

# MEET CAPS

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## MEET CAPS 2021-23 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

From bargaining contracts and determining member benefits to overseeing elections and endorsing legislative candidates, 14 committees direct the operations and recommend policies that chart CAPS' course. The committees are generally comprised of Board members, although members who aren't on the Board may also serve. This list details six committees and their duties. Look for more listings in next month's CAPSule.

### Benefits

Responsible for the establishment and administration of insurance and related benefit programs of CAPS and for CAPS Members.



**Chair:**  
**Monty Larson**

*Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)  
 CDFW – Fortuna*

### Bylaws & Policy

Reviews all proposed changes to the Bylaws and Policy & Practice Manual prior to review by the Board. Periodically reviews and updates these documents.



**Chair:**  
**David Miller**

*Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)  
 DTSC – Sacramento*

### Bargaining

Responsible for the compilation of relevant data regarding issues of concern to the Unit. Negotiates any MOU with the State to address those concerns.

#### Members:

Margarita Gordus, Justin D. Garcia, Maureen Lee-Dutra, Itzia Rivera & Jacqueline Tkac



**Chair:**  
**David Rist**

*Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)  
 DTSC – Berkeley*



**Chair:**  
**Kris Weise**

*Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)  
 CDFW – Ontario*

### Budget

Responsible for the preparation of an annual budget.

#### Members:

Margarita Gordus, Daniel Ellis, Alice Nash & Kelley Aubushon

### Governmental Affairs (GAC)

Develops Legislative Program by developing and/or reviewing legislative proposals that may impact State Scientists. Recommends to support or oppose bills to the Board.

#### Members:

David Rist, David Miller, Kris Wiese, Mia Roberts & Itzia Rivera



**Chair:**  
**Kelley Aubushon**

*Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)  
 CDFA – Tulare*

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**Your CAPS  
Consultation  
TAKING  
TIME OFF**

**Question:**  
*I want to take time off over the holidays, and I have plenty of leave credits to use. But some of my colleagues want to take the same dates. Can my department turn down my request because it conflicts with theirs? And what's the deadline for the department to let me know, either way?*

**Answer:**  
Questions about leave always come up during this time of year, particularly how departments approve and deny requests and how quickly they must decide. CAPS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), [Section 31](#), addresses this situation: "If two or more employees on the same shift in a work unit request the same vacation time and approval cannot be given to all employees requesting it, employees shall be granted their preferred vacation in order of seniority."

As for how soon your employer must decide and inform employees, the MOU says, "... each department head or designee will make every effort to act on vacation requests in a timely manner."

CAPS advises that you make vacation requests as early as possible to avoid possible conflicts. If you encounter issues getting your vacation requests approved, contact CAPS ([caps@capsscscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscscientists.org)).

*Your CAPS Consultation highlights timely issues that come to the attention of CAPS' labor-relations consultants and attorneys. Our seasoned, knowledgeable professionals assist CAPS Members – and only members – on matters concerning the Unit 10 MOU, supervisory/managerial disputes, state labor law, and civil service rules and regulations.*

**Reminder:  
FILE YOUR TELEWORK  
AGREEMENT TO QUALIFY  
FOR A TELEWORK STIPEND**



Now that CAPS has bargained a new telework stipend of up to \$50 per month for Unit 10 employees, every CAPS member who works remotely should fill out a [Telework Agreement](#) (STD 200) to qualify for the extra funds.

The two-tiered program detailed in the [Side Letter Agreement](#) between CAPS and the State provides \$50 per month for "remote-centered employees" working at least 50% of their time from an alternate work location. Those working less than 50% at an alternate site qualify for a \$25 monthly stipend as "office-centered employees." (Employees who do not telework do not qualify for the telework stipend.)

CAPS recommends Unit 10 supervisors and managers also formalize their telework arrangement by filing a Telework Agreement or with an email that includes your schedule and your designation as either remote- or office-centered. The CAPS Supervisory Committee is working to gain the benefit for managerial employees, in keeping with the rank-and-file Side Letter Agreement.

The program is retroactive to October 1, although the State can't make payments until the Legislature returns to the Capitol in January and approves the expenditure.

Meanwhile, departments will be developing their own telework rules and procedures well into 2022 under the terms of the [Statewide Telework Policy](#) released in October. Look for members-only CAPS Update emails and *CAPSule* for more telework news as it develops in the coming months.



**NEW CAPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
CONVENES INAUGURAL MEETING  
IN-PERSON & ONLINE**

The 2021-2023 edition of CAPS' Board of Directors met for the first time on November 6 to discuss union business. Most board members and staff gathered at the Sacramento Holiday Inn Downtown-Arena, while a few attended via Zoom.

Because CAPS places the highest priority on the safety of members and staff, the Board required attendees to show proof of vaccination upon entry and wear masks during the meeting. It was the first time since February 22, 2020, that the Board had conducted a meeting with its members assembled in person.

CAPS posts draft minutes and other materials for every Board meeting on the [Members-Only Section](#) of [capsscscientists.org](http://capsscscientists.org).

**President's Column  
Margarita Gordus  
A LOOK BACK AT THE LAST TWO YEARS**

It has been my honor to serve as CAPS President for two years, and with your support I'm looking forward to serving a second term.

As I look back on the last 730 days or so, it's humbling to consider the momentous challenges we have faced as a labor union, a state, a nation, and a world. In the last two years, millions of people have lost their lives to COVID-19. The social and economic impacts of the pandemic have confounded the brightest thinkers.

Despite the turmoil, CAPS has held steady. The pandemic didn't shut us down. In fact, we seized the opportunities it presented to recommit to our mission and to serve members more effectively. When I think about the last two years, this is what I remember:

**Bargaining**

- CAPS continued to fight for a contract that appropriately values members.
- We committed to Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) to recast talks with CalHR and the Newsom Administration as a partnership instead of a contest between adversaries.
- We launched a social media program to support bargaining for a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- We kept members updated with detailed accounts of events at the bargaining table via emails from the CAPS Bargaining Team.
- We negotiated a better-than-furloughs PLP 2020 program that raised the State's leave caps and reduced employee contributions to benefits – thereby keeping more money in members' wallets – when the Legislature demanded salary savings.
- We bargained the early end of the PLP salary reduction, a reinstatement of the 5% increase deferred by plp 2020, plus an additional 2.5% raise.
- We bargained a new telework stipend benefit for all State Scientists who work remotely.

**Governmental and Political Representation**

- CAPS Legislative Representatives successfully advocated for hundreds of millions of dollars for [state scientific programs](#).
- More than 90% of the candidates CAPS endorsed won State and local elections in 2020.
- With our enthusiastic support, CAPS' Board Member David Miller won reelection to the CalPERS Board of Administration. CAPS also backed the winning campaign of first-time CalPERS Board candidate Jose Luis Pacheco.

**Member Representation**

- Our legal staff successfully urged the State Personnel Board (SPB) to reject a one-year statute of limitations for filing Merit Issue Complaints. SPB eventually settled on a three-year limit.
- CAPS filed a successful grievance against CDFW on behalf of all affected members regarding installing policies – disguised as plans without notice – that changed working conditions for members.
- We increased individual member representation in response to ever-changing health and safety concerns related to COVID-19 and leaves.

**Communications / Member Engagement**

- CAPS leveraged web conferencing to conduct virtual worksite meetings that connected CAPS Board Members with members statewide.
- We conducted Board business seamlessly through online meetings that continued CAPS' commitment to member involvement.
- CAPS' Bargaining Committee oversaw the first-ever all-electronic ballot when members were asked whether to ratify PLP 2020.
- A record number of members voted, and they overwhelmingly accepted the PLP 2020 terms CAPS Bargaining Team had worked out with the Newsom Administration.
- The Elections Committee came back with the first-ever electronic balloting for CAP's Board Election last October.
- Our Membership and Communications Committee developed a suite of online tools, videos, talking points, and infographics to communicate the many benefits of CAPS membership.
- We updated CAPSule with a fresh layout and more news-you-can use features while still informing members about statewide issues of interest to Unit 10 employees.

**Social Engagement**


- After careful consideration, the CAPS Board spoke with one voice to support social causes consistent with our union values and the values of our profession. We issued statements online and on social media supporting Black Lives Matter and the Asian Pacific Islander community.
- CAPS traditionally has not talked about political issues outside the scope of member representation, but the extraordinary moments prompted our extraordinary responses.

**Member Benefits**

- Our Member Benefits Committee awarded 15 scholarships of \$750 to members' kids who are attending college this fall.
- The Committee also continued our quarterly Professional Development Grant program, which provides members – and members only – with \$400 awards to pay for career-enhancing projects and education that the State does not fully reimburse.

It's been a challenging and immensely rewarding two years. I'm thankful for everyone's dedication and support. Next month, we will look ahead to what the next 730 or so days will bring.





**CALPERS**  
**SCHEDULES**  
**LIVE MEMBER-EDUCATION**  
**WEBCASTS**

Whether you're early in your career or nearing retirement, CalPERS has web-based resources to help members plan for their financial future. Recent additions include instructor-led monthly online classes that start at 11 a.m. and run about 20 minutes on middle-of-the-month Wednesdays. Upcoming webcasts include:

**Pre-Retirement Survivor Benefits**  
Wednesday, December 15, 2021

**Social Security and Your CalPERS Pension**  
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

**Your myCalPERS Account for Active and Inactive Members**  
Wednesday, February 9, 2022

There is no charge to participate, although registration is required by midnight the evening before the webcast airs. Please click [here](#) to open the CalPERS Member Education Webcast page for more details.

## CAPS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR \$400 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

CAPS strongly urges you to apply now for one of four \$400 Professional Development Grants awarded each quarter to support scientific research, education, or other career-enhancing activities that the State does not fully fund.

The next deadline to apply for this CAPS members-only benefit is December 31 for grants the CAPS' Member Benefits Committee will award in January. Applicants may seek funds for upcoming costs or expenses already incurred. (Due to COVID-19 concerns, at this time, the Committee is not considering applications to facilitate attending in-person meetings or conferences.)

### The Committee selects grant winners based on:

**Quality of the grant application**, including an explanation of the purpose of the event or project and **documentation of costs**.

**Relevance or impact** on the State Scientist's career or current position.

Degree the grant will accomplish the applicant's **stated purpose**.

**Diversity of departments and agencies** whose employees win grants, to the degree possible.

CAPS makes a total of \$1,600 in grants available to deserving members each quarter. Recipients are chosen in January, April, July, and October, so applications should be submitted before those months to be eligible for the subsequent selection. Once submitted, applications remain eligible for consideration for at least two quarters.

For more details about CAPS' Professional Development Grants and how to apply for this members-only benefit, please go to [capsscscientists.org/application/benefits/grant](https://capsscscientists.org/application/benefits/grant). Please contact CAPS staff with questions at [caps@capsscscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscscientists.org) or by calling your nearest CAPS office. Don't wait! The end of the year will be here before you know it!

## CAPS MEMBERS QUALIFY FOR LOWER-COST INSURANCE WITH LIBERTY MUTUAL

Through a partnership with Liberty Mutual Insurance, CAPS members qualify for significant savings on auto, home, and pet insurance with premiums paid via payroll deduction. For more information about personal insurance (including homeowners, renters, or auto insurance), please click [here](#). To learn more about the pet insurance program, please click [here](#).



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