editor unless otherwise noted.

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COS.edu
PACE Page



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CSEA Page



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NEGOTIATIONS AND GRIEVANCES

Recently, your Chapter Leadership fought on your behalf to accomplish:

- ... auditing District and chapter compliance with the Master Agreement and preparing items for our initial proposal for the 2024 negotiations cycle.
- ... continuing to fight and advocate for appropriate workloads for office staff in Facilities.
- ... getting all custodial positions filled on all campuses to reduce use of substitutes.
- ... clarifying the District's Covid-19 Prevention Plan.
- ... providing a Know Your Rights Training for all staff.
- ... clarifying job descriptions and re-aligning job titles in A&R to be more consistent across the District.

As a reminder, the Collective Bargaining Agreement is closed to open negotiations until Summer 2024.

MEET YOUR STEWARDS

These CSEA members have undergone specialized training and are ready to help you navigate issues.

Katie Cain

Union Steward
csea408president@gmail.com

Osiris Deleon

Union Steward
csea408secretary@gmail.com

If you are interested in becoming a Site Representative or Union Steward, please contact your Chapter President.