CBA Tip: *Fringe Benefits*

An important article in our Contract **Article J: Fringe Benefits** provides the details of our Health and Welfare Benefits coverage as well as the overall philosophy. The benefits philosophy codified in our CBA confirms that "health, dental and vision coverage provided by the district are considered benefits of employment, not compensation. The district fully covers the cost of health, dental and vision insurance for eligible active and retired faculty and their eligible dependents." This is not the norm at most colleges.

This is critical language that ensures that our fringe benefits are not tied to compensation, and thus, are not bundled as part of a "total compensation package" that many other districts and bargaining groups must consider when negotiating for salary each year. Instead, our Contract specifies the amount of the premium paid by the district to cover these items including non-discretionary benefits like base life insurance, long term disability, and flex account administration fee. During the 2025 negotiations, that yearly premium per faculty member was reset to a maximum of $37,432.92 to match the highest premiums for that year. Per the CBA, the district will automatically cover the cost of premium renewal rates by an amount not to exceed 10% in each successive year. However, if the annual premium renewal rates represent an aggregate increase of more than 10%, the district and the FA agree to immediately reopen negotiations on this Article.

Each spring, the district receives its premiums for like coverage, and the VP Human Resources convenes the Fringe Benefits Committee to review and make any change recommendations. This committee is composed of representatives from full-time faculty, associate faculty, administrator groups, and classified. Ultimately, the representatives of these groups vote to approve (or not) the package options for the following year.