



Skagit Valley College Federation of Teachers

Fall 2025 Roundup

Here are some highlights from the general membership meetings held last quarter:

Winter 2026 SVCFT Meetings

- Wednesday, February 4, 2026 from 2:30-4:00 P.M.
- Wednesday, March 11, 2026 from 2:30-4:00 P.M.
- All general membership meetings are held via [Zoom](#)

SVCFT Officers

- President- Kip Zwolenski
- Vice President (Associate Faculty Liaison)- Nancy Bixler
- Vice President (Whidbey Island Campus)- Brian Manning
- Treasurer- Claudia Avendano-Ibarra
- Secretary- Amanda Wells

Contact us

- skagitaft@gmail.com

Comments & Contributions

- awellsdepaz@gmail.com

- New officer elections were held. Please see the following page to get to know your officers!
- The SVC-FT and WPEA are working on maintaining open communication lines and a closer relationship.
- Institutional meeting days are now on Fridays. The next one is on Friday, May 8.
- WA state legislators reduced the budget. The 3% COLA was approved, however, it still lacks concrete funding sources (ongoing issue).
- Current open faculty positions can be found through the [Skagit Valley College website](#).
- The Bachelor's of Science and Nursing was approved.
- The new Shared Governance structure will be fully implemented before the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year (more information on page 10).

If you are looking for more comprehensive information, the notes from each general membership meeting can always be accessed on the SVC-FT Canvas page.

Meet your SVC-FT Officers



Kip Zwolenski- President

Kip Zwolenski is a tenured, Early Childhood Education instructor at Skagit Valley College. He came to SVC in the summer of 2015 and has served as our faculty union president for the past eight years. Kip came to Skagit with a breadth of experiences ranging from direct service, in both early childhood and youth settings, to administrative roles in higher education. His undergraduate studies focused on child literacy in bilingual settings; whereas his graduate research concentration was on adult literacy and teacher preparation.

Kip's current hobbies include wrestling with his new grandbaby, Milo, and tinkering on boat and truck engines. He also loves getting outside on hikes with his wife, Jonny, and their two huskies (whom you have probably met on Zoom).



Nancy Bixler- Vice President (Associate Faculty Liaison)

Nancy Bixler has been our union VP for Associate Faculty for 3 years. She has worked on contract gains (even in this period of financial retrenchment), better processes for administrative matters, and better visibility and inclusion of our hard-working, skilled adjunct faculty. She loves to get acquainted, answer questions, and help find solutions or information! She is happy to meet with you or converse through email or at school functions. Contact her via email at nancy.bixler@skagit.edu.

Nancy also works on projects to increase adjunct faculty pay and job stability at the state level through the union's CFIC committee (Contingent Faculty Interest Group). This January, she attended a regional Union conference – which she definitely recommends! Nancy has a BA in Economics and a MA and PhD in Communication from the University of Washington, plus two fellowships (the most recent, from a research center at UC Berkeley, finished last spring). She has received three SVC faculty achievement awards and, last fall, the excellence in teaching award for associate faculty. She is in her 13th year teaching here mainly full-time and has been involved in college workings through committees and on special projects. She primarily teaches communication courses in CMST, where, as departmental liaison, she is enjoying assisting where she can with some chair-related activity.

Meet your SVC-FT Officers



Brian Manning- Vice President (Whidbey Island Campus)

Brian served as a member of the executive council of SVCFT prior to becoming the Vice President representing Whidbey Island Campus for the last several years. He has also served on negotiation teams for 3 different rounds of contract negotiations and has been a regular on the Joint Labor Management Committee. He has taught math and physics on WIC, MVC, and at the Marine Maintenance Technology Center in Anacortes. He also holds a black belt in Aikido and teaches a free Community Education class on each campus called Mind and Body Coordination, which teaches meditation, posture, and staying calm in difficult situations.



Claudia Avendaño-Ibarra- Treasurer

Claudia Avendaño-Ibarra is a dedicated social justice advocate, educator, and clinical social worker who focuses on empowering disenfranchised communities. Currently pursuing a Doctor of Social Work with Simmons University in Boston and holding an MSW from Eastern Washington University, she anchors her practice in the core values of service, integrity, and the dignity of the individual. As the Human Services Chair and a Clinical Social Work Associate, she combines academic instruction with practical experience gained from her time in Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, and non-profit work. In addition to her academic and clinical roles, Claudia is an active entrepreneur and community leader. Her extensive volunteer portfolio includes serving on several high-impact boards in Skagit County, such as the Housing Authority and the Immigrant Rights Council. Her profound contributions to her community have been recognized with numerous honors, including the 2019 Liberty Bell Award and being named the 2021 SWAN Woman of the Year for Transformative Leadership.



Amanda Wells- Secretary

Amanda Wells is the SVC-FT Secretary. She started working for the college in the Fall of 2022 in Student Services supervising student mentors in the Diversity Center. Amanda transitioned into an associate faculty position in the BEdA department in Fall of 2023 primarily teaching English as a second language. She joined the SVC-FT immediately but became more active after Kip and Nancy helped her advocate for a step promotion. As secretary, she will take and share notes at all membership meetings, update member rosters on AFT Connect, and compile the newsletter. In her free time, she loves reading, hiking, camping, performing, and swimming. Amanda looks forward to serving and working with you all!

President's Legislative Update

By Kip Zwolenski

2017 & 2019 - SBCTC Resolutions (Best Practices)

- SBCTC Resolution 17-03-22 (Mar 23, 2017) – State Board for Community and Technical Colleges adopts best practice principles to improve employment conditions for part-time/adjunct faculty (emphasizing equitable treatment and workgroup development). [SBCTC Resolution 17-03-22 \(best practices webpage\)](#)
- SBCTC Resolution 19-05-23 (May 2, 2019) – Board updates best practices to include diversity, equity, and inclusion principles for part-time/adjunct faculty. [SBCTC Resolution 19-05-23 \(PDF\)](#)



2023-2024 - Legislative Action & Pay Study

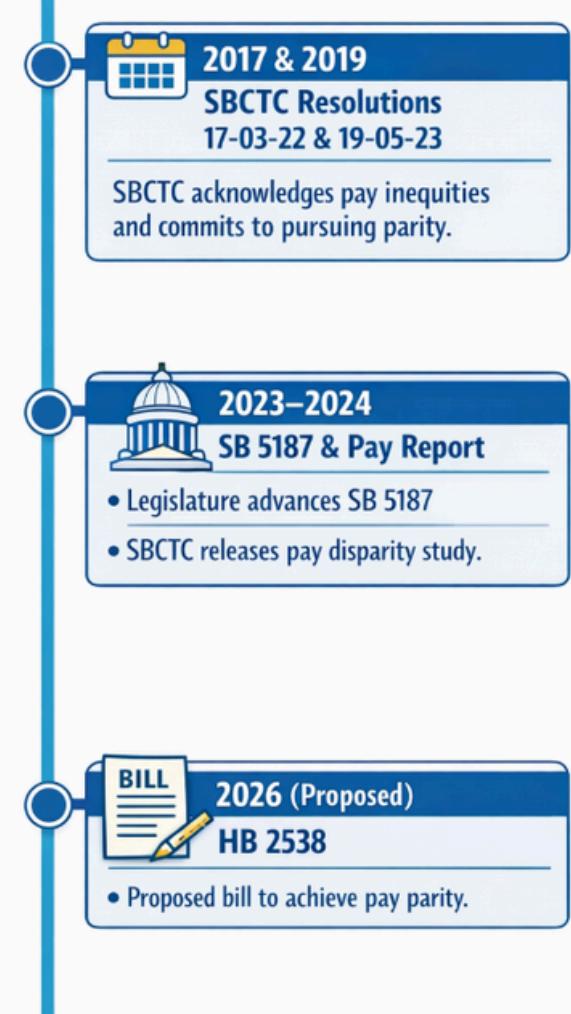
- 2023 – SB 5187 (Operating Budget Proviso) – Legislature directs SBCTC to develop a plan costing out compensation to bring part-time and adjunct faculty to at least 85% of full-time pay by the 2026-27 academic year. [SB 5187 Operating Budget \(law text, Section 605-54, page 554\)](#)
- 2024 – SBCTC Adjunct Faculty Pay Report – SBCTC publishes systemwide pay analysis and cost plan responding to the budget proviso. [SBCTC 2024 Adjunct Faculty Pay Report \(PDF\)](#)



2026 (Proposed) - HB 2538

- HB 2538 (Introduced Jan 16, 2026) – Proposed legislation to establish statutory pay equity, phasing toward part-time faculty compensation at 75-85% of comparable full-time pay over 2028-31. [HB 2538 Bill Text \(Legislature page\)](#)

Pay Parity for Contingent Faculty in Washington's CTC System



A Union of Professionals
SVCFT
AFT Local 4985

Associate Faculty Update

By Nancy Bixler

Wonderful associate faculty, I am so pleased to be your VP on the union executive counsel here at SVC. Thank you so much for the recent survey feedback. We are aiming toward offering you at least a couple of Zooms a quarter on topics of interest you expressed in that survey, one on “big picture” topics (like on the Washington Legislative Session, below), and one more on something more specific (like SVC Professional Development, below). We are also looking at social and discussion events over the course of the year. If you have ideas about those or want to be involved in planning something, I would love to hear from you!

Here's promising news on the legislative front: **HB 2538 - 2025-26**, labeled “Increasing pay equity for part-time faculty.” In the last few years there have been groundbreaking attempts in the Washington State legislature to introduce legislation toward pay parity, that is, paying contingent faculty closer to what tenured faculty who do similar instruction are earning. Getting a bill into law is an arduous, frequently multi-year process with many steps to it; previous efforts have fallen in preliminary stages, and people in the know think this issue might be a long-haul battle. The bill is in committee and is going into a work session to get ready for more progress (we hope) next year. [Here is the page to look at the status of this bill and to comment if you approve.](#)

I sent this out via email, but to remind you, here's upcoming events so far:

- Paystub and Contracts Workshop, set after the first payroll of the quarter:
 - Thursday, 1/29, 3pm on [Zoom](#)
 - Basic information here! If you are not sure how to find, read, and interpret your paystubs and your contracts, this is the workshop for you. Associate faculty tend to have more contracts, so there is more field for error – which affects your paystubs. Good to check every quarter.
- What to know about this year's Washington Legislative Session. Hint:
 - Thursday, 2/26, 3pm, Zoom to follow
 - [Here's a teaser about HB 2538 - 2025-26, “Increasing pay equity for part-time faculty.”](#) Come get the update on the progress of the positive work going forward for contingent faculty like us!
- Professional Development Plans, Professional Development Funding, and Associate Faculty Evaluation.
 - Thursday, 3/5, 3pm, Zoom to follow
 - We have professional development activities we do to keep ourselves current on what we teach, which might (or might not) require funds which the college may be able to assist with financially. Come learn about how these processes work and how to find out the scope and timing of your personal responsibilities.

SVC-FT Executive Council and WPEA Steward's Open Letter to the Board of Trustees

(page 1 of 2)

Skagit Valley College Board of Trustees,

We are jointly writing this open letter in response to the recent termination of Dr. Villa's contract. Regardless of the rationale for this decision, the immediate removal of a community college president inevitably creates institutional instability, particularly during periods of transition.

This decision occurred amid several significant and compounding challenges. We would like to respectfully highlight the following:

- External factors are dramatically challenging higher education. There are substantial fiscal challenges nationally and in Washington State that are placing increased strain on higher education institutions. There are significant political tensions nationally. To name a specific, current immigration policy and enforcement have created disagreement, stress, and harm within the communities we serve, directly affecting students and employees.
- In addition to these, we have impending challenges and tasks. We are currently celebrating our centennial as an institution, a milestone that will inevitably be affected—both internally and externally—by this period of leadership transition. We are in the process of implementing a restructured shared governance model that will fundamentally change how we co-create our operational plan.
- The College lacked stability for much of the recent past due to the pandemic and its subsequent impacts across multiple areas. More recently, we appeared to have reached a period of relative institutional stability. We have had measurable gains in key areas, including gaining Hispanic-Serving-Institution status and seeing increases in enrollment. We note, and greatly value, the fact that this is the case at a time when other institutions are suffering enrollment drops and lack of stability in leadership.

SVC-FT Executive Council and WPEA Steward's Open Letter to the Board of Trustees (page 2 of 2)

In the last year, we have ratified our collective bargaining agreement, supported a successful accreditation visit through our participation and ongoing work, and continued to progress college initiatives, all of which have contributed to a period of relative stability at Skagit Valley College. With this context in mind, we recommend that an Interim President be selected who will provide a stable trajectory to sustain our organization's healthy position and respond to unstable social and political conditions in ways that are protective of students, faculty, staff, and Skagit Valley College.

A leader with these skills and priorities will provide faculty, staff, and administrators with continuity, allowing important efforts in service of students to proceed while the search for a new President takes place. Looking further ahead, we agree with the plan to conduct a national search for the next SVC President consistent with the college's guiding principles, and we hope that the priorities we have suggested in this letter will influence that selection process.

We, the council and stewards of the two SVC unions, would welcome the opportunity to engage further regarding the request outlined in this letter, the selection of an Interim President, and the eventual presidential search process. We respectfully request transparency in how these processes take place, starting with the Interim President selection.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with our colleagues in the coming weeks and months.

Respectfully,
Skagit Valley College Federation of Teachers—Executive Council
Washington Public Employee Association—Skagit Valley College Stewards

Classified Staff Happenings: Faculty & Staff Unions Stronger Together

WPEA Union

Representatives for SVC

- Shirley Confer
 - SVC Fiscal - Business Office
 - WPEA Shop Steward
 - Office: 360.416.7746
- Lance Levesen
 - SVC Security
 - WPEA Shop Steward
 - Office: 360.416.7934
- Amy Williams
 - SVC Arts & Science Assistant
 - WPEA Shop Steward
 - Office: 360.416.7994
- Joe Buenaventura
 - SVC IT Dept. Network / Telecommunications Admin
 - WPEA Shop Steward
 - Office: 360.679.5216
- Deb Montez, WPEA Staff Rep.
 - Member Representative
 - Cell: (425) 697-0390
 - Email: deb@wpea.org

Contact us

- SkagitValleyLeadershipTeam@wpea.org

Leadership Statement

We're so happy to get back to working together with the SVCFT Union, especially now that things are so different. We'll be continuing our focus on the values of Respect, Integrity, Open and Honest Communication, Collaboration, and Compassion as we tackle our shared goals and worries. Working together is key to making a real difference in the future. By using our strengths and resources together, we can make a bigger impact on our goals. Our joint efforts have the power to create amazing results that will help our SVC community and the students we care about.

The impact on faculty directly affects us, and the impact on staff directly affects you. Our objective is to ensure that every department has a representative. Faculty members from all departments have the authority to elect and encourage a Classified Staff member to serve as their representative. This initiative would give us a heads-up and help our unions connect more effectively.

We'd love for you to help your Classified Staff colleagues shine by encouraging them to take on leadership roles, like becoming Shop Stewards! They can reach out to us using the details listed to the left.

Classified Staff Happenings: Faculty & Staff Unions Stronger Together

WPEA Union

Representatives for SVC

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Contact us

- SkagitValleyLeadershipTeam@wpea.org

WPEA News and Updates

The local shop stewards have been keeping in touch with the SVC President, showing up at Board of Trustees meetings, and participating in Labor/Management Communications Committee (LMCC) meetings. We look forward in engaging discussions on common efforts with your SVCFT Union President and Executive Council.

LMCC topics discussed in January '26:

- Vacant Positions Report
- Update on Roles/Responsibilities on Governance Committees/Councils
- Clarify change in SVC President role/responsibilities
- Update/follow-up on Head Start/ECEAP and school closure policy alignment - individual safety/closure procedures at extended sites
- Parking lot cameras

Looking at everything above, we have a lot of potential to grow and make a difference. Can you imagine what we can achieve together?

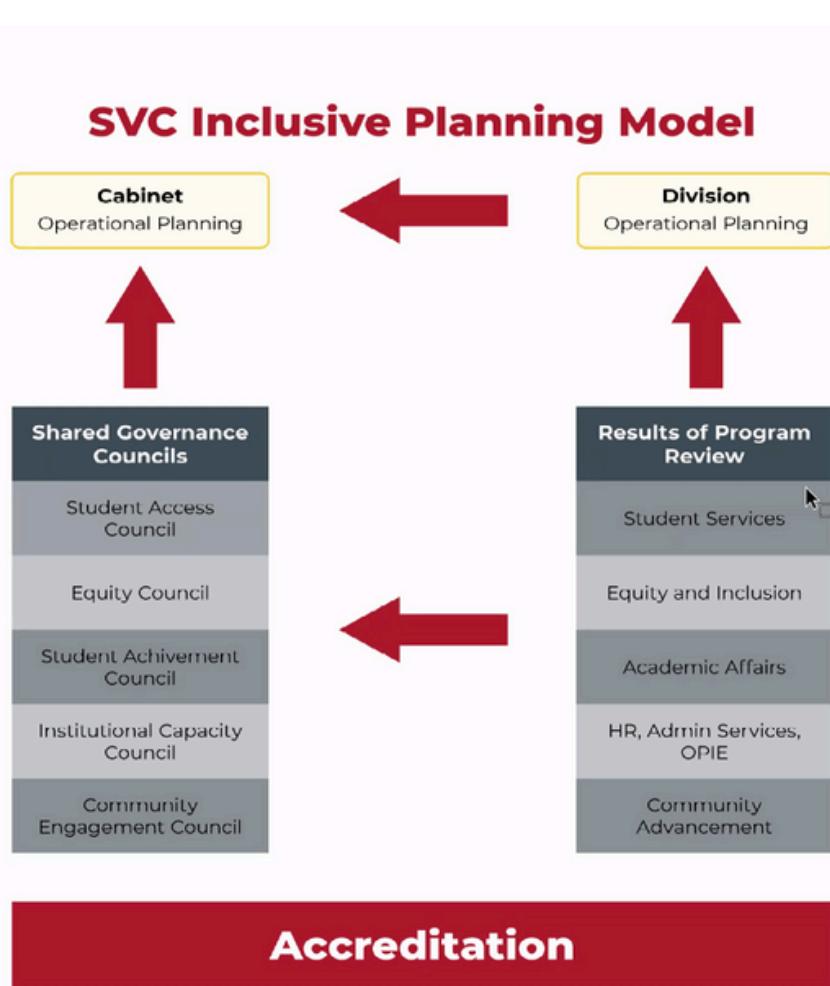
Years ago at a Clark College Board of Trustees meeting, Suzanne Southerland, Faculty Union President, made a statement in support of Classified Staff: *"In many cases, staff are the first point of contact for students. Unit and division staff help students find their classrooms, their instructor's offices, and meeting rooms; staff have proctored make-up exams, made sure instructors got the student's late papers, and helped students with the paperwork required to add a class. Without them, units and divisions will not function as well, important tasks will not get accomplished or will take longer, student retention will suffer, and faculty and staff morale will suffer even more."*

New Shared Governance Structure Overview

The new Shared Governance structure was drafted during the Fall 2025 quarter. It is now in its temporary implementation phase (Winter 2026). The plan is to codify the new structure in the Spring 2026 quarter and officially implement it at the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year.

These five new Shared Governance Councils are meant to serve as advisory recommendation councils to the operational planning councils at the Cabinet level. The goal is to move away from the former more siloed governance councils and towards councils that are specifically aligned with SVC's operational goals.

The new structure is outlined in the graphic below. All councils will be comprised of (1) a tenured faculty chair, (2) 2 faculty members, (3) 2 administrators- a Vice President and an administrator, (4) 2 exempt professional employees, (5) 2 classified employees, and (6) 2 students.





The twenty-third annual SVC Athletic Auction will be held on Saturday, February 28 at 5:00 P.M. at the Swinomish Casino & Lodge. Tickets and additional information can be found on the [Skagit Valley College Foundation's website](#).



Skagit Valley College is inducting 10 new members to the Hall of Fame during our centennial year, 2026. A formal celebration and induction will take place on Friday, March 20, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. in McIntyre Hall. More details about the Hall of Fame inductees can be found on the [Skagit Valley College website](#), and tickets can be purchased in-person or [online](#) from McIntyre Hall. Tickets cost \$75.

SVC
SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE
Music

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S

Oklahoma!

Music by Richard Rodgers
Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

FEB. 20 - MARCH 1, 2026

McIntyre Hall
Mount Vernon, WA



GET YOUR TICKETS! →

2501 East College Way Mount Vernon, WA

Based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs
Original choreography by Agnes de Mille

OKLAHOMA! Is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of
The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. www.concordtheatricals.com

Skagit Valley College provides a drug-free environment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, pregnancy, genetic information, age, marital status, disability, honorably discharged veteran or military status in its programs and employment. If you need disability accommodation at an SVC event, please contact Disability Access Services at das@skagit.edu. For inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, contact Carolyn Tucker, Vice President of Human Resources/EEO, 360.416.7794 or carolyn.tucker@skagit.edu. For inquiries regarding sexual misconduct compliance, contact Title IX Coordinator, Sandy Jordan, 360.416.7923 or sandy.jordan@skagit.edu. Mailing address: 2405 E. College Way, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.



mcintyrehall.org
360.416.7727



The Redwing

Skagit Valley College Federation of Teachers

The Redwing values your feedback!

Please complete this short, anonymous survey to share your feedback with the editor of The Redwing, Amanda Wells. You can access the survey by following [this link](#) or scanning the QR code below.

Feedback form- The Redwing V3I1

