

# CAPSule

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## Reclass Project Moves to Phase 2



Phase 2 of the CAPS Reclassification and Pay Project begins February 19. That's the first scheduled meeting between CAPS and CalHR devoted to salary and benefit negotiations. The goal of the CAPS Bargaining Team remains the same: salary equity for ALL state scientists. Phase 2 negotiations will include both the salary review referenced in Section 17.4 of the CAPS MOU, and all items in the CAPS MOU that may require the expenditure of state funds.

Relevant language from CAPS MOU Section 17.4 reads as follows: "...subsequently, the parties shall endeavor to reach agreement regarding compensation related to these classifications for the successor agreement prior to their submission to the State Personnel Board."

**Phase 1 Concluded January 28.** The last meeting of Phase 1 of the Project was January 28. Results are posted on the CAPS Discussion Forum (<http://capsscscientistsforum.org/>). That's where CAPS members can view the current status of each of the classification specifications.



Many CAPS members participated in Phase 1 as Subject Matter Experts or simply as interested members who made suggestions on the Forum. That work is largely done, with unresolved issues in a few areas. CAPS expects to address any unresolved classification issues during the Phase 2 salary

review. The Discussion Forum is regularly updated with the latest information.

**Phase 2 Salary Review.** The schedule for Phase 2 salary discussions will be set by the CAPS Bargaining Team and CalHR, which represents Governor Brown in contract bargaining. Any tentative agreement on salary is subject to ratification by CAPS members and the state Legislature as part of the budget process. The state budget should be passed by the state Legislature on or before June 15, then signed by Governor Brown by July 1.



**State Personnel Board Approval Required.** In newly established classifications, or where revisions have been made, final language must be adopted by the State Personnel Board, a constitutional agency. CAPS won't support adoption of any of these changes until the salary review is complete for ALL state scientists.

**Three Percent GSI Due July 1.** The current CAPS MOU calls for a 3% general salary increase for all rank-and-file state scientists effective for the July 2015 pay period. Funding for that increase is included in the Governor's proposed budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year, released on January 9.

**Join CAPS Online.** If you aren't yet a full CAPS member, join via the web page: [www.capsscscientists.org](http://www.capsscscientists.org).



# Encapsulations...

## Furlough Checks Expected in March.

Checks that reimburse state scientists for two days of mandatory furlough deducted from payroll during March 2011 were expected to be cut at the end of January 2015. Further delays in processing the checks now have the delivery date sometime in March. Interest at the statutory rate of 2.2% will be added. CAPS will continue to press CalHR to distribute these checks as quickly as possible. **We won the case and we want you paid!** Read details here: <http://capsscscientists.org/furloughs/>.



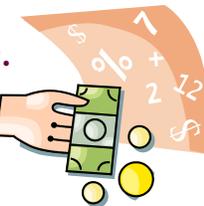
## CAPS Member In Need.

Early on January 1, 2015, Environmental Scientist (and CAPS member) Dylan Clark and his family collided with a semi-truck as they traveled to Oregon. Dylan, Stephanie and Jack survived with minor injuries, but the other boys were not so lucky. They were airlifted from the accident scene to a nearby hospital. Thanks to the amazing care they received, all three will survive, but they will require months of medical care. The only vehicle capable of carrying the boys following the injuries was destroyed in the accident. Stephanie is planning a leave of absence to care for them during their recovery. Dylan's grandfather started an online campaign to raise funds to help in the family's recovery. If you wish to contribute, please go here: <http://www.youcaring.com/medical-fundraiser/preston-ethan-juan-and-their-family-s-road-to-recovery/286106>



## Vacation/Annual Leave Cash-Out.

Section 3.22 of the CAPS MOU provides that Unit 10 scientists may be permitted annually to cash out up to twenty (20) hours of accumulated Vacation/Annual Leave. On or before May 1 of each year, each department head or designee will advise employees if the department has funds available for the purpose of cashing out



accumulated Vacation/Annual Leave. For departments with funds available, employees will be advised of the number of hours that may be cashed out—again, up to twenty (20). Those who want to cash out Vacation/Annual Leave must submit a written request during May to their department's designee. Checks will be issued during June 2015.

## Schedule Your Professional Development Leave!

Section 3.22 of the CAPS MOU also provides Unit 10 scientists with two days of professional development leave each fiscal year. This includes activities such as continuing education training, professional association activities, professional development seminars, or other activities that promote professional growth, all at **your** discretion. Time off is requested and approved in the same manner as vacation/annual leave. PD time doesn't accrue, so use it or lose it by July 1, 2015.



## Retirement Security Paramount.

CAPS continues to spend considerable time promoting retirement security for state scientists and all public employees. CAPS leaders and representatives remain vigilant and work hard to ensure the sustainability of the defined benefit contribution model, and to maintain the integrity of CalPERS as the vehicle for delivering retirement security to state scientists and all of its 1.6 million members in the coming decades. The CalPERS retirement program remains relatively secure and sustainable over the long term. Yet CAPS is aware that well-funded, vocal detractors are working to undermine every public retirement program nationwide. So CAPS tracks important news on retirement issues in California and throughout the country. You can review the latest information about retirement issues near and far, courtesy of CAPS and Californians for Retirement Security, right on the CAPS webpage: [www.capsscscientists.org](http://www.capsscscientists.org).

# Secure Retirement, Not Scare Tactics

*Editor's note: condensed from the January 14, 2015 opinion by Dave Low, chair of Californians for Retirement Security*

During December, then-state Controller John Chiang launched a new website with details of the future costs of the pensions from CalPERS, the pension provider for most state and municipal employees.

The Controller's numbers are drawn from regularly required reports. Chiang, for the first time, simply consolidated the reports in one place, making them easily accessible. Contrary to many editorial and news reports, Chiang did not sound an alarm, but went out of his way to say that firefighters, teachers, police officers and other public servants deserve the retirement security they've earned.

But those who seek to undermine retirement security for working families took the website launch as a new opportunity to hit the panic button and unnecessarily whip up a new round of public hysteria around retirement security for working families. Their sky-is-falling criticism had little foundation in facts. Here's one to remember: The funded status of retirement funds today (on a percentage basis) is better than it was in 1980.

Unfunded liabilities — the statistic that pension bashers typically use for their false hysteria — are cyclical, and better measured as a percentage than on a dollar basis. Pension critics are willfully ignoring cyclical variations and the long-term nature of pension funding. Instead, they want to turn more public dollars over to Wall Street. The fact is, the biggest downturn in unfunded liability was due to the fiasco caused by irresponsible Wall Street bankers gaming the system.

Pension plans are designed to be funded over the long-term. Variations in funded status are expected and over time the highs and lows of the market even out. Journalist Dan Braun offered a good metaphor to help understand how pensions work: "To some extent, managing a pension fund is like sailing a large ship across an ocean. A one-degree change in

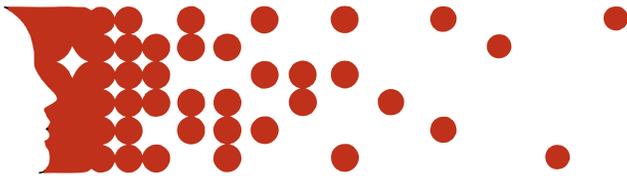
trajectory can add up to a few miles of difference on the far shore. Changes in wind and current push you one way or another, and you continually adjust using the tools you have to stay reasonably on target."

Most of the inflated liability numbers we are seeing are remnants of the Great Recession working its way through the pension system. Since then, employers and employees have increased their contributions to the pension systems, and the stock market has rebounded, boosting the investment portfolios of the large public pension systems. CalPERS, for example, had an 18.4 percent net rate of return for the last fiscal year.

Despite the heated rhetoric coming from conservative ideologues and others, there is no one more interested in strengthening the public pensions system than the public employees who are counting on pensions to retire. After all, public pensions are the only source of retirement for 30 percent of public employees since they do not receive Social Security. Pension plans also play a vital role in decreasing poverty among older Americans, according to the National Institute for Retirement Security.

We are still facing major economic issues in this state, despite our top-line recovery. The gap between the haves and have-nots has never been wider, and nearly 25 percent of Californians are living in poverty. While we continue to create jobs as we recover from the Great Recession, the kinds of jobs we're bringing back are lower paying than the ones we lost during the recession.

Those realities are going to create growing pressures on Californians going forward. As Gov. Brown prepares to wade into the retirement security issue again, we look forward to working together to strengthen our collective economic future and ensure a secure retirement for all Californians.



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## Calling All Science Lovers!

Do you live in or around Sacramento and have some spare time for the next generation of scientists? If so, we can use your help!

We need more volunteer judges for the Synopsis Sacramento Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Judging projects is fun and requires just a few hours of your time. Kids who enter the Fair learn how to apply the scientific process, how to present their results on a project board, and how to explain their project succinctly to a team of judges. Often, it inspires students to pursue college degrees and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

We know that many of you already judge regional science fairs around the state. This is the one Fair COSPONSORED by CAPS. That's right, CAPS actually has a pivotal role in operating this Fair. This year, the **Fair is March 14 at Folsom High School in Sacramento County**. You would join other volunteer judges from CAPS, PECG, Intel, UC Davis and Sac State.

Volunteer judges must attend a mandatory orientation Friday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Folsom High School. Judges receive a detailed explanation of the guidelines and evaluation criteria for judging projects. Judging assignments will be made, and DINNER is served.

**Judging will last for no longer than three hours on Saturday, March 14, starting at 9:00 a.m. at Folsom High School.** Judges will review projects covering a range of topics within their assigned category. If you can help, please contact Nadia Compton at [ncompton@capsscienists.org](mailto:ncompton@capsscienists.org).

