



Dear ,

As the 4Cs has been reporting, our coalition bargaining with AFT and AFSCME has been yielding positive results including a number of tentative agreements on language changes (with the details still being worked out). All of these language changes are non-economic; they benefit our members but with little to no cost to the administration. They include such things as the establishment of a sick leave bank, no loss of pay when the college closes for a snow day, and the establishment of portable tenure for involuntary transfers.

The 4Cs and its coalition partners have also reported that no progress has been made on economic matters (wages, professional development, etc.) and that we are anticipating bringing these issues before an arbitrator. Dates were scheduled with an arbitrator for early January with the assumption that we'd receive a reward by April, in time to have it go through the General Assembly before the end of session.

The last negotiation session between our coalition and the administration occurred on October 27, and we are meeting again today (December 15). However, the election results in Connecticut have complicated things.

Election Results Complicate Negotiations

Two things are of importance that have caused complications: (1) the Connecticut General Assembly is going into 2017 with a [split Senate](#) (18 democrats and 18 republicans) and (2) Connecticut is facing a [budget deficit of over \\$1 billion](#). Deficits of over \$1 billion are hard to overcome on cuts alone, especially since many state agencies have faced years of cuts already. However, there is little public support for revenue options, not to mention that it would be extremely difficult to pass a tax increase in a split Senate.

SEBAC Asked to Re-Open Agreement

As you know, SEBAC was approached by the administration last spring to re-open the SEBAC agreement on healthcare and retirement benefits to find savings. The 4Cs and the other union leaders surveyed our memberships; the 4Cs membership was against making more concessions. SEBAC, as a group, decided not to re-open the agreement, which has led to significant [state employee layoffs](#). The community colleges have not been hit by layoffs, but we know our colleges are

struggling and cannot absorb many more cuts without it impacting staff (read [here](#)).

SEBAC has recently been approached again by the Governor's administration with the argument that we only have a few weeks left with a majority democratic legislature. Their argument is that we have the opportunity to reduce the budget deficit through savings that are mutually agreed upon rather than having a split legislature force savings on state employees.

It is important to note that SEBAC has NOT agreed to re-open the healthcare and pension agreement, but SEBAC will be meeting with the administration to listen to ideas for possible savings and protections for state employees before making its decision.

Next Steps

Needless to say, the SEBAC discussions have complicated the economic components of our coalition negotiations. If SEBAC were to formally begin to negotiate with the Governor's office, economics including salary increases would be a part of a negotiated deal. If SEBAC voted not to reopen the healthcare and pension agreement then cuts of 10% or more to agency budgets are possible. Regardless of what path we end up on in the weeks ahead, it seems that a salary increase for the next year or two is unlikely.

The 4Cs and our coalition partners are preparing for all possible scenarios. Protecting your jobs, healthcare and retirement benefits, and collective bargaining rights are our top priorities.

Check Email Over Break

We know this news is coming at a horrible time. Many of you are preparing for finals and grading; others may be travelling or otherwise unavailable with family commitments. Likewise, our union staff will have some time off around the holidays.

Circumstances are subject to change rapidly, but we will do our best to keep you informed. Please make sure that you are receiving this email at an address that you will be checking around the holidays. If not, please update your email preference by emailing ellen@the4cs.org.

Remember, nothing happens without your approval.

In solidarity,



Bryan R. Bonina
President, 4Cs

