



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## UC Verifies Competitive Compensation, Low Turnover Among Nurses During Second Round of Labor Negotiations

The end of the second scheduled bargaining session between the University of California (UC) and the California Nurses Association (CNA) today in San Diego, Calif. brought verification of competitive compensation and low turnover among UC nurses and no new proposals from the CNA.

In spite of a 13.5 percent average university-wide salary increase for nurses in 2005 and current market-competitive wages, low vacancy and turnover rates, a higher than average number of paid holidays, and exceptional retirement benefits as compared to key competitors, CNA continues to demand salary increases between 10-19 percent for 2006.

“Contrary to CNA claims, UC remains competitive during a continuing national nursing shortage, attracting and keeping nurses on staff who continue to offer the best of care to our patients,” said Howard Pripas, UC’s executive director of labor relations. “Our compensation is very much aligned with the market and our salary proposals will help us retain our competitive position.”

The university’s latest information reveals the rates of turnover and vacancy at each UC location, including vacancy rates that do not exceed or are significantly below the state hospital association survey averages of 11.2 percent in Southern California and 9.1 percent in Northern California and turnover rates that beat the state’s averages of 15.3 percent in Southern California and 17.8 percent in Northern California.

UCLA	vacancy = 2-5 percent	Data unavailable
UCI	vacancy = 10.7 percent	turnover = 14.2 percent
UCSD	vacancy = 5.6 percent	turnover = 13.2 percent
UCD	vacancy = 2.9 percent	turnover = 10.8 percent
UCSF	vacancy = 10.5 percent	turnover = 11.6 percent

(The reason that UCSF is currently experiencing a vacancy rate higher than the Northern California average is that it is expanding its nurse population.)

One of four meetings in the “reopener” negotiations between UC and the nurses union, this week’s sessions included discussion of three other specific issues – health benefits, meal and break periods and retiree health plans – that were mutually agreed upon by UC and CNA during last December’s contract agreement between the university and its more than 8,500 nurses.

Discussions addressed:

### – **Safeguarding the standard of healthcare enjoyed by all UC employees.**

UC provides healthcare plans to more than 100,000 employees system-wide. Nurses have the same healthcare plans as faculty, environmental services staff, management and other healthcare professionals at the university.

The ability of UC to fund system-wide healthcare benefits is largely dictated by the level of state funding received each year, according to Pripas. “UC balances resources to ensure excellent coverage for all of its employees.”

**CNA alleges that other hospitals provide less costly health benefits but has not provided supporting documentation in spite of UC's requests at the bargaining table.**

With the continuing support of its unions, including the CNA, in 2003 UC implemented and maintains a unique salary-based contribution approach to ensure that lowest-paid employees have affordable healthcare. If CNA pulls out of the UC employee benefit plan, then the cost to all employees may go up. This cannot be a desirable outcome for this negotiation.

– **UC makes every effort to accommodate meal and break periods for its nurses**

The CNA has suggested that UC nurses are not allowed to take breaks, but feedback from nurse managers demonstrates that meals and breaks are generally taken. Nurse managers do not report significant requests for assistance in ensuring that breaks can be taken.

"UC is committed to working with CNA to find a solution to issues related to missed meals and breaks," said Pripas. "Because CNA continues to insist that RNs are not receiving meals and breaks, we proposed that meals and breaks be scheduled when a majority of nurses in a work unit say they have a chronic problem."

– **A commitment to the current retirement health benefit plan for current working nurses.**

Barring any changes in legislative or regulatory requirements, or changes in the health care marketplace that directly affect the plans offered (such as a merger among the plans UC offers), the UC has provided a written commitment to making no change to the retiree health plans through June 30, 2007, including the benefits within those plans, unless changes are made in current employee health benefits. Consistent with current practice, annual adjustments in retiree contributions will be made to reflect the increased costs of providing retiree health benefits and any change in state funding levels.

Negotiations between UC and the CNA will continue during two additional bargaining sessions scheduled for May 15 – 17 in Westwood and May 30 – June 1 in Irvine.

For more information about the university's negotiations with CNA: [www.ucnurses.com](http://www.ucnurses.com) or [http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies/labor\\_relations/index.html](http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies/labor_relations/index.html).

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