

District and CTA/SCFA Approve Agreement

On March 10, the District Board of Trustees approved a [Mediated Tentative Agreement](#) regarding reopener negotiations with the Sierra College Faculty Association (SCFA), covering the 2024-25 through 2026-27 academic years. Prior to the Board's action, the agreement had been ratified by the SCFA membership. The agreement was reached through state mediation, after the parties were certified for impasse last October. The agreement has also led to the resolution of pending complaints filed with the Public Employee Relations Board.

The agreement provides a 3.3% Cost of Living Adjustment for all members, effective March 1, 2026. This COLA includes the 2.3% increase provided to other District bargaining units, plus an additional 1% from funds previously budgeted for position reclassification/salary study implementation. Additionally, faculty will receive a one-time off schedule payment distributed from the faculty share of the 2024-25 fiscal year budget surplus, as described in the Mediated Tentative Agreement.

Under the agreement, the transition between salary steps for part-time faculty and overload courses will be accelerated, with faculty moving to the next salary step every 22.5 units instead of 30 units as previously. In addition, the top step of each salary class is increased by 2%.

The agreement also provides health benefits to part-time faculty who are teaching at least a 40% load through the state Part-Time Faculty Health Insurance Program, beginning in Fall 2026.

In response to a 2025 court decision and ongoing litigation against numerous community colleges, including Sierra College, the parties clarified the framework for compensating part-time faculty.

To address this legal risk, the new contract language clarifies that part-time faculty are compensated for their preparation and other outside teaching-related Duties. As potential non-exempt employees, part-time faculty are assigned a defined amount of compensable time, including preparation/grading time. The District has always maintained that part-time faculty should have the exempt status their qualifications and professional responsibilities reflect, as their full-time colleagues do. However, a February 2025 decision in a case against Long Beach City College found that part-time faculty are non-exempt. That lawsuit was similar to and based on the same arguments as the suit against Sierra. The new language clarifies part-time faculty compensation, and creates a framework to address any potential liability going forward.

The net result of these changes is that all Sierra College faculty will receive a pay increase effective March 1 for their current instructional assignments.

The District appreciates the efforts by SCFA to reach this agreement, deliver a well-deserved pay increase for all faculty, and address the challenging issue of potential non-exempt status for part-time faculty. Implementing the clarified part-time faculty compensation framework will be a significant transition for all parties, and the District appreciates the partnership and patience of our faculty and department leadership during the implementation phase. Additional information and guidance on the time certification processes will be forthcoming.

The District will continue working with SCFA on the remaining topics listed in the agreement for further discussion, including part-time faculty participation on Academic Senate and the Distance Learning Refresher training. Additionally, the District looks forward to bringing forward its interest in supporting part-time faculty professional development through compensation for Workshops on Wednesday training and Planning and Assessment Day during flex week.