



SCCFT President Eric Hamako
Statement to the SCC Board of Trustees
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Good evening. I ask that my comments be read into the record.

Trustees of the Board:

My name is Eric Hamako. I am the President of the faculty's union, the Shoreline Community College Federation of Teachers (SCCFT), Local 1950 of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Since the January meeting of the Board of Trustees, our faculty union has been actively negotiating with our two bosses: the Washington State Legislature and you, the College.

On the legislative front, we continue our participation in our state Federation's Bridge to the Future campaign. We are advocating for the first substantive salary increases for faculty in more than a decade: a 6.5% raise for 2023 and a second 6.5% raise for 2024. And, we are advocating for pay equity for adjunct faculty, raising the statewide rate of pay for adjunct faculty to create equal pay for equal work at equal levels of experience. To that end, we have recently gone to the state capitol as part of AFT Washington's Lobby Day. And, we are supporting legislation such as Senate Bill 5557, to support pay equity for adjunct faculty.

On the College front, our faculty union has begun the process of renegotiating our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) – our contract – with the College, as we do every few years. Today, I'd like to speak to you, the Board, about two issues important to faculty. First, our continuing conflict regarding the College's recent turn toward discounting the value of our faculty members' union work in contract negotiation and contract administration – with the College now saying that such work does not count as service to the College. And, second, the

student-to-faculty ratio – that is, the number of students assigned to each faculty member – sometimes referred to as “course capacity” or “class caps,” although still relevant to the workload of our Advisors, Counselors, and Librarians, who serve students through means other than classroom instruction. Both issues bear on our faculty’s workload – and on the benefits we’re able to provide to the College and to our students.

Regarding faculty union work as service work to the College: As I noted in a previous statement to the Board, the College is continuing to pursue a change in its past practices, now asserting that faculty members’ union work on contract negotiation and contract administration largely does not count as service to the College, with the exception of our Joint Union/ Management Committee (JUMC) work.

The College has presented various and varying rationales for its change in past practice. The College has asked whether it had actually consistently counted and paid for such work in the past – and has asked our union to provide documentation of the College’s own practices, saying that the College itself was unsure of what it had done in the past. The College has suggested that perhaps its past practice had actually been illegal – and that it would not want to financially dominate our union – except, it seems, in cases in which the College might find that purported risk acceptable, as with continuing to count our union’s JUMC work as service to the College. And, circling back to one of its initial arguments, the College says that our union’s contract negotiation and contract administration work is not collaborative work that serves the College’s functions – except, the College says, in the cases that the College decides it does serve the College and therefore does count.

However, our faculty union proposes that, not only is counting such work the documented past practice of the College and not only is counting such work legally permissible, there is also ample evidence that our faculty’s union work does benefit the College. To be clear, those benefits are not always the benefits the College has sought – but they are benefits to the College nonetheless. As one example, several years ago, our faculty union’s work – in solidarity with other unions and constituencies – pressed the College to retain our Dental Hygiene program and to finally create a feasible relocation plan, rather than a series of half-baked plans that would have killed the Dental Hygiene program. And, our faculty union bargained with the College to improve the working conditions during and after the Dental Hygiene program’s relocation. As a second example, our faculty union played a key role in revealing dysfunction in the College’s financial practices, including its multi-year failure to conduct required external financial audits and questionable budgeting and accounting practices. Through this work, we pressed the College to be more transparent and current with its financial practices. As a third example, our faculty union, through our contract administration work, filed a grievance that

prompted the College to identify and, soon we're told, fix problems with ctclink's reporting of our accrued leave benefits. As a fourth example, through our past and ongoing Collective Bargaining work, our faculty union has prompted the College to recognize further financial dysfunction and disorganization in the accounting for student fee monies, including those that pay for Club Advising and other extracurricular activities. In each of these examples, our faculty union's work bargaining and administering our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) – work which the College has, in the past, recognized as service work – has benefitted the College. It hasn't necessarily made the College *look* good, but it has helped improve the College's functioning.

So, on that note, I'd like to now discuss the student-to-faculty ratio and its impacts on the College's functioning. Another benefit of our faculty union's work, particularly via our collective bargaining: Our union's work is a bulwark against the financial incentives that would push down the quality of students' education – particularly the financial drive to reduce labor costs by increasing student-to-faculty ratios in the name of "efficiency." With declining state and federal investment in higher education, the College has a financial incentive to try to pack as many students as possible into each class taught by an instructor, so that it can hire fewer instructors, thus reducing its labor costs. And, as the College and various Trustees have noted, labor *is* the College's largest expense. But, labor is also what produces the College's value. So, our faculty union pushes back against increases in the student-to-faculty ratios, against increases in "class caps" and caseloads, not only for our own sake, but also for the benefit of the students we serve and for the benefit of the College.

In 2018 and 2019, when our faculty union re-bargained our Collective Bargaining Agreement, we won a notable, if understated, clarification of faculty workload. With the current CBA, we have clarified that the number of instruction hours per quarter for a full, 100% workload assignment is 301 hours per quarter. That is, for a faculty working full-time, their "major duties" constitute 301 hours of work per quarter. In agreeing to this, the College and Federation had different motives. The College wanted to ensure that, when paying faculty to do quasi-managerial work as Faculty Program Coordinators (FPCs), the College would not be "releasing" faculty from any of their "other academic responsibilities" (sometimes colloquially called "service work"), only from their "major duties." Our union, however, saw this as an opportunity to better articulate and clarify our faculty's workload standards.

With the clarity provided by our current CBA, I'd like to discuss the importance of reducing class caps – that is, reducing the student-to-faculty ratio in our workload. A full, 100% workload assignment is approximately 15 credits. So, for example, teaching a 5-credit course would constitute one-third of a full workload assignment. That 5-credit course, then, would be one

third of the 301 instruction hours per quarter; for that 5-credit course, the College allocates approximately 100 hours of faculty work. In this 5-credit course example, what work is expected and compensated for those 100 hours? As the College is increasingly pressing for more in-person courses, let's say we're talking about a course that is entirely in-person, which we currently and somewhat confusingly call a "web-enhanced" course.

In this example, the 100 hours of faculty labor for the 5 credit, in-person course might map out like this:

First, classroom contact hours – that is, the time in the classroom – can vary from program to program. For me, as a faculty member in a transfer program, the standard is five contact hours per week for a 5-credit course. Multiply that by 10 weeks: those classroom contact hours account for 50 hours of the total 100 hours, leaving another 50 hours for all other work that takes place outside the classroom.

Here, I'll pause to say that, in my department, the class cap for a 5-credit, in-person course is 35 students. If we divide the remaining 50 hours by 35 students, that's slightly less than an hour and a half – ninety minutes – per student per quarter. To be clear, not ninety minutes per student per week – ninety minutes per student for the entire quarter. In a ten-week quarter, ninety minutes per student per quarter is about 9 minutes per student per week. And some faculty teach courses in which the class cap is not 35 students, it's as high as 45 students.

But, for a 5-credit, in-person course with a 35 student class cap, faculty have 50 hours per quarter for work outside the 50 hours of classroom instruction. So, if all I had to do in a course was teach in the classroom and grade student work, I'd have about 50 hours per quarter for classroom instruction and 50 hours per quarter for grading – again, that's about 9 minutes per student per week for evaluating student work and providing them with feedback to direct their learning. But, of course, teaching in the classroom and grading student work isn't all of the work needed for a 5-credit, in-person course.

What other kinds of work might be expected in that 50 hours per quarter outside a 5-credit course's classroom? Here are only a scant few examples:

1. Preparing the course's materials – for example, selecting or creating content, such as lectures, activities, and assessments.
2. Improving the course's content and pedagogy for future iterations.

3. Supporting students, including addressing their various general needs, as well as following up on missing work, as well as supporting students who are in crisis and connecting them with support services at the College and in the community. This often takes place over email, as well as during office hours and in other conversations outside the classroom.
4. Addressing student conflicts and disciplinary issues, such as dealing with cases of academic dishonesty and conflicts among students.
5. Reviewing and integrating student feedback from end-of-course evaluations.
6. And, of course, grading student work and providing feedback.

So, all that work and more – supposedly in 50 hours per quarter; an average of ninety minutes per student per quarter for a 5-credit, in-person course with a 35 student class cap. And, this is to say nothing of the work needed to create an entirely new course.

It's in this supposed 50 hours per quarter that faculty are tasked with doing the work that benefits both our students and the College. That's crucial work for student learning and development – and that's crucial work for retaining students and supporting them in reaching their educational goals. That's why our faculty union advocates lowering class caps, the student-to-faculty ratio. Each additional student in a course reduces the amount of time available per student. With lower class caps, faculty have more time to dedicate to each student. With lower class caps, faculty can provide more individualized attention to each student, rather than being harried into more generalized approaches. With lower class caps, faculty have more time to develop new content and to implement high-engagement pedagogies, which promotes student learning, addresses inequitable student outcomes, and increases College retention. With lower class caps, faculty have more time to create new curricula and new courses, which helps grow the College's offerings and its appeal to both current and prospective students, supporting both recruitment and retention. And, with lower class caps, faculty would also have a more manageable workload, rather than being compelled to volunteer some of our labor, unpaid, to make up the difference between the hours for which the College pays us and the hours needed to actually serve our students well. Faculty are categorized as professional workers – as such, we are not hourly workers and we don't punch in and out of work – but, that does not mean that the College is entitled to an unlimited number of hours of our labor.

In my example case, this evening, I've used my own experience as a reference. In conclusion, I'd like to reference another part of my experience, as well. Growing up as a Jew in the United States and as part of Jewish movements for social justice, I've frequently encountered three questions posed by Rabbi Hillel: *"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And, if not now, when?"* This evening, I've spoken about the importance of our faculty union's work, not only for faculty, but also for students and for the College. As a labor union of faculty, we are for faculty members – if not, who will be for us? As a labor union of faculty, we are not only for ourselves – far from it. This evening, we have advocated that the College concretely recognize the value of faculty union work as service to the College – and that the College consider the value of lowering the student-to-faculty ratio, not only the value for faculty, but also the value for students and for the College. If not now, when?

Good night.

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