CABRILLO COLLEGE

Union blasts cuts at Cabrillo

Union president: Classified workers being unfairly targeted

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APTOS — With labor negotiations ongoing, and a fourth round of reductions on the horizon, members of Cabrillo’s classified employees union are butting heads with administrators.

About two dozen faculty and staff positions have been eliminated or reduced in the past several months, yet the college still anticipates entering 2023-24 with a million-dollar deficit, according to Victoria Lewis, vice president of administrative services. So when the governing board meets Aug. 6, they’ll discuss eliminating more than 100 teaching units and five vacant positions, as well as nine currently filled positions — all of them held by classified employees, who work in the financial aid, admissions and records, business and other offices.

 Classified union members believe administrators are using the budget crisis as an excuse to whittle away at their membership and make changes to their contracts, which cover everything from pay increases to health coverage and pension contributions.

“We’ve offered up way more than any other employee group has even begun to have a conversation about, and yet the district keeps coming back to us, saying, ‘Nope, that’s not enough,’” said Stephanie Stainback, the union’s president.

Lewis denied classified workers are being singled out, saying negotiations with all employee groups involve reductions in pay and increased health costs. Last week, for example, managers proposed saving the college nearly $100,000 by picking up more of their health care costs and working fewer days.

“It’s very difficult for employees to give up things they feel they’ve negotiated over long periods of time,” Lewis said, adding the budget crisis is “not a one-time problem. We need structural changes.”

Last month, the board approved eliminating Stainback’s position and cutting the union chief steward’s hours. Union members feel threatened, and say the decision was contrary to the recommendation of the Services Programs Reduction Advisory Committee. That body’s purpose is to evaluate how cuts will affect the college, and advise accordingly — and they advised retaining both positions so union members can continue to have a voice.

“They’re disabling our ability to have a voice in the decision-making process,” and disrupting the continuity of the union’s leadership, Stainback said.

Lewis said neither the elimination of Stainback’s position nor the