



## The 411 on 274

July 2025

### Shout Outs!

I hope you all had a great 4<sup>th</sup> of July and you came back to work in one piece! There's not too much to report on this month, but I'd like to give a shout out to our **negotiators** for the 3% raise we received on our revised reemployment notices! It's a reminder of the benefits we gain by standing united.

I also want to take a moment to honor **Sandi Goudy**, our Senior Programmer Analyst here at Merced College. Sandi has been named the recipient of the **2025 Chief Information Systems Officers Association (CISOA) Technology Excellence Award**. This prestigious award celebrates individuals who have made remarkable contributions to the field of technology through innovative breakthroughs, creative problem-solving, or the development of new technological approaches. The CISOA Awards Committee praised Sandi for her steadfast commitment to our system and her exceptional support for colleagues statewide. Her expertise in addressing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) challenges and her extensive knowledge of the Ellucian Colleague platform have greatly benefited the entire community.

## New Members

On June 24th, our campus buzzed with energy during the **CSEA Member Blitz**, a statewide event bringing together classified school employees to connect, collaborate, and strengthen our union. Members from our Merced Union High School Chapter, alongside other local chapters and dedicated Labor Relations Representatives, joined forces for a day of unity and engagement. Thanks to CSEA's generous support, participants enjoyed full-day release time to focus on building our community and advocating for our shared goals.

This event showcased the power of standing together as we work to support students and improve working conditions. A big thank you to everyone who participated, including our own Chapter President, Dustin, Past President, Angelica Campos, and colleagues from neighboring chapters! Want to get involved in future events? Reach out to me or any other E-board member . Please join me in warmly welcoming our six new members:

- **Deshaun Allison** – Warehouse Delivery Technician
- **Cory Bristow** – Lab Technician
- **Angel Comer** – Student Support Coordinator
- **Jiaqi Murtos** – Data Visualization Analyst
- **Jesus Sanchez** – Electrician
- **Jonathan Souza** – Maintenance Mechanic

## CSEA Labor Relations Representative Spotlight

This month, we're doing something a little bit different! I would like to introduce you to **Darwin Duncan**, our **CSEA LRR** (Labor Relations Representative)! As our LRR, Darwin is a dedicated advocate for our chapter! LRRs are the backbone of our union's support system, working to empower classified school employees like us. They recruit, train, and develop members to **strengthen our collective voice**, lead organizing efforts, and mobilize us for political action to protect our rights and improve our workplaces.

Darwin is one of our strongest advocates, assisting with representational matters such as contract negotiations, grievance handling, and ensuring fair treatment on the job. Darwin oversees several chapters, including ours, here in "Area E" of California including:

- **Merced Union High** - Chapter 252
- **Merced College** - Chapter 274

- **Merced City Schools** - Chapter 530
- **Merced Co Office of Ed** - Chapter 541
- **Mariposa** - Chapter 609
- **Planada** - Chapter 839
- **Merced Head Start** - Chapter 856



**1. Can you share a bit about your journey to becoming a Labor Relations Representative? What inspired you to take on this role?**

*I worked at Doctors Medical Center in Modesto in 2005, and SEIU (Service Employees International Union) came to our hospital to organize us into the union. I began as an organizing committee member, talking to my coworkers about the advantages of being in a union and having a united voice in our working conditions and wages. Through this process, I realized that other unionized hospitals around us had a real*

*voice in their workplace. We voted 90% yes to unionize, and I became a Steward, Negotiating Committee Member, and finally President. Throughout my tenure, we won the best contract wages in the Central Valley, behind Kaiser.*

**2. What does a typical day look like for you in your role as Labor Relations Representative, and what are some of the key responsibilities you handle?**

*A typical day starts at 6:00 AM to read emails, plan calls and site visits, and complete daily administrative tasks. Then, between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, I handle an average of 30 calls and 50 emails a day. Usually, my day includes multiple back-to-back meetings handling representation, negotiations, training leaders, bargaining new job descriptions, acting as a liaison between members, and numerous case-sensitive meetings regarding workers' rights, violations of law, contract violations, PERB (Public Employee Relations Board) cases, or terminations and layoffs.*

**3. What do you find most rewarding about advocating for our union members and supporting their rights in the workplace?**

*Helping members learn their rights and giving them the best defense possible is most rewarding. I, too, was a member in need of help, and a great Labor Representative taught me the importance of fighting for those who are scared, lost without hope, and in need of a calming voice and someone who will fight, do everything, and expect nothing in return. It is the absolute best feeling to see our members go from hopelessness to positive outcomes.*

**4. Can you tell us about a particularly memorable experience or success story from your work that made a difference for a member or the chapter?**

*My first strike! I had been bargaining the contract for Stanislaus County for 10 months, and the employer was ruthless. We organized over 4,000 workers in three months and called for an indefinite strike that lasted two weeks, and the employer settled with us. The workers gained a sense of power and determination that still lives today! They were once timid, and the employer controlled their unit, but after this strike, they reversed the power dynamic, became equals, and, in some cases, just the threat to fight is real with the County now.*

**5. What advice would you give to members who are new to the union or unsure about how to engage with the union?**

*Read your contract! Come to a few membership meetings! Most new members do not educate themselves on what workers fought for before they were hired, what so many members and bargaining teams have bargained for in gains, rights on the job, and implementing new laws for them to receive on their first day of work. The union is the members and their chapters; it is a great democracy where members bargain, vote, approve, and make the changes they want to see. If we don't have this participation, then who will make these changes?*

**6. Outside of your work with the union, what's a fun fact or hobby about you that members might not know?**

*I love classic cars and restoring them. I currently have several that I cruise around in. Another fun fact: I love to play basketball, and I'm a 49ers Fan.*

## Steward's Corner: Professional Development

In this section we discuss bite-sized parts of your union contract with examples to help you better understand how it all works. This month we're focusing on professional development!

**Situation:** Priya, a lab technician, wants to attend a workshop to improve her skills but is concerned about getting time off and covering costs.

**Explanation: Article 24 – Professional Development** encourages employees to participate in workshops and seminars to enhance skills. Employees can request Professional Development days with supervisor approval, which must be reviewed within **5 working days**. If Merced College doesn't provide the training, Priya may need to cover fees but can apply for **Classified Staff Development funds**. Employees can request a written explanation for denials, which are grievable under Article 38. Priya should submit her request early and check for funding options with Human Resources.

**Takeaway:** Professional development is supported, but plan ahead for approvals and funding. Contact HR or CSEA for assistance with funds or denials.

## Upcoming Events

- **Next Chapter Meeting – Save the Date**

**Date:** August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Details:** Our next chapter meeting is August 20<sup>th</sup> in LRC-202!

Any shoutouts, anniversaries, membership growth, contract wins, training completions, retirements, event successes, or other wins we should celebrate? Please reach out to me at [michael.lara@mccd.edu](mailto:michael.lara@mccd.edu)

### CSEA Chapter 274

**Our mission | To improve the lives of our members, students and community.**

Want to share your thoughts, join a committee, or connect with fellow members? Your Chapter 274 team is here to support you—reach out to me or any other E-board member!

<https://csea.com/chapters/274>

