

# Union Voice

## The Executive Board of the UC- AFT

By Mike Rotkin, VP for Organizing, UC-AFT

The University Council of the American Federation of Teachers is a democratically run union. The most important decisions about the future of the organization rest with the general membership, the only group in the organization that can raise dues, change the structure of the group, or its basic way of operating.

Important strategic decisions for the organization are generally made by a statewide UC-AFT Council comprised of representatives from each of the ten UC campuses. Each campus has representation proportional to its campus membership. The statewide Council meets generally four times a year – twice in Northern California and twice in Southern California.

The Executive Board (E-Board) of the UC-AFT includes four statewide officers: President, currently Bob Samuels, a writing lecturer at UCLA; Secretary-Treasurer, currently Miki Goral, a librarian at UCLA, VP for Grievances, currently Alan Karras, a senior lecturer in International and Area Studies at UCB, VP for Legislation, currently Ben Harder, a writing lecturer at UCR, and VP for Organizing, Mike Rotkin, a Lecturer in Community Studies at UCSC.

The E-Board meets four times a year face-to-face, usually the evening before each of the four statewide Council meetings, but we often make decisions through email exchanges or conference calls. Our major role as a collectivity is to prepare information to help the statewide Council to make decisions at its meetings, but we make many decisions within the framework provided by the membership and the Council when the decisions cannot be put off until the next Council meeting. The E-Board works very closely with our Executive Director, Karen Sawislak and we often consult over staffing decisions, budgetary matters, electoral endorsements, and with respect to the relations between our union and other unions and affiliates and our relationship to the UC administration. Whenever possible, important decisions are postponed until they can be resolved at a statewide Council meeting.

As individuals, each of the E-Board members has responsibilities implied in our titles. Our President, Bob Samuels, represents our union -- often along with our Secretary-Treasurer, Miki Goral -- at meetings of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). As a prolific author on issues of higher education, Bob is deeply engaged in national debates and organizing efforts around the role of the university in modern society.

Miki Goral, keeps the organization's financial and historical records, minutes at Council and E-Board meetings, and is responsible for our investments, paychecks, reimbursements, etc. She makes sure that we follow State law with respect to political contributions, making rebates and sending formal, required notices to fee-payers. There is no doubt that she is responsible for the quickest reimbursements provided by any organization in the history of the labor movement.

Alan Karras works to help train and coordinate the work of our many campus grievance officers and works closely with our Executive Director to resolve statewide grievances and arbitration matters for the two bargaining units. His work involves a great deal of travel to campuses to help resolve difficult grievances and he often plays a key role in "educating" UC officials about the provisions in our labor agreements.

Ben Harder works with our statewide affiliate, the CFT, to build our legislative program in Sacramento. For example, in the current struggle for a librarian contract, Ben will be playing the key role in helping us gain the support of legislators as a form of pressure on UC to take librarian concerns seriously.

My own work focuses on UC-AFT organizational matters, helping the Council and the two bargaining units develop effective strategies for increasing membership, activism among that membership, and in developing the un-

## Professional Development Fund

**SECURED IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR NON-SENATE FACULTY (UNIT 18) INSTRUCTION WILL BE AVAILABLE AGAIN THIS YEAR. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO APPLY FOR FUNDS FOR RESEARCH, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS OR TRAVEL FOR ATTENDING CONFERENCES, ETC.**

**THE ONLY APPLICATION DEADLINE:**

**JANUARY 10, 2010.**

**THE GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORM CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM OUR WEB SITE:**

**[performanceawd.com/local2034](http://performanceawd.com/local2034)**



ion's ability to extract necessary and reasonable concessions from our employer. Currently, my work will be bringing me in to closer coordination with our campus field reps.

Although each of the E-Board members receives a modest stipend for our union work, it is worth noting that all of us are also regular UC employees, serve on bargaining committees, that we often hold leadership positions within our campus locals, and that we even strive to maintain a personal life outside of our UC employment and the work with the union. Most importantly, each of us does our best to make ourselves accessible to the general membership. If you have questions about our work, or need our help, please feel free to contact us:

President Bob Samuels: : [bobsamuels\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:bobsamuels_us@yahoo.com),

Secretary-Treasurer Miki Goral: [miki@vzavenue.net](mailto:miki@vzavenue.net)

VP for Grievances Alan Karras: [ALK616@gmail.com](mailto:ALK616@gmail.com),

VP for Legislation Ben Harder: [blharder@gmail.com](mailto:blharder@gmail.com),

VP for Organizing Mike Rotkin: [matlin@cruzio.com](mailto:matlin@cruzio.com),

**From left to right:**

**Front: Miki Goral, Karen Sawislak, UC-AFT, Executive Director**

**Back: Bob Samuels, Alan Karras, Ben Harder, Mike Rotkin**

### **WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE FOR NOT JOINING OUR UNIVERSITY UNION?**

You don't want to be caught dead being an active union member; unions only mean trouble; you'll be instantly terminated; You get along with my supervisor; you're paying fees already, that should be enough; you're too busy as it is; unions are for carpenters; we don't need unions, you trust top administrators to do the right thing - they earn their six-figure salaries; you don't want to get involved; union business is not your business; who needs job security, medical benefits or a retirement program; unions are for wimps; unions are so retro; you accept that in tough times your career needs to be sacrificed; you're an individualist, who would rather solicit jobs on street corners than join... If we overlooked your excuse, please let us know. We know there are many more out there. Otherwise, take a minute and fill out our membership form. To do so simply increases the union's power to represent you and protects your rights as an employee of the university. Think smart, think again.

### **NEW MAJORITY FACULTY & LIBRARIAN DAY APRIL 30 - NOON TEACH-IN LIBRARY WALK**

**This day is dedicated to raising the visibility around the country of all faculty teaching outside the tenure system.**

**DEFEND OUR INSTRUCTORS - DEFEND OUR LIBRARIANS - SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS - FIGHT BUDGET CUTS - UC HAS THE MONEY;**

**LECTURERS (NON-SENATE FACULTY), LIBRARIANS AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ARE JUST NOT A PRIORITY**