

PRO Meeting February 3, 2010

PRESENT: Jerry Herman, Bruce Jacobs, Shirley Timm, Ned Pearlstein, Alex Pappas, Remo Arancio, Sondra Neiman, Jay Quesada, Linda Japzon, Ann Whitehead

ABSENT: Pat England

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of minutes advanced by Remo, seconded by Shirley

MSU

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Shirley identified the balance in the PRO account thus: \$20,498.71. Shirley also stated that there are 280 PRO members paid through 2010 and about 70 to 80 members whose dues are in arrears. Bruce mentioned that PRO needs to focus on a timely dues-collection effort.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Jerry recently met with a professional health care expert who predicts that the combined costs—Kaiser and Coresource—to PCCD next year will increase by about 15%. This prediction applies to both current employees and retirees. Jerry also shared that Alton Jelks has been named Acting Financial Officer given the absence of Tom Smith. Jerry identified insufficient staff-size along with a deficient software system for the recent failure of reliable financial-reporting/financial-information from the Smith office. Jerry told the PRO Board that following March 5, 2010 there will be a meeting of representatives of PFT and PRO with Tom Smith where an analysis of the District financial situation will be explored. Jerry extended a warm welcome back to Alex, recently returned from Turkey. With respect to retirees' medical benefits, Sondra inquired if we might end up with co-pays. As of now there is no clear answer. Jerry went on to say that the FURA court hearing is scheduled for March 5, 2010. After the meeting there may be definitive information available. Lastly, Jerry achieved agreement that the next PRO Board meeting will be on March 10, 2010 because of several projected absences for March 3.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT:

Linda indicated that there was no formal report and then she and Jay described the details surrounding purchase of a PRO Banner and PRO t-shirts. It was moved and seconded—Alex and Jay—to purchase a Banner 2.4 X 4 feet. 8 yes 2 no. Motion passed. Alex moved and Jay seconded purchase of 11 t-shirts at \$15.00 per at each PRO Board member's own expense. 7 yes 3 no. Motion passed.

SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Sondra explained that she had just received \$1,500.00 which had been collected to honor the memory of Lee Spenza. Following a short discussion unanimous agreement was reached to deliver the moneys to the Foundation Scholarship Fund as usual. At the 2010 COA scholarship annual ceremony there will be recognition of Lee's successful academic career as the scholarship is conferred. There will not be any complex process introduced for individually naming the funds---the funds simply remain as PRO scholarship funds as in the past. Accompanying this discussion Jay announced that per Lee's request Shirley Conner will host a celebration-of-life party on February 21, 2010 at her home in Alameda starting at 1PM. At this time the PRO Board meeting relocated to Laney Library Room 104 where Bruce delivered on computer a demonstration via use of overhead projection the PRO website where one can gain access to valuable information. Following Bruce's demo Jerry read aloud the speech he has written to be given on February 9, 2010 at 7:30PM to the PCCD Board. PRO Board members are urged to attend the PCCD Board meeting.. A copy of the speech is attached.

The meeting adjourned at 3:13PM.

Members of the Peralta Board of Trustees, I'm Jerry Herman, president of the Peralta Retirees Organization - better known as PRO.

I'm here to formally introduce you to our organization since retirees are an important component of the Peralta family even though we lack the visibility of active employees.

PRO was founded five years ago by a few Peralta retirees who realized that retirees had no official representation to monitor and protect our most precious Peralta asset: our contracted, guaranteed lifetime health care benefits. Pro was enthusiastically welcomed by retirees who hastened to join our fledgling group. Currently we have approximately 400 dues paying members.

There is no hierarchy among Peralta retirees; we are all simply retirees, without rank: Among our members are retired trustees, retired chancellors, retired college presidents, deans, faculty, and classified staff. No one is anybody's boss or underling. We are all living out our golden years in the glorious equality of thinning hair, expanded waistlines, hearing aids, false teeth, and digestive dysfunction.

Though our primary purpose is to protect our health benefits, we are not a one-dimensional organization. We sponsor social activities such as theater parties and attendance at other events such as jazz and dance concerts, and our annual picnic. We have a yearly membership luncheon at which the attendance is typically around 100. (Two years ago Cy Gulassa was our speaker at the luncheon.)

We also believe in serving the Peralta community, specifically the students. Perhaps our finest achievement has been our scholarship program. We work cooperatively through the Peralta Foundation and the individual colleges to facilitate the awarding of the scholarships. By the end of this academic year PRO will have contributed about \$15,000 in scholarships to the four colleges.

We have heard through the grapevine that PRO is the largest, most active and strongest of any community college retirees group. We are proud of that and plan to maintain that reputation.

We also take an intense and active interest in retiree issues in other areas. We are following carefully the case between the Fresno retired teachers and the Fresno unified district in which the district violated its contract with the retirees by imposing fees on their health care benefits. That case, which has dragged through the courts for five years, is about to be decided in March. PRO and its members have contributed over \$2000 to the Fresno retirees' cause, not even a drop in the bucket compared to the millions of dollars of district money that Fresno unified has wasted on the case.

We communicate with each other – and with you - through the PRO website and our excellent quarterly newsletter The Peralta Retiree, as well as through email.

We also serve as a trouble-shooting agent for retirees. I won't begin to estimate the staff time we have saved the district by being able to answer retirees' questions and clear up confusion about retiree issues that have arisen over the last five years. Our members – and even retirees who are not PRO members – know they can call or email us with their problems, and we will do our best to solve them.

PRO has worked closely in a mutually advantageous relationship with benefits coordinator Jennifer Seibert. We have representation on the district benefits committee and we never miss a meeting.

PRO is blessed with an extraordinary board of directors, most of whom are here tonight. I'd like them to introduce themselves individually to you, but first let me tell you that collectively they represent 356 years of service to Peralta. We represent an institutional memory that should not be ignored. To tap that institutional memory and document it officially, we are in the process of recording video interviews with every living participant in negotiations with the district regarding the lifetime health care benefits the district has guaranteed to Peralta retirees.

The PRO board is smart, resourceful, tenacious and persistent. Let me cite one example:

Several years ago retired faculty, for the most part, could not join Medicare because most of us had not been in the social security system for the required number of

quarters, so the Peralta district had to pay for the entire cost of health care for its faculty retirees.

STRS devised a plan to enroll formerly non-qualified retired faculty in Medicare at no cost to retirees or districts, but each district had to agree to the plan individually. Peralta did not take its own initiative regarding this plan, but two of our current PRO board members (this occurred before PRO was formed), Alex Pappas and Ned Pearlstein, got together and went to district officials to inform them of the program and get Peralta to join it, thereby saving the district significant money.

Despite the evidence they had as to the cost savings and the ease of enrolling in the STRS program, their advice fell on deaf ears. The district wouldn't pay attention to them. But they didn't give up. Tenaciously they persisted for two years until the district saw the light and joined the program. Peralta retirees in Medicare now save the district millions of dollars a year largely due to the perceptiveness, resourcefulness and persistence of Alex and Ned. And the rest of the PRO board is just like them.

Let me end by saying that PRO would like to continue our reciprocally beneficial relationship with the district. We would gladly contribute time to Peralta activities that concern retirees and other issues as well. For example, we would appreciate representation on the hiring committee for the new chancellor. We would bring tremendous experience and expertise to it.