

## BUILDING JUSTICE PODCAST



### CRISJ Building Justice Podcast

#### Season 3, Episode 9 : Social Justice Unio Organizing with the California Faculty Association (CFA).

##### Moderator:

**Melissa Cardenas-Dow**, Sacramento State Social Sciences Librarian, Chair of the CFA system-wide Librarians Committee, Chair of Sacramento CFA Chapter's Anti-Racism and Social Justice (ARSJ) Committee Representative to the system-wide Council for Racial and Social Justice (CRSJ).

##### Guests:

**Anne Luna (Luna)**, (Choctaw and Cherokee) is an associate professor of Sociology at California State University, Sacramento. She serves as President of the Capitol Chapter of the California Faculty Association and as Tri-Chair of the statewide CFA Womxn's Caucus.

**Margarita Berta-Avila**, Professor of Teaching Credentials, CFA Vice-President

**Andrea Terry**, Assistant Prof of Rhetoric, Communication Studies, CFA Sacramento chapter Political Action & Legislation Committee Chair

**Please note:** This transcript may be imperfect. Please contact Melissa Cardenas-Dow directly should you have questions.

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##### Music lyrics:

Company under construction, the function, justice for the human family we demand it. Justice, true freedom, equality is a must. Thus, decolonization of the planet. So bust this. People be the power now we're Building Justice. Pulling out divinations, now we're Building Justice. Welcome

the planet to the Podcast, "Building Justice," "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Building is to add on, or to do away with.

## **Introduction**

**Melissa:** Welcome to Building Justice, a podcast by Sacramento State's Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) . We explore critical issues affecting our communities with the hopes of creating a healthier and more just world.

I'm Melissa Cardenas-Dow, Social Sciences librarian at Sac State. I'm here with Anne Luna, Sac State Associate Professor of Sociology. Andrea Terry, Assistant Professor of Rhetoric in Communication Studies, and Margarita Berta-Avila, Sac State Professor of Teaching Credentials. We are also members of the Executive Board of the Capitol Chapter of the California Faculty Association (CFA). Anne Luna is our current Chapter President. Margarita is our Immediate Past President and Andrea is our Chair of the Political Action and Legislation Committee. And I am the chapter Representative to the Statewide Council for Racial and Social Justice. Welcome, everyone. Thanks for joining us today.

Luna, Margarita, Andrea: Great to be here. Hey, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Melissa.

Melissa: So the California Faculty Association sees itself through the lens of social justice and anti-racism. Now, what does this mean? Before we get into that, let's talk about the differences between more traditional forms of union work and contrast that with social justice unionism. From your perspectives, what are the differences?

Luna: I think, traditionally, a lot of like union organizing is more focused on what we call bread and butter issues. You know, your pay, your benefits, things that are very restricted to the workplace, where social justice unionism has a much broader scope in terms of thinking about how we can improve the lives of not just our membership, but the entire community that we're engaged in. And because we are involved in higher education, that involves our students, but it also involves our families and the greater communities that they all belong to. And working to lift up this lens of anti-racism and social justice and using it to inform all of the work that we do, whether it is organizing, whether it is our research, whether it's our engaging with the administration, and just making sure that we let that push us forward and try to deepen the learning experience for all of our students.

Melissa: Andrea, you wanted to add something?

Andrea: I'll just say from the perspective of someone involved in the political action and legislation side of this: part of that means getting out in our community and identifying the folks who can run for office, who are committed to the tenets of anti-racism and social justice.

Melissa: Thank you, Margarita?

Margarita: I think, just to add, it's really interrupting just a transactional framework, right, as well. Where it's just, "This is what the union can do for you," or even othering the union as far as :that's the union, that's in this context, that's the CFA, when in reality it's it's all of us together. We are only as strong as those that are engaged and involved as our members And so it really is one that is reciprocal, right? And being really, as Luna and Andrea shared, really one of mobilization and organizing versus just, hey, here's you, you know, here we got the raise and that's it. And now we don't have to do anything about that. But really thinking about the the issues that impact our working conditions, our living conditions, our sustainability, and then and how that transcends also from community to university, university to community.

**Melissa:** So one common thread that I'm hearing here is is almost thinking about the university as a community, as a collective, and as--- almost like like an ecology, like how different parts actually affect the whole. So let's turn now about to the more specific so SAC State what this social justice unionism look like in action and what examples can we see in the present moment here in SAC State?

**Luna:** So one of the things that we're doing at Sac State is we're partnering very closely with SQE, Students for Quality Education, who are sort of like our student labor organization. And so they are advocating against the tuition hikes and also working in support with us in terms of supporting the demands of faculty are trying to reach in our bargaining process. We are gearing up for a likely strike. We are having a strike vote next week, the 21st of the 27<sup>th</sup>, and we are trying to get as many people involved as possible because we know that our working conditions, are student learning conditions. And so we are in this together and we are trying to address their needs to make sure that we can give them the quality education and support that they need. In addition, we have a lot of goals in terms of our bargaining that address, anti-racism and social justice. Just one of those is the fact that we are trying to get the counsellor ratio at a level that meets the national standards that our students, many of whom are in crisis, can have the mental health support that they need. And on the other side of that, to make sure that our faculty who are counselors have a workload that is manageable, right, where they can do adequate intakes for students and not be rushed through them and be able to spend the time they need to actually give them the service. So those are just a couple of examples, and I know some of our other members have some.

**Melissa:** Thanks. Luna Andrea, you wanted to add something?

6:41

**Andrea:** Yeah, I would say something specific that we've been doing here at that state is in addition to partnering with SQE, we also are really involved with other issues happening on campus that are related to social justice. So for example, we co-sponsor a lot of events that bring awareness to different issues in the community. For example, we recently had a film that we co-sponsor screening on campus that was all about alternatives to policing on campus, which is something that we know affects a lot of folks on campus. And it's really important to think about safety more holistically and proactively. Like Luna was saying, from the perspective of protecting people's mental health. Rather than just putting uniformed people on campus and assuming that that's going to solve everything related to crime, because we know that it's about people's basic needs being met. It's about their mental health needs being met, and it's about

feeling like they're included and valued in a space and that they're not constantly having to be on guard. We have a lot of situations on our campus where we know that will have been profiled by police and made to feel like they don't belong. And that certainly doesn't do anything for our campus community. As a whole. And so that's one of the things that we're focused on.

**8:11**

**Melissa:** Thank you for that. Andrea. Margarita?

**Margarita:** Yeah. You know, a couple of points I wanted to make with respect to what Luna and Andrea just shared. And so when we're talking about social justice unionism, it is about transforming the academy, right? In order to just represent people of color, women, other targeted groups, marginalized groups. Right. And it's about us analyzing, having an analysis of power, the history, the systems that impact our working conditions. And then, like Andrea has shared, like the learning conditions of our students. So in that context, you know, and trying to really move away from like a service oriented union, but moving towards a social justice union, the issues of salary is one of social justice union. Is that where people can't sustain themselves and their livelihood, that impacts like how they can be centered on campus with their students if they have to work two or three jobs per se. Right. They can't pay their bills, etc. That impacts one's livelihood and that transcends into their working conditions Right. We're all the dependent on one another, right. As far as, you know, ensuring our working conditions. And then in turn, you know, the learning conditions of the students and, right, And so we have faculty that are not able to sustain themselves. That ripples. Right. So how do we sustain ourselves and help one another in order to be able to really push the needs of of our colleagues?

And that is a quite distinct difference from the chancellor's office. I mean, we're right now already, in fact finding. Right> We know that the that the chancellor and the presidents have approved themselves giving last summer 25 to 35% raise. Right. We know that the new chancellor that's in now has close to \$1,000,000 in like 600 and something in salary, and then the rest, you know, bonuses or, you know, allowances, I'm sorry, car allowance, house allowance. That makes up close to \$1,000,000. Right. We know that they're investing close to \$1,000,000,000 a year in different types of investments. We know that they have a rainy day fund that's close to \$70 billion a year. So then, or total, so to tell us that there is no funding to be able to give a 12% raise to faculty. Well, we know this is the only way that we even get raises is through bargaining, because we have no steps, because the chancellor's office took that away many years ago. Right. And so then if this is our only way and they're saying, no, we can only give you five, 4%. Right. That's their latest offer, right, was 4%. 4% this year and 4% the next two years. But it's contingent on the budget and we know what that did to us last time. They're not even giving---they're not even taking into consideration inflation. Basically, They're washing their hands. They're just letting it wash. So the intention of the chancellor's office is is not to think of the collective community as a whole as we are trying to do so. Right. It's more like, how can we keep the wheels running at your expense? How can we keep the wheels running at the at--by exploiting you. How can we keep the wheels running by othering you in order to justify our exploitation Right. So those are the distinctions. And why so critical? More now than ever with this potential strike that we're coming together. Because it's not just about now. It's also about the sustainability of future faculty as well.

12:17

**Melissa:** Thank you. Thank you so much, Andrea. You had something to add?

**Andrea:** Just really quickly. in terms of the whole ecosystem. One of the things that we've also been really concerned with is being in solidarity with other unions on campus, supporting student workers who are trying to unionize, because we know that those folks get exploited terribly. And on top of that, we have folks who literally are the people who keep the lights on in our buildings on campus and make sure that there's air conditioning and make sure that everything is physically functioning that haven't gotten raises in almost 20 years. And so people coming in as brand new folks are getting paid more than these individuals who have years and years of service into the university. And so being in solidarity with all of the workers in the students on campus or the betterment of us all is really something I think, that also defines what it means to do social justice unionism on campus. We're not just concerned with the needs of ourselves, we're concerned with the needs of the entire community and making sure that we are all doing well as a whole because we know that we are only as successful as a university as the most vulnerable among us.

13:41

**Melissa:** Thank you for that, Andrea. Wow. this this, I'm sure there is more to say. Luna, you wanted to say something?

**Luna:** I just wanted to happen on the comments about exploitation and say: we have a situation at Sac State in particular, but also all of our CSU campuses where we have a disproportionate number of the faculty who are teaching our students, our lecturer, faculty. A lot of them are extremely precarious financially. We have folks who are teaching five classes per semester and they're only making \$55,000 a year in the state of California. And then there's all the other folks who are teaching fewer classes of that who are not full time. And so it's really an issue of like equity and understanding. The reality is that most of the folks in my department are actually lecturers and to meet their needs as well, and doing what we can to advocate for them because a lot of them don't get to participate in many aspects of shared governance either. Right? So the union is like one of the last ways that they can try to engage and improve their working and living conditions. And our students experience this directly. When you have faculty who are teaching at multiple different campuses to be able to make ends meet, they're not going to have as much time to have in-depth discussions with you about how to improve your writing, for example, right---to do all that extra work that we are called on to do for our students and to help improve their educational experience and their lives as well. So it's it's something that we really take into account. And, you know, it's it's a tenured density is a real issue here. So we're always advocating for that, too.

15:29

**Melissa:** So two things that I, I come away with from this conversation. The first is definitely solidarity that we're not in this for ourselves only. • Right. So that seems to be the summation of social justice unionism. The other is the interconnectedness that we all share.

Music Break

**Luna:** Just to, sort of, add on to what Andrea was discussing in terms of legislation: CFA has been really active to address all sorts of things that impact the larger community and not just things that are affecting our faculty on campus. So for example, one of the things that we're fighting for is a full semester or equivalent of paid parental leave, but it's not just for faculty, it's also for staff. So this would extend beyond just our faculty and impact the whole community, because so many people who are in a college town also work in relationship or with or for the university. And that gives people the opportunity to be able to have time to bond with their children. And that is absolutely anti-racist social justice issue because we see that there is a extremely high rate of infant mortality, of maternal mortality, particularly in African-American populations here in the United States. And so if we want to be able to support and and recruit and retain faculty of color, we absolutely have to show that we care about them and their families and their communities, like as human beings. Right. Not just as these robots that teach students, you know, via Zoom or something. So that is one aspect of it. Another piece of legislation that we're working on is ensuring that there's Title nine compliance across all the CCGs. We've had this horrendously embarrassing history of/from the top level management of people being promoted and being put into positions as campus president despite there being a track record of sexual harassment on their campus and not very little being done about it. So we are actually launching a large legislative package next year to address with this blight of sexual harassment, sexual assault on our campuses and making sure that it's a safe space for our students, for our community members, and for everyone who's interfacing with this power dynamic that is very much rooted in cis hetero patriarchy. Right? We are trying to rip that out from the root and hold people accountable. So that's just another aspect of the type of work that we do, not just being focused centrally on our campuses is that we're not just in our silo with faculty. We also work across other unions on all of our campuses, right? So we are working with CSUEU, we're working with the Teamsters, we're working with APC, we're working with APD, these other organizations that represent the other folks who are all contributing to the environment on our campus and making sure that we are, you know, supporting one another. A lot of us are at the bargaining table all at the same time and making sure that we can fully show up in solidarity for one another and recognize each other's dignity and how important all the work that we do is --- that it's not this hierarchical structure that we see reinforced by the administration. And, in fact, that all of us are important to the work that we're doing here.

19:17

**Melissa:** All right. Margarita you wanted to add something.

**19:21**

**Margarita:** I just wanted to just to say that was just so important what Luna just shared, because I think oftentimes as faculty, um, whether we're tenure line, lecturers, faculty, counselors, librarians, coaches, because that's who we represent as CFA. We often see ourselves separate from the labor movement and we are part of the labor movement. We are workers within that, right. And so I think the solidarity that Luna was explaining that has really been such a strong force, particularly on our campus, is essential to to recognize. It's critical, to recognize and, and, and to note it not only in the context of Sacramento State or the city of Sacramento, but also to note it nationally that we are part of this larger movement of labor that is fighting for rights and respect and justice for the common good. Right? That it is, yes, about the

sustainability of ourselves, but also the sustainability of of the collective and the movement of the collective. And when we take care of each other, then we're also taking care of the future, right. And the future generations to come.

**20:51**

**Melissa:** For for a few seconds here, I'm noticing two big themes. One is the idea that the campus is is a culture, an ecosystem, right like that. Basically, the different parts, like staff members who are working, let's say, in dining services are connected to faculty members who are teaching the classes, right? So that's one very important theme that I hear from all three of you. Another is we're also connected to a larger movement, as Margarita had said, of workers who are focused in on rights, dignity and respect when it comes to the output of our labor, right? That we do particular things and we need our employers to recognize the work that we do. So those two themes seem to be really, really prominent in in what we are currently dealing with on our campuses.

### **Music Break**

**22:12**

**Melissa:** So I just want to steer our conversation towards very specific examples of social justice unionism on our campus. So I am wondering what you all would like to impart, Andrea?

**Andrea:** Yeah, sure I think that our bargaining package right now that we're fighting for is a perfect example of social justice unionism, because we're not focusing on salary alone. We're also fighting for what Luna was talking about earlier in terms of that full semester of paid leave for people across the CSU that would affect so many folks. And we're also asking, well, demanding that we have lactation rooms across our campuses that meet preexisting state guidelines that we are completely inadequate in. And then we also are fighting for gender inclusive restrooms across our campuses. It is ridiculous that there are so many people on our campuses that are unable to feel safe just being able to use th bathroom because all of our bathrooms are split by gender binary and we should have spaces that are inclusive for all folks.

Melissa: Thank you.

Luna: Yeah. Another really important aspect of this bargaining package is the concept of campus safety. Right? So we have an unfortunate history of some people calling cops on other faculty because they are so-called 'being threatening' or [they are] perceived as being so because of a racial bias that that person had. This has done a lot to chill the space in terms of being a safe zone for faculty of color to continue to work and thrive. And it's extremely concerning. So one of the things that we are advocating for is that faculty be able to have a union representative there with them when they're being interviewed by the police so that we can, you know, basically extend the Weingarten rights to them. Another thing that we're doing that we hadn't really mentioned before, and that is also related to this broad a social justice unionism, is that we work very closely with students We have a student arm of interns, they are labor interns that's called Students for Quality Education or SQE. They launched their own initiatives and do their own work, but we also compliment each other's work. They have been doing a no harm disarm movement across the state and trying to de-escalate and disarm campus police for a number of

years. And we support them in that work. We hope that that will go forward and get some traction and specifically at our campus as to is launching with a number of other organizations, including the Black Student Union---what they're calling the Students for Quality Education Coalition, where they're inviting a broad array of stakeholders, other organizations, including CFA. Right. And other student groups and just independent students to participate in order to address social justice across the campus. And one of the things that they're doing is they're raising awareness and trying to get folks to push back on this decision by the chancellor's office to raise tuition by 6% each year over the next coming five years. You know, it's not written in stone. And so CFA is absolutely there in solidarity with our students in resisting this and saying there's no reason for these fee hikes. The Chancellor's office has tons of money, billions of money dollars. They're putting away about \$1,000,000,000 a year in investments. They have about 8.8 billion stashed away right now that they could be using to meet the demands that we're asking for our faculty and staff ; that other unions on our campuses are asking for their their staff; that students are saying, hey, we don't have the money to pay these kind of fees. Right. When you look at the history of the CSU, it was free when it was first started, right when predominantly students were white and they're are benefiting from the GI Bill. The CSU was free as the color has shifted at the CSU and it has become more colorful, more diverse We've had to shell out more and more money to pay for students to be able to attend These students are largely first generation working class students, black, Indigenous students of color A lot of them are so-called nontraditional, right? They are caring for their own family. They may be caretaking their elders or their own children. They might be holding multiple jobs. They are resilient and amazing. And we are so inspired that by the work that they're doing together We're really in support of them. And I mean, this is the future of the state of California. That is the purpose of the CSU, is to educate this the people, the citizens of California, to be able to go forward and create the change that they want to see in the world. Right. And that's why we must make it accessible, Right Because we have such horrendous inequality in the state of California in the whole I mean, country, obviously, but extremely rampant here in California. And the only way that a lot of folks are able to create that change in their families in their communities is to be able to get a leg up with education. And that's why we're here. We are here to help these students in these communities to be able to thrive instead of pinching pennies from them funneling money into the pockets of a top heavy administration. Right. We really are demanding that change. And that's part of like the work that we're doing here at Sac State and on a statewide level as well.

28:16

**Margarita:** What Luna and Andrea shared really reflects our union and our union work being the conscience of the CSU. Like we're putting at the center. Right? We're centering What are the realities and experiences of our students, of our faculty and our union siblings right together in in collaboration and in coalition? If the CSU is not going to prioritize and value who they have with them, then we're the ones that are going to have to do it as a collective right. And unfortunately, as been shared, the CSU has demonstrated time and time again that let me be more clear. To be honest with you, the administration of the CSU, because we are the CSU as well. We are CSU. And so the administration of the CSU has demonstrated time and time again that they are willing to exploit us. They are willing to have students work 3 to 4 jobs, right. They are willing to have students not have access to health care, you know, or health counselors. Maybe be more specific. Right? And so those are some of the issues also that were addressed trying to



put forth is like, hey, we're at one health counselor, one mental health counselor per like 3000 students here at Sacramento State and the at the bargaining table they're like, "yeah, we don't see an issue here." So what does that tell us about their priorities? What does that tell us about really being the People's University? It's not about that. And, you know, I think our track record as CFA in centering these issues, especially on our campus with pushing for faculty of color, pushing for LGBTQ faculty to be here so that our faculty can be representative of the students that are on our campus, pushing to make sure that there are programs to to retain our faculty. we can have our folks come in, but if they don't stay because they're being dealing with racism and all other isms that exist, then those are the issues that have to be addressed. And this cannot be performa. It can't just be a checklist that like, Oh, we've done this and this, this right. There has to be real institutional policy change.

**Melissa:** Andrea.

**31:10**

**Andrea:** So what we're doing is we are trying to get the attention of an administration and a board of trustees who largely don't know what it's like to be here, Working with students, who don't know the conditions we face on our campuses. I recall very clearly speaking with the Board of Trustees member who did not know the difference between a mental health counselor and an academic counselor. And so when we spoke with that person, he clearly had no grasp of even the people who are in our union. And so one of the things that we're trying to do is we are trying to use our collective power to force them to listen, to force them to understand what the conditions are on our campuses for us, for our students, for the larger community that we serve. And so when we talk about things like taking a strike vote, moving towards strike action, it's something that we're doing to get the attention of people who are completely disconnected from the work that we actually do on campus. We can't move forward if we have people in positions of power who don't understand what's happening on our campuses and who refuse to listen. And so when we strike, we are forcing them to listen.

**32:21**

**Melissa:** Thanks for that, Andrea, Luna?

**Luna:** Thank you for bringing that up. There's been almost no movement on the part of the chancellor's office to meet any of these very important demands that we're trying to reach. As we've been trying to exhaust the statutory process of HEERA, the Higher Education Employees Relations Act. It's basically giving an opportunity for the Chancellors office to come forward and negotiate, and they have just dug in their heels and they haven't given an inch. They don't have any interest in meeting these very important social justice demands. It's just about salary for them. And that is one of the things that we really must communicate to everyone is that this is about quality of life. This is about a safe learning and working environment for people. And so when we bring up the idea of a strike and we say we're going to take work actions and we're raising visibility on campus We're having unity events during lunchtime on a weekly basis as all of our sibling unions This is a call to action for our faculty. But it's also saying, "hey, administration, we're serious about this. We really must have these demands met. We're not

going to back down on this this time.” And so we hope that everybody will show up to these events that we're having and really show that you care about these things. It's not just about, you know, an individual faculty member in their silo. It is absolutely about creating a culture of safety where people can flourish as researchers, as human beings, as teachers, as students on campus. Right. And all of our faculty and staff.

## **MUSIC BREAK**

### **34:18**

**Melissa:** I'm sitting here just listening to you. And what really comes to mind is that fundamental difference, like our union perspective, you know, CFA is grounded on anti-racism and social justice unionism. And how the CSU management has been responding. Really comes from an orientation of traditional service unionism. And I, I really think that that's where we see the difference coming from. Margarita you had something add

### **34:56**

**Margarita:** I think that's a really important point that both you and Luna are bringing up or highlighting, because it really is about that approach from management is really a very individualistic framing. Right. And so if we can get you all just to think about yourselves, then you're going to be willing to not address these other issues and concerns. And that's what they're they're trying to push: by only addressing salary. And again, we see salary as part of the whole package. Right. As well as part of our whole anti-racism social justice package. And so we're coming from like Luna shared that collectivist frame that it is about that quality of life. It is about that sustainability. It is about that being able to be serving our students and at the same time not sacrificing ourselves in order to do so Right. And so I think that's a really important point and a real a real flip in on the frame of how unions might have been perceived or looked at at one time. Right. And and I think it's a critical change, a critical change. And the the management will use that to try to divide and conquer. We'll use just focusing on salary to divide and conquer when we know that there are so many other issues that were named by Andrea that were named by Luna. Right now, as far as what we're bargaining for.

36:40 The most powerful act of action that we have is that which we're doing right now, which is to get strike ready. Right. And to do that in solidarity with one another and not cross that picket line and not work in order to make sure that this is what we get. And a lot of times people would be like, what about the students? This is going to hurt the students. We get that a lot, right? No, this is about the students. Having a potential strike or getting strike ready is thinking about our students when we're talking about workload. It's thinking about our students when we're talking about our faculty being sustainable and being able to have good living conditions and working conditions. It's hand in hand with the students. So this is about fighting for our students as we are fighting for the collective good as well.

**Melissa:** I want to stress what you just said there, Margarita. That, I think that idea that Union striking isn't, especially in our contexts..In Sac State—that--- it is about our students. It's also about our our siblings in other unions So we're not really thinking about it in a sense that, well, I'm going on strike because I'm not getting mine. It's we're going on strike so that all of us get what we deserve in terms of rights, respecting justice. And I think that is a really important message. So let's turn our attention now to the challenges that we might be facing as we get

strike ready. So anybody want to weigh in on that in terms of what we foresee as the work ahead of us? LUNA?

**38:46**

**Luna:** Well, a lot of us are kind of tired, right? We work really hard and it gets hard to be like, "I'm still prepping class And I'm also thinking about showing up or organizing for this event, right?" It takes a lot of collective effort to pull in ideas and get this stuff going. But it also takes a lot of groundwork just to go out and make sure that we're contacting folks and that they know what's going on. A lot of us are completely bombarded by emails all day and social media and so we don't even read a lot of the stuff that comes through and saying like, "Oh, I should go to this event because, oh, I'm just I got to do this other stuff. " Right now I'm on the treadmill, right? Just trying to keep up with everything So there's a lot of fatigue on behalf of like our our faculty. A lot of us also are still kind of in an individualistic frame of mind very isolated after being in the pandemic for so long and not thinking about, you know what, it's time to show up. You know, we got to put ourselves and our bodies out there on the picket line. We got to get organized to make that happen. There's a lot of logistical stuff that's important. Terms of thinking about ramping up for a strike, like there's a lot of things that have to be thought about in terms of, you know, motivating language, supporting people that needs accessibility. Right? Like, how are you going to make sure that your actions are accessible so that we have ASL interpreters, so we make sure that they're wheelchair accessible so that people will know that they are included and that that is a part of our social justice orientation, is to make sure that everyone who wants to participate can actually be there and participate. So there's a lot of things going on.

**Melissa:** Margarita?

**40:40**

**Margarita:** I think that I definitely concur with everything that Luna is talking about and the other area that I have seen as well that I that I think is, you know, when there will always be continuous is.. our young, our new faculty, right Our new faculty who come in who maybe were not part of campuses before that were unionized or never. This is their first opportunity on a campus, right? This is their first position on a campus And so there's a lot of fear or concern, like, well, if I join the union or if I'm involved in different activities, that's going to hinder me. That's going to I'm that's going to impact me when I'm going up for retention or people are going to look at me. Let me tell you loud and clear, to be a union member is your right. Right. And that is very important to do, to work towards mobilizing, organizing, getting involved. It is your right. No one can take that away from you and you cannot be retaliated on that for that. Right. And so there's a lot of political education that we that we will need to do for one another and with one another especially those of us who have been on campus I've been on campus for I'm going on my 23rd year on campus. So I've seen the different times that we have had to get also prepared for a potential strike. And one thing that is, you know, important to to know with that is that these---the benefits that that many are coming in with like our new faculty coming in with three units of assigned time release time every semester for two years. That was your union. Right. The benefits that you have in health care. That was your union. That is your union. That is us. The what we were able to obtain during COVID. That was the union. Right. And so nothing comes here. Your salaries that you came in with where they are now. Right And where

we're trying to push. That's us. That all of us together. That is our union. I think that's important to remember. So. If we want to maintain this for those generations to come We have to come together now for our union, for the future of the unions, of those that will be coming in as well.

Luna: Margarita, you're so on point right now and it's so important. One of these other things that we definitely come up against is this kind of othering of the union. Like the union will do that or the union did that as opposed to we collectively want in these things so that all of us could thrive, so that all of us could continue to serve the students of the state of California and beat them where they are and be the best version of ourselves as we can be, whether we are working as faculty, whether we end up like counseling them, whether we're coaching them, whether in the tenure line or not, whether we're a librarian, all of us are here working collectively together to meet the needs here and to do it, you know, with love, right. And with respect, the humanity of our students as well. We need to all show up and be present so the administration will hear us right. They succeed when they're capable of dividing and conquering us. They absolutely do. So that puts the pressure on us to come together. And that's the thing is when we come together, we're stronger together, right? We have each other's backs When you are engaged with the union, you're even safer than you would be otherwise, because we know everything that you're doing. We know the work that you're doing, and we are here quick to advocate for you. We will come into meetings with you. We can come into your department meetings and talk about the union There's so many ways that we can support all of our faculty and our students by working together, by being aware of the issues that we are organizing around and then coming out and just showing our solidarity and support for one another. And there's nothing more exciting and uplifting than that feeling of solidarity that you have when you have shared space with one another And you actually are listening to how echoing like, yes, this is exactly what I have been struggling with. I thought it was just me. Oh, maybe we have a way to solve this problem because we can collectively problem solve together• and we can think about it in a broader way instead of individually trying to do it right

**45:20** So many of us are feeling isolated because of, you know, the impacts of the pandemic. And so coming together is a way to alleviate that. Right, that collectivity, that solidarity, that is what is going to make us so strong and it's going to let us be able to win this time and really get all of our demands met, and create that change that we want to see for everyone in our community. Right? And so that's what we're asking people to do. And it's going to be the most liberating, exciting feeling experience people having in their lives to show up on the picket line. The big party with music going and great speeches and everybody bringing their kids and their strollers and their grandmas and all there in our community and our full beauty as like human beings be like, look, we are not just cogs in the machine, right? We are here. We are here to address the needs of everyone here and be the best faculty we can possibly be And so I really I love that we've had this opportunity to talk about this today and share this strike word right now.

### **46:30**

Melissa: Thanks, everybody. So that wraps things up. You just listened to the 'Building Justice' podcast. The information contained in this podcast, including its title and description represent the views and opinions of the hosts and guests and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Sacramento State, CRISJ and/or the 'Building Justice' podcast committee

**Outro Music Lyrics**

No more penalties and no more wars. Based on the actions. Now, time for "Building Justice,"  
"Building Justice." Time for building justice, justice.