

Winter 2020

Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association

The Monitor

Retirees, District Benefits, and CalPERS

BY GARY JOHNSON

The Chancellor and a majority of the VCCCD Trustees are still on track with their desire to contract with CalPERS to provide District-paid health benefits, with a projected beginning date of 7/1/2020.

CalPERS administers benefits for a pool of 1005 varied public employers covering about 1.5 million employees and retirees.

The District is arguing an urgent and imperative need to reduce benefit expenses and especially to reduce its long term liability for post-retirement health benefits. Contracting with CalPERS projects a \$12.4 million yearly savings. The Board intends to use the budget relief to meet Trustee goals of shifting these dollars from medical premiums to additional, immediate, and long-term salary adjustments, state pension contributions, and educational support objectives.

CalPERS savings is not finding new money. It is shifting existing money from benefits to elsewhere in the budget, using CalPERS as a conduit. Making the shift requires numerous unsettling changes for retirees and has enor-

mous and divisive ramifications for all stakeholders.

Despite District assurances that retirees will be taken care of, retirees will experience out-of-pocket cost increases (exact amounts to be determined). In contrast to active employees, retirees will also face the largest required personal adjustments and aggravations resulting from CalPERS plans' rules, restrictions, lack of access, processes, and administrative procedures.

Imperative need, seen by some Trustees, is a difficult sell in the current state and national economic climate. Sacramento projects a record \$26 billion in reserves by summer 2021. Some of that may be earmarked for community colleges under a pro-education Governor and Democratic legislature.

The District is not poor. Last year's ending balance of unspent money was \$78.8 million. Additionally, the District has \$22 million in an irrevocable trust, as of June 30, 2019, to be applied toward the total liability for retiree benefits, which was estimated at \$197 million as of June 30, 2018. The sum seems enough for hold-

ing the status quo on benefits or negotiating cost saving internal adjustments on current plans.

Determination of what future benefits will be is still very much in play. The VCCCD Retirees' Association is holding steadfast to the status quo - no CalPERS. Retirees have spoken at each of the three Fall Board meetings and will speak again in December. Retirees' Association representatives meet with individual Trustees regularly to share information and perspectives, and also to closely monitor AFT and SEIU negotiations.

The District has offered salary and other incentives to both unions to support a move to CalPERS, but both are currently opposed. In mid-November, the District declared Impasse in negotiations with AFT, and the next step will be mediation.

CalPERS requires separate plans for employees and retirees, operated by Anthem and Kaiser, but administered by CalPERS. For retirees eligible for Medicare benefits, CalPERS requires Medicare enrollment and provides a self-insured Med-

icare supplement, with a vague District suggestion of short term temporary support to offset costs shifted to retirees.

Retirees under age 65, those not eligible for Medicare, and those with Medicare Part A only will, at the outset at least, be on the active employee plan. The District proposes paying all premiums for Medicare Part B and late membership penalties, but that has not been negotiated. CalPERS offers three levels of benefit plans and the District is offering the middle grade plans, known as PERS Choice, for both active employees and retirees.

Retiree Benefits Committee attention has been heavily focused on understanding all ramifications of a CalPERS move, and from findings, to develop a strong case against a move. Largely through the analytical efforts of Marta Freixas, we have very detailed plan comparisons between current AFT and ASCC Anthem plans and the middle and best grade CalPERS employee and retiree Medicare supplement plans. Current plans provide better coverage with less out-of-pocket member costs. In December we will be sharing findings and conclusions with AFT and SEIU.

For about 500 Tier I retirees, contract and Settlement Agreement language contains no requirement to enroll in Medicare.

Medicare only came into play in 1990 for Tier II Retirees as a step down cost-saving retiree benefit. The CalPERS proposal requires the District to sidestep both longstanding contract language and more specific Settlement Agreement language. The District is confident they can do so legally. We hope they can be dissuaded before that confrontation is required.

We have additional and more detailed information to share and will be adding it soon to the Retiree Association blog at blog.vcccdra.org. Look for it beginning mid-December.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

WE NEED DATA! We recently sent an email asking you to check if your current medications would be covered under the proposed District plans. Thank you for your responses. Now we want to demonstrate how important it is for us to have Anthem/Blue Cross as a back up to Medicare.

If you have Medicare Parts A and B, in addition to the District Anthem plan, please send your answer **asap** to this question:

“Did you have instances where Medicare didn’t cover something, but Anthem did?”

If so, please specifically describe what wasn’t covered in each instance (i.e. out-of-network counseling, a specific procedure, etc.). What reason did Medicare give, if any, for not covering the cost? Let us know if you have AFT or ASCC coverage when you respond.

Send your answer by mail to Gary Johnson, 3421 Rio Hato Ct., Camarillo, Ca 93010 or send an e-mail to freevcnet@aol.com

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

1) Attend Trustee Board meetings, or email/write to the Trustees, and express your concerns:

Josh Chancer
jchancer@vccd.edu

Larry Kennedy
lkennedy@vccd.edu

Dianne McKay
dmckay@vccd.edu

Bernardo Perez
bperez@vccd.edu

Gabriella Torres
gtorres@vccd.edu

2) Volunteer to serve on the Retiree Benefits Committee.

3) Frequently check the blog (Health Benefits category) at blog.vcccdra.org for the latest information.

2020 – 2021 VCCCDRA Directory

BY JOY KOBAYASHI

It is time to publish a new name and contact directory for the Retirees' Association. To ensure that we only print what you want, please complete the form below and either:

- print it out and mail to:

Joy Kobayashi
7960 Pearl St
Ventura, CA 93004

or

- scan or photograph it and email as an attachment to:

tandemstoker@roadrunner.com

by 1 February 2020.

If you have recently moved or changed your email address, please let me know. We want the Directory to be as accurate as possible.

My name is: _____

Please do NOT publish my (e.g. street address) : _____

The Directory will be available for purchase at our Annual General meeting in March for \$5.

If you prefer that we mail it to you, please send your name, address and a check for \$10, made payable to VCCCDRA, to my home address above.

If you do not respond by 1 February 2020, we will publish all the contact information we have for you in our database.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Important Retiree Meeting Coming in February

Rene Rodriguez, President of the VCCCD Retirees Association, has called for a special meeting of all community college district retirees on Wednesday, February 5, 2020. Its purpose is to present the findings of research into the CalPERS employee benefits programs as proposed by the Ventura County Community College District for both active and retired employees and their spouses. The meeting will attempt to answer many questions that have been received by the Retirees Association from many concerned retirees.

The location and start time of the meeting was still pending at the time this newsletter went to print, but those details will be posted on the VCCCDRA blog (blod.vcccdra.org) and transmitted both by e-mail and snail mail. Stay tuned!

Former College Trustee to Run for State Assembly

BY HARRY CULOTTA

Stephen Blum, who served as Area 1 trustee for the Ventura County Community College District from 2007 through 2018, has obtained petitions to run for the California State Assembly in the open 37th district. The signed petitions and filing fee must be returned to the County Elections Office by December 6, 2019, in order to be eligible to appear on the March 3, 2020 Primary Election ballot.

Mr. Blum is one of five prospective candidates for the Assembly seat, and the only candidate from Ventura County so far. The other four potential candidates, all from Santa Barbara County, are:

- * Jonathan Abboud, a trustee of the Santa Barbara Community College District,
- * Jason Dominguez, a member of the Santa Barbara City Council,
- * Elsa Granados, a director of a Santa Barbara-based nonprofit organization, and
- * Cathy Murillo, the mayor of Santa Barbara.

Under current law, the top two vote-getting candidates in the Primary Election will advance to the General Election on November 3, 2020.

The 37th Assembly District is geographically diverse. It covers 53% of Santa Barbara County, including the cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Solvang. It also covers 29% of Ventura County, including the cities of Fillmore, Ojai, Santa Paula, Ventura, and about one-fifth of Oxnard.

The 37th Assembly District has been represented since 2017 by Monique Limón of Santa Barbara. However, Ms. Limón is leaving the Assembly to run for the State Senate in the 19th district, currently held by Hannah Beth Jackson, who will be termed out in 2020.

Membership Report

BY JOY KOBAYASHI

Please join me in welcoming our valued colleagues to the VCCCD Retirees Association and in wishing them a long and satisfying retirement.

Marla Burg	Ventura College	Rick Carnahan	Oxnard College
Diane Eberhardy	Oxnard College	William Eck	Ventura College
Nora Escobedo	Ventura College	Linda Loiselle	Moorpark College
Cynthia Stringfield	Moorpark College	Spencer Thompson	Moorpark College

Dear VCCCD Retirees,

I am still trying to collect email addresses for all the members of the Association. In addition to helping us save money on newsletter costs, giving us your e-mail address will enable you to stay current on the District's attempt to change our medical insurance. Although our newsletters summarize the situation over the last few months, we also send out electronic notices as soon as we find out anything new. It is the best way to stay informed in a timely manner.

If you know the email addresses of any of the people below, please send them to me at tandemstoker@roadrunner.com

Thank you.
Joy Kobayahsi

Kauffman, Marilyn (Jean)	Marziani, Alexander	Morgan, Jeannette A.	Parker, Jennifer
Kazmark-Bruskotter, Mary Ellen	Matzenger, George	Munoz, Michael	Passno, Philip
Keebler, David	Mayer, Steven J.	Murdock, Janet K.	Patterson, James D.
Kimberling, Tom	McAdam, Thomas K.	Naseri, Muthena	Peddie, James & Linda
King-Rushing, Bola	McCarthy, Lenore	Nasri, Farzeen	Panuela, Alan
Kitabayashi, Florence	McDill, Linda	Neilsen, Helen	Perez, Joe
Kofron, Angela Chapman	McFarland, Carl	Nelson, Moretta B.	Perry, Joanne
Laboriante, Manny	McGann, Michael	Nevarez, Henry V.	Peter, Claudia
LaCoste, Randy	McNeil, Mary Anne	Nicholas, Clemmie	Phelps, Richard
Lansing-Eigenhaus, Joan	McPherson, Ruth D.	Nicklas Inajane	Pinkard, Irene
Lawson, Clara L.	Mehr, Sheldon	Nordquist, Alvyn & Phyllis	Pollock, Steven
Lerma III, Paul	Melby, Darlene	Ohara, Maricarmen	Pomeroy, Marilyn (Jean)
Letinsky, Norma S.	Menchaca, Olivia	O'Neill, Earl	Preston, Arthur E.
Lewis, Gary	Mendoza, Gilbert	O'Neill, Margaret E.	Purcell, Jerry
Lindsay, Nancy	Mercado Jr., Victorino R.	O'Neill, Stasia	Rabe, Scot
Llanes-Munoz, Carmen	Metcalf, Gail & Walter	Orozco, Andres	Radcliffe, Dorothy
Lopez, Diana	Metcalf, William	Orr, Garland	Ramirez, Candy
Lopez, Robert	Meznek, James M.	Osborne, Deni	Ramirez, Ralph & Dolores
Loza-Medina, Jesus	Michaelson, Patricia	Pack, Sandra M.	Ramos, Judith
Mactague, Doris	Miller, Mariel	Paez, Lucy	Ramos, Margaret
Mahr, Carl	Miller, Sherrill	Pagson, Paul	Ramsey, Diane
Mangham, Mary	Mills, Mary	Palafox, John	Rapose, Joel
Manriquez, Stephen	Monezis, Gulhis C.	Palestina, Sergio	Raptis, Anthony
Marquez, Gregory	Moore, Jay	Pardee, Terry	Redding, Margaret Ann
Martinez, George	Morales, Richard	Parkel, Joyce	Reider, Conrad
	Morgan, Gary W.	Parker, Delbert	Renteria, Robert

VCCCD Retirees Association
P.O. Box 6216
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

Place
Postage
Here

 **The Monitor**

Winter 2020

In Memoriam

We honor the memory of our departed colleagues and extend our sincerest condolences to their families, friends, and associates.

Connie Baker

Evis Barnett

Frank Bianchino

Richard Black

Lois Denardo

Dorothy Mills

Clint Ragan

2019-2020 Executive Board

René G. Rodriguez, President

vcccdra@gmail.com

Harry R. Culotta, Past President

hculotta@outlook.com

John Woolley, Vice President

jwools37@gmail.com

Marie Soo Hoo, Secretary

masoohoo@twc.com

Patricia Gage, Treasurer

pgage5545@roadrunner.com

Gary Johnson, Benefits Committee Chair

freevcnet@aol.com

Joy Kobayashi, Membership Committee Chair

tandemstoker@roadrunner.com

Larry Manson, Educational Issues Committee Chair

lmanson@west.net