It’s been a good year!

By Nancie Fimbel
(Marketing and Decision Science)

Another academic year is at an end. SJSU has inaugurated a new president, started construction on new dorms, and reinstated the annual Reception for Retiring Faculty that many of us remember. Meanwhile, ERFA members have enjoyed each other’s company at luncheons, a holiday party, and a fabulous Spring Outing to the Rosie the Riveter Museum. The Executive Board of ERFA has added several other pleasures to these: we’ve selected two very impressive faculty awardees for grants, contributed to CSU ERFA’s discussions, and, through the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education, learned more about what other retired faculty in the US expect from their university associations.

The statewide CSU ERFA is worth following; I urge you to try a membership next year if you aren’t now a member. Its latest newsletter provides information on state legislative and CSU initiatives, as you would expect, but it also includes articles like these: reimbursement from CalPERS for the basic Medicare Part B premium; research grants for us retirees; the transition to Optum Rx; and the COLA increase this May. The newsletters are always full of valuable information.

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Talking Back to the Mercury News

By Dave Elliott
(Communication Studies)

In the first part of this series, I wrote about the Mercury News’ support for Measure B, which sought to curtail pension awards for public employees. I also discussed the paper’s editorial on January 17, 2017, which urged the California Supreme Court to affirm recent appellate court rulings suggesting that pension awards only need to be “reasonable,” rather than what was originally promised.

The Mercury News published a follow-up editorial two days later that was even more menacing than the first one. The second, entitled “Governor Brown Can Still Achieve Real Pension Reform,” argued

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University News and Academic Senate Report

Too many administrators at SJSU?

By Peter Buzanski
(SJSU-ERFA Representative)

During the past few months, national media outlets have featured articles dealing with problematic issues at institutions of higher education. One of these is the large increase in numbers of administrators over the past two decades while the number of teaching faculty has decreased substantially. The result is that fewer teachers now have far more students than was considered wise when funds for higher education were more plentiful.

This is not a new problem at SJSU. Back in the 1990s, when this problem first arose in the Academic Senate, President Caret replied that we actually had fewer administrators than other CSU campuses and comparable institutions. Move forward two decades and the question arose again after I read that one current administrator thought that a new “Vice President of Research and Innovation” would be “very helpful.” At the April 10 meeting, I asked whether SJSU now had too many administrators, since ten years ago we had only seven administrators in fundraising, whereas now we have seventy. I realize that fund raisers bring to the university more money, often much more, than their earned salaries. However, all the administrators in Advancement are paid out of the general fund, while the sums they bring in go for purposes like scholarships and

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President’s Message

A good year!

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SJSU ERFA includes a monthly film group. (Contact Marian Yoder or Don Keesey to become a member and receive information.) We could also have a book club or a bridge group or a wine tasting group—or anything else that strikes your fancy—if we knew what activities you would like to do with former colleagues. Contact one of the ERFA board members with your idea (hiking, chess, travel discussions), and we will see if there are other members who would also like to participate. You don’t have to organize the group—although you can if you would like to.

Please let an ERFA board member know, too, if you would like to join the Executive Board in the future. Our monthly meetings are a good way to associate with colleagues you knew, or meet people you might not have known, to contribute to the well-being of others, and to have a pleasant hour-and-a-half once a month. (In addition, our snacks are always terrific!)

Thank you for trusting me to be this year’s president. It has been a joy!
Too many administrators at SJSU?

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Too many administrators at SJSU? (Continued from page 2)

student aid, and always come with strings attached, making those funds unavailable for salaries of teaching faculty. I asked whether we could reduce the number of SJSU administrators or whether some of the positions might be funded at lower compensation levels to make more funds available for faculty hires to teach.

President Papazian responded that SJSU has made an effort to maintain the numbers of faculty we need and she is 100% committed to increasing the faculty. But, she claimed, it really isn’t a matter of one or the other, faculty or administrators. “We need to be thoughtful and strategic,” she said, and look carefully at all positions. She argued that our location in Silicon Valley, surrounded by global industries and world class research, has to be taken into consideration. In order to be relevant, each and every position at SJSU must produce a strategic benefit. Still, for answers to these and other questions, Papazian admitted that she needed more data. One week later, Elaine M. Howle, California’s State Auditor, provided some. She concluded that in the period from 2007 to 2016 the CSU System increased its management personnel by 15% while full time faculty equivalent growth was only 7%. This longstanding question obviously remains unresolved.

As for campus activities, one interesting change is a much better-looking Spartan Daily, a newspaper that has existed for more than eighty years. We remember it as a four or six page paper in black and white. The current paper, which comes out on Tuesday through Thursday, ranges from six to ten pages, in beautiful colors. Occasionally one entire page is written in Spanish, and while campus activities take up the most space, some attention is paid to national and even international news.

The Academic Senate has passed and forwarded to the President some important issues: one concerning department voting rights and another clarifying the requirements for intern students. The latter involves students doing internships at various locations in the community. On the one hand, the Chancellor insists that internships must adhere to a University-Organization Agreement (UOA), while on the other, large Silicon Valley firms like Apple refuse to sign UOAs. Both the College of Business and Science are especially anxious to have a satisfactory resolution to this problem. The Senate also learned of a few interesting statistics. The first is that the graduation rate of student-athletes within four years is now 85% compared to the rest of the student body, whose rate is in the mid 50% range. Second, although SJSU has recently increased its number of tenure-track faculty in the last two years (58 and 68 new hires in each year), our tenure density has remained virtually unchanged with a density of 54.7%. There are several explanations for this puzzling situation. There’s been a simultaneous increase in the number of retirements and faculty members who have left SJSU for better paying positions elsewhere or to other CSU campuses where the cost of living is considerably lower than in Silicon Valley.

Third, we learned that the SJSU faculty is now comprised of 49.7% females and 50.3% males. However, these figures are not completely reliable since the system-wide requirement for reporting excludes faculty on leave or sabbatical, as well as librarians and counselors, even though they all have faculty status.

The most disturbing item brought to the attention of the Senate was a newly developing CSU policy on Intellectual Property Rights. The Chancellor’s office believes that one single, system-wide policy is more desirable than having each campus develop its own. Therefore, unbeknown to the campuses, a small committee of administrators in Long Beach wrote a new policy without any faculty input and sought to implement it within a short period of time. When our SJSU Senate met in April, there was only enough time left for the Senate to pass unanimously a courteous but vigorous statement of opposition to what Long Beach is attempting. Whether the bureaucrats there will pay any attention is unknown at this time.

SJSU-ERFA Faculty Awards

At our Spring Luncheon, the two SJSU faculty recipients of this year’s $2500 Faculty Research and Creative Activity Awards were introduced and spoke. A.J. Faas, Asst. Prof. of Anthropology, will use the funds for travel to Bogota, Colombia, to continue his research on the social history of disasters in Latin America. Nicole Dubus, Asst. Prof. of Social Work, will use hers to travel to Malta to further her research in developing best practices for working with refugees. Both thanked ERFA members for their donations.
the first year. The resulting housing crisis had workers sleeping in tents, cars, even large boxes. Those lucky enough to find a place to rent shared living quarters with half a dozen fellow-workers. Working three different shifts on a 24/7 schedule, the roommates alternated through the same beds, which never got cold. They didn't mind—they were on a crusade to win the war.

There was an initial reluctance to hire women at the shipyards (the Longshoremen’s Union was opposed), but the wartime demand for workers quickly overwhelmed such qualms and the women soon proved their worth. The ladies explained that upon arrival they were given a two-week crash course to become welders, not riveters. Welding apparently

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A Memorable Experience!
Rosie the Welder?
(Continued from page 4)
provided better adhesion for the sheets of prefabricated metal supplied by Kaiser’s steel mills. The metal seams had to be welded with small, consistent, circular motions without a break or misstep that could cause a leak. One of the ladies said she soon could distinguish the men’s from the women’s welding at a glance: the men’s welds were often heavy handed—the women’s more like “embroidery.” And being physically smaller, the women were able to work in more confined spaces on board the ship. Of course, when the war ended they were all let go—rather unceremoniously: “Good job. Thank you very much.”

Now, decades later, and just shortly before our visit, these same five women had been invited to Washington, DC, by Vice President Joe Biden for a ceremony in which President Obama personally awarded them a specially-created medal for their work on the WW II home front. They received hugs all around and were featured on ABC’s “Good Morning America” in New York City. Still basking in the glory of their trip when they talked to us, they beamed as they proudly wore their newly-acquired presidential medals. Though they didn’t know it back in the 1940s, these women helped lay the groundwork for the feminist revolution a generation later by simply showing that women could handle the same jobs as men, and even excel at them. Their recognition had been a very long time in coming.

If you’d like to visit the Museum, the time is now. These ladies, though still vital and delightful, are not immortal. Visitor information is available online at www.nps.gov/rosi or by phone: (510) 232-5050.

In Memoriam

• Alvin Beckett (Accounting & Finance, ’82) died peacefully at his home in Davis, CA, on April 26, 2017, at the age of 101 years. “Al” was a likeable character with a colorful background for an academic. Born in New Jersey, he graduated from Trenton State Teachers College with a BS in 1937. While in college, his shorthand skills got him a job taking notes at the Lindbergh kidnapping trial and during his first year of teaching high school, he was summoned by police to take a confession from a 17-year-old killer of a doctor and his wife. Though popular with students, he was denied tenure by the local Board of Education just before receiving his MA degree and the entire HS student body went out on strike, resulting in his reinstatement.

    Al took his MA degree from Columbia Univ. in 1940, then joined the Army during the War, serving at Fort Ord, CA. While there he taught typing, small arms and was Chief Clerk of Payroll. At the same time, he moonlighted by teaching Adult Education in Monterey, where he met his future wife, Betty. She was a returning student, brushing up on her shorthand. They married and moved to New Jersey where he taught at Monmouth JC for eight years while earning his Ed.D at New York Univ. Over the years, he worked as a professional accountant at Dupont Chemicals, Standard Oil, the Monmouth Park Jockey Club (as comptroller) and the YMCA (Business Manager). With his doctorate from NYU in hand, he was offered a position at SJSU after an interview with John Wahlquist in 1955. Al was more passionate about teaching than publishing, and he won the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award on campus. Students loved his enthusiasm and storytelling. He used his racetrack experience to teach them how they could figure the mathematical odds that were always against their winning. After retiring in 1982, he stayed busy with stamp collecting, gardening, travel with Betty and correspondence with students, some of whom came from as far as NYC to celebrate his 100th Birthday. Betty passed away in 2014, and Al is survived by two daughters, Laurel and Bonnie, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

• John Neptune (Chemistry, ’90) died on April 17, 2017, at the age of 97. John was born in Barnesville, Ohio, and after high school he enrolled in Muskingum College in New Concord, OH, where he took his BS degree in 1942. During WW II he worked on the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge, TN, and after the war, while pursuing his doctorate, he taught at Muskingum College and Bowling Green University. He took his Ph.D from the University of Wisconsin in 1952 and taught there for three years before coming to SJSU in 1955. He was Chairman of the Chemistry Department from 1973 to 1986. He wrote articles in the Journal of the American Chemical Society and worked as a research chemist for Kaiser Aluminum and the Barneby-Cheney Corp. His wife died before his retirement in 1990. They had one son, Ben.
Talking Back to the Mercury News

(Continued from page 1) that the governor should pressure CalPERS to reduce its estimates for future earnings of the Pension Fund (called the "discount rate") to a much lower level. The CalPERS Board of Administration did vote recently to reduce the discount rate from 7.5% to 7.0% over the next three years, but this was not enough for the Merc. It wants the reductions to be more precipitous and more immediate.

I do believe that these recently-lowered adjustments should have been made sooner. The failure to do so has allowed the contributions of public agencies such as the CSU to remain unrealistically low. And this, combined with the massive hit the Pension Fund took during the Great Recession (too heavily leveraged in real estate), has left the fund significantly short of the amount it would need to meet its pension liabilities if they were all to come due at one time.

With some reluctance, I am inclined to think that future employees should bear some of the additional costs this shortfall could create. Normally, public agencies, which are supported by taxpayers, are required to make up all of these losses, but depending on how things work out, it may be necessary for employees to help by contributing more to their pensions. The California Highway Patrol has already made concessions along these lines and I don't think it would be unreasonable to ask other employee groups, including CSU faculty, to follow their example, should it become necessary.

But lowering the discount rate in a precipitous manner would inflict immediate and substantial pain on all state agencies. And, of greatest importance, it would provide strong ammunition to those who are eager to replace our existing "defined benefit" system with "defined contribution" arrangements, such as 401(k) accounts. Phasing in the discount rate reductions over several years, as CalPERS plans to do, will allow the public agencies to prepare for the increased costs they will probably be required to bear. If the reductions are phased in gradually, the effects would be less calamitous in the short run and, over time, the discount rate could be returned to a more favorable level, if economic conditions improve.

American business has virtually abandoned defined benefit pensions in favor of defined contribution systems. This kind of solution is no solution at all, since it’s well known that 401(k) accounts and others that put the responsibility on individual workers for planning and funding their own retirements simply don’t work for most people. F.D.R. understood this back in the Thirties, and that’s why he created Social Security, a defined benefit system. The system we currently have for public employees in California requires regular payroll deductions, and produces a defined benefit for life that is based on years of service and one’s highest salary.

The Charles Schwab investment firm, perhaps arguing against its own interests, reported in 2015 that, “The 401(k) accounts came into being quietly as a clause in the Revenue Act of 1978,” and “they were never designed as the nation’s primary retirement system.” They were only meant to supplement defined benefit pensions. But, as might have been expected, employers soon found it expedient to abandon their traditional defined benefit systems in favor of less expensive 401(k) arrangements, and the rest is history. According to Investopedia, “A 2015 Government Accountability Office study found that 29% of Americans 55 and older don’t have any retirement nest egg or even a traditional pension plan.” And “those who do have retirement funds don’t have enough.” Shockingly, the study revealed that if the savings of workers between 55 and 64 were turned into lifetime annuities they would only yield a monthly income of $310.

The failures of these plans make it clear that this kind of system is not a realistic alternative for public employees. We should understand the envy that private sector employees feel when they realize we have more reliable pensions. But the solution is not for the state to terminate our defined benefit pensions and force us into the same voluntary, defined contribution arrangements that are not working for private employees.

A better solution would be for the state to support private sector employees in acquiring better retirement systems. Four states already have state-managed payroll deduction plans for private sector employees that encourage systematic investment in IRA savings programs and California is planning to roll out a similar program, called Secure Choice, in 2018. But the payroll deductions for these plans are relatively low (won’t accrue value as fast as if they were higher), employers are not required to match

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I wonder what it would be like to live in a floating house. I don’t mean a houseboat, but a real house built on a platform and tethered to a dock on a lake. I saw floating houses during a trip to Vancouver Island in Canada and also on a lake in Seattle. There’s a bit of romance to living on the water, and with a floating house, there would be a sense of permanence, too. I imagine there is also a sense of community among the residents living nearby, and that would be a plus for me. But living in a floating house in strong winds could be a real problem. Imagine cooking dinner while the hot pots and pans are sliding off the stove. It’s probably good that I just wonder about life in a floating house.

I wonder what it would be like to be rich. I don’t mean just wealthy but filthy rich, a multi-billionaire. I could have a flat in New York, a chateau just outside Paris and houses wherever else I might fancy. I could have my own charitable foundation like Bill and Melinda Gates, and that would make me feel good. I’d hire a private chef and, of course, I’d have a cadre of maids. A chauffeur would be nice, too. But I wonder if my friends would still feel comfortable around me. Would they understand that no matter how rich I was, I would still like to shop for bargains and would crave a run to Marshall’s every now and then? Maybe I’d be constantly hounded by distant relatives who wanted handouts. It’s fun wondering about being rich, but I’m probably better off the way I am.

I wonder what it would be like to be Kate Middleton. It would be nice to be as pretty as she and wear clothes that cost thousands of dollars. Eventually, I would be the King’s consort and live in Buckingham Palace, not to mention all the other royal castles. I’d want to spend a lot of time in Windsor, because I think the town is oh so lovely. But would I be able to stroll the streets and drop into a little shop for a spot of tea and a sweet? Probably not. What’s more, they don’t have any Marshall’s in Windsor, so where would I shop? As Kate Middleton, I’d have to look perfect, and that means spending a lot of time getting my hair styled, my nails manicured and standing still for fittings. Oh yes, I’d have to curtsey to my in-laws, too. I think just wondering is good enough for me.

I wonder what it would be like to be thin. I’m not talking about thin as in dieting and exercise thin but thin as in having a monster metabolism that allows me to eat as much as I can without gaining an ounce. It’s the kind of thin where your doctor tells you to put on a few pounds but you don’t because it’s too hard to put on weight, and besides, you look fabulous in all your clothes. On my way home from Marshall’s, I’d stop at the frozen yogurt store for a snack. It wouldn’t be any of that fat-free stuff, either. I’d have a mound of fatty yogurt and put lots of toppings on it. Then I’d go to a restaurant for dinner and not order off the calorie-conscious menu. And old men, and maybe even some young ones would try to hit on me. Nonprofit organizations would be after me endlessly to model in charity fashion shows. Worst of all, my friends would probably hate me for eating so much and looking so good. Oh well, I think I’d take my chances.
At the Spring Luncheon . . .

Arriving for the Spring Luncheon are Ludwig and Patricia Mayer

Mary Lou and Benton White enjoy the Social Hour

Dalia Sirkin and George Grant look forward to SJSU ERFA’s Spring Luncheon program

Being greeted at the door are Janet Sinclair and Rob Moore.

Getting together are Marian Melendy, Lela Noble and Jean Beard

A.J. Faas, a recipient of one of this year’s ERFA Faculty Awards, chats with Tom Layton.
Chat Room . . .

Special news from and about our members.
Edited by Gene Bernardini

This edition contains news about travels and activities taken from the membership renewal forms. Members are invited to send additional news about themselves to Gene Bernardini at geebernard@comcast.net or by snail mail at 775 Seawood Way, San Jose, CA 95120

• **Marjorie Craig** (Counseling, '92) continues her work abroad with African children. This past December was her 13th year of helping staff a Health & Hygiene Education Mission in Kenya. Her attitude at this point: “Life is good!”

• **George Grant** (English, '01) comments on the large number of colleagues who passed away last summer, as listed in the Fall Newsletter: “It was sad to see so many, whom I knew so well, ‘take flight.’” George says he still bicycles, but not the distances he did before. He and Abdel El-Shaieb, our ERFA treasurer, rode together on the annual AIDS Rides from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

• **Gloria Lee Hutchins** (Human Performance, '88), who now lives in Lincoln City, OR, sent her “Greetings from the Oregon coast” late last year. She wrote, “The final kite fest has ended, the tourists have fled to the inland and the rains have come. California, “we” hope to have some moisture to share with you this winter!”

• **Scott Rice** (English, '12) and his wife, Mary Beth, have been doing some serious traveling. In September, 2015, they took a 20-day Mediterranean cruise which included the Greek Islands; Kotar, Montenegro; Split, Croatia; Venice, Ancona and Bari, Italy; and Haifa, Israel, where they visited Masada and the Dead Sea. They capped off the trip with three days in Paris. In the Spring of 2016, they booked a cruise from Singapore to Dubai, and this past December they took their daughter to Reykjavik, Iceland (which Scott wrote about in our Newsletter). Sounds like they’re making up for lost time.

• **Dennis Wilcox** (Journalism and Mass Comm., '05) celebrated his 75th birthday last year on the Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, where he snorkeled with whale sharks, the world’s largest fish—about 40 feet long and weighing up to 20 tons. “It’s a bit like speed snorkeling because the sharks have to keep moving,” says Dennis. Fortunately, he says, whale sharks are filter eaters so it’s not exactly “Jaws.” He and his wife, Marianne, also visited South Australia and Tasmania. At Port Arthur, the convict colony, he found that about six Wilcoxes were sent there in the mid-1800s by the British Crown. “Probably for stealing a loaf of bread,” he notes.

A note to ChatRoom readers and members: Spouses of deceased members who would like to maintain contact with their friends in SJSU-ERFA are considered Associate Members, and are welcome to fully participate in all activities of the Association. Membership is free of charge for the first year after the passing of a loved one. After that, Associate Members simply pay the annual dues ($24.00) for as long as they wish to remain members.

The riveters’ autographs!

Jill Cody has her Rosie T-Shirt autographed by one of the five Rosies who all signed her shirt.
Julie Kowaleski-Ward, our Access Services Manager in the MLK, Jr. library, brings good news. On June 27th, 2017, SJSU will be joining the other 22 CSU Libraries in a new Unified Library System called OneSearch. “This new system combines the strengths of all the CSU libraries together and will allow faculty to request material from other CSU campuses easily,” she says. The choice to go with the new system was based on an analysis that showed that 80% of the Link+ requests could be filled by CSU libraries. The good news is that although SJSU is leaving Link+, San Jose Public Library is not. You will be able to continue to use Link+ with your San Jose Library account. Interlibrary Loan will continue to be available to you as well.

Because we are moving to a separate system, you will automatically be given an account in OneSearch, but will maintain your account with SJPL as a public patron. When requesting Link+ material after May 29th, please choose SJPL as your library affiliation. Additional questions can be addressed to Julie at julie.kowaleski-ward@sjsu.edu. More information about OneSearch will be coming soon!