



August 2001

Labor Relations at UC

The University of California takes pride in its ongoing commitment to employees and working effectively with its labor unions. UC first began working with organized labor following the passage of the Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA) in 1979. Currently, UC negotiates with 13 different unions about the employment terms of more than 60,000 of its employees. The university is proud of its many accomplishments in this area and in its ability to continually provide quality employment conditions and opportunities for those that make UC their employer of choice. Below are some highlights of UC's labor relations activities.

Summer 2001 Bargaining Highlights

June

- Two-year comprehensive agreement reached with UPTE for Research Support Professionals.
- One-year agreement reached with CNA on all reopened articles.
- Negotiations begin with CUE regarding clerical employees. (UC proposed only minimal changes to the existing contract since it has been in effect for only four months. CUE requested changes to the entire contract.)

July

- Comprehensive agreement reached with UPTE for contract regarding Technical employees (wages reopener set for 8/01).
- Agreement reached with AFT to continue the current contract for Librarians regarding 2001-02 wages.

August

- Agreement reached with AFSCME on the issue of subcontracting. Discussions continue regarding staffing. Illustrative of its commitment to listen and respond to employee needs, the University proposed the creation of a joint Management-Labor committee dedicated exclusively to addressing the issue of staffing. As of yet, AFSCME has not indicated acceptance the idea.
- Negotiations with CUE for clerical employees continue. Barring additional unexpected changes from CUE, the University will present its new comprehensive proposal on August 28.
- Agreement reached with UPTE on ground rules for consolidated negotiations regarding Research Support Professionals and Technical employees. UC and UPTE are discussing 2001-02 wages only.

Bargaining Process Improvements

The university is implementing several new internal processes designed to foster efficiency in contract negotiations with unions. These change include the creation of a four-level advisory structure intended to facilitate goal setting, decision-making and information gathering necessary to collective bargaining. UC also continues to seek out and propose opportunities for joint problem solving with unions. For example, this year the university and AFSCME bargaining teams engaged in joint bargaining training, aimed at improving the communications at the bargaining table. Also, UC and UPTE have agreed to consolidate wage negotiations for Research Support Professional staff and Technical employees, thereby increasing the prospects for more efficient, productive negotiations.

UC's vast size, decentralized organizational structure, fluctuating funding, and geographically diverse workforce, pose occasional challenges to the collective bargaining process and may, at times, necessarily constrain the university's flexibility in individual negotiations. UC believes ongoing process improvements like the ones mentioned above will help promote efficient, productive negotiations and better enable the university to realize its goal of maintaining equitable and quality employment conditions for all UC employees.

Improved Responsiveness to Union Requests for Information

In a decentralized organization as large as UC, detailed information can take time to gather, confirm and disseminate – particularly given the variety of computer systems at UC. So as to be more responsive to union requests for information, the UC Office of Labor Relations recently created a new position devoted solely to this purpose. As a result, all union requests are processed immediately and are conscientiously tracked through to completion. Additionally, the university maintains a database of employee information, updated weekly, that all unions have 24-hour access to for information pertaining to the employee group(s) they represent. UC is pleased to report that unions have acknowledged improved responsiveness in this area.

Unfair Labor Practice Record

UC's favorable record regarding unfair labor practices (ULPs) stands as evidence of its commitment to UC employees and to working fairly and respectfully with unions. In the 22 years that UC has been involved in collective bargaining, over 900 charges of unfair labor practices have been filed against the university by unions. Of this amount, only 4% of PERB rulings have been decided in favor of the unions.

Improved Benefits and Employment Opportunities for “Temporary” Employees

Because many areas of the University involve fluctuating workload conditions and funding, temporary, or “limited-term,” employees fill critical short-term staffing needs at the University and are an important part of the UC community. In recognition of the important contributions that limited-term employees make to UC, the university recently enacted several important changes to its policies affecting temporary employees. Now, limited-term employees who accumulate 1,000 hours on pay status in a consecutive 12-month period will become eligible for membership in the UC Retirement Plan. Because eligibility for health and welfare benefits is based in part on UCRP membership, employees who enter the Retirement Plan under the new provisions also will become eligible for full health coverage.

In May of this year, the Bureau of State Audits issued a review of UC's temporary employment policies and affirmed overall the University's reasonable use of temporary positions. The audit made only two recommendations: that the University ensure that campuses understand the eligibility of employees for certain benefits under UC's new policies, and that the University incorporate additional automated features into its payroll system to ensure that employees receive only those benefits to which they are entitled.

Benefits for Domestic Partners

In today's rapidly changing and very competitive employment environment, attracting and retaining quality personnel remains one of UC's top priorities – and ongoing challenges. To help meet this goal, UC continually monitors its benefits options to help ensure it's offering its employees the very best benefits it can.

Consistent with its commitment to developing benefits that are sensitive to the needs of its employees, in 1998, UC began offering health benefits to same-sex domestic partners and financially dependent family members. These health benefits include medical, dental and vision coverage and parallel options offered to married UC employees and their spouses. These and other benefits innovations help strengthen the university's ability to compete for quality faculty and staff, and help maintain UC as a leading California employer.

Number of Domestic Partners in UC Health Plans*

	Medical	Dental	Vision
Employees	766	798	829
Retirees	109	106	n/a
Total	875	904	829

*as of 12/31/2000