



U · P · D · A · T · E

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Steps can be funded, but no cost-of-living this year

Budget fight ends – funding restored for UC’s enrollment, outreach, labor studies programs

This year’s budget fight is over, and there is mixed news for higher education. California’s budget deal has restored millions to UC’s budget, as state legislators, supported by citizen activists and union members across the state, succeeded in turning back some of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s harshest cuts to higher education.

UPTE-CWA members made their voices heard through a massive petition and postcard

UPTE was joined by other unions in the campaign, including the Coalition of University Employees (representing clerical workers) and AFSCME (representing service workers), as well as the UC Students Association.

The fight for fair pay

UC admits it can afford step pay increases. But despite the best efforts of legislators and union members, Governor Schwarzenegger wouldn’t budget fair pay

increases for UC employees. The budget includes no funding for cost-of-living increases in 2004-05. This, despite the state’s track record of insufficient increases for several years running, and available data showing UC jobs pay less than market rates.

The governor says he is committed to increasing UC’s budget by 3%, 3%, and 4% over next three years starting in 2005. UC claims it intends to pass that increase on to employees.

But even when the state does not fund raises, federal and private grants as well as the many money-making enterprises at UC (like the hospitals and recharge facilities) do have the ability to provide for employee raises. The state provides less than 25% of UC’s budget, but UC continues to use the budget as an excuse not to give employees fair pay increases.

“All UPTE-represented employees are now on the step-pay system,” notes UPTE President Jelger Kalmijn. “The cost of

providing step increases for eligible employees balances out with savings from staff turnover and vacancies, so UC can definitely afford step increases for all employees who are not topped-out or on probation.”

Kalmijn added that at the bargaining table, UC has said it does have the money, but that it wants to spend it elsewhere. How can we make sure UC spends turnover and vacancy savings on step increases?

“Get active,” says Rodney Orr, mobilizing coordinator for the UPTE bargaining team. “We need to work together to demand our fair share, and that means talking with your co-workers and participating in contract support activities.”

Contact your local UPTE representative if you’d like to host an informative “Where’s the Dough?” workshop for your coworkers. For a sneak preview of the workshop, take a look at www.upte.org/UCwage.html.



Members Mary Howe, Lynne Sheehan, Scott Harris, Jelger Kalmijn (who also serves as systemwide president) and CharlieCrummer meet in front of Harris’ workplace union bulletin board

Charles Allen, photo

campaign to the governor over the summer. Thousands signed on to UPTE’s statement demanding Schwarzenegger reverse his proposed cuts to UC and the state and community college systems.

“Our members added their voices to a broad cross-section of the state’s residents who were extremely dismayed by the governor’s gutting of public education,” said Lisa Kermish, UPTE’s systemwide vice president.

The petition pointed out that California’s future as a world leader in education, research, technology, health care, and the economy depend on adequate funding: “This must be a university for all Californians, not just the very wealthy.” Members asked the governor to restore outreach and enrollment funding, reduce the proposed tuition increases, and support measures to hold UC accountable for all taxpayer money it receives.

UCSD union activist fights for free speech rights

Talking with fellow union members. Writing a message on a whiteboard in an employee lunch room. Not the sort of thing that would get you fired, right?

Not usually. But at UCSD, Labor Relations manager Michael Melman wants to fire UPTE

President Carolan Buckmaster for just such reasons.

Unlike UC’s other eight campuses, where such interaction between union reps and members is entirely routine, UCSD management appears to be afraid of people who talk to each other about their wages and working conditions.

For the past several years, UCSD management has continually harassed the leadership of UPTE and other campus unions when they try to communicate with their members.

Carolan has worked at UCSD for more than ten years as a staff research associate. She currently works for the union two days per week, organizing fellow members around issues like contract bargaining and their rights on the job. All perfectly legal activities under our union contracts, and common on all UC campuses – except, apparently, UCSD.

In a letter filled with trumped-up charges, Labor Relations claims Carolan broke “regulations regarding time, place and manner,” because she called union members at work, or stopped by their offices.

Ironically, these “time, place, manner” regulations are much like those overturned in 1964 by UC Berkeley’s historic Free Speech Movement. Then, UCB unreasonably sought to stop students’ free



Carolan Buckmaster

speech on campus. Now, UCSD management wants to prevent the free speech of employees.

“What are they afraid of?” asks UPTE systemwide board member Fran Holzer, who also works as a staff research associate at UCR. “Employees have a right to communicate and organize, and we’ll fight to make sure those rights are guaranteed.”

You can help. Send an email to management in support of Carolan’s and all other union members’ rights to communicate freely at work: www.upte.org/UCSDchancellors.html.



UPTE LOCALS

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(530) 759-0803

Los Angeles:

(310) 443-5484

Santa Barbara:

(805) 685-3661

Irvine:

(949) 833-8783

Riverside:

(951) 781-7922

San Diego:

(619) 296-5090

At the bargaining table

Strike@SBC

Union workers and SBC, the nation's second-largest phone company, reached a tentative agreement just minutes before workers ended a four-day strike this spring. Communications Workers of America (UPTE's parent union) represents 100,000 SBC employees in thirteen states.

Job security was the central issue. SBC wanted to transfer some 7,000 technical and customer service jobs – some 7% of the entire SBC workforce – to India, the Philippines and other countries. The new contract includes wage increases and a guarantee of no layoffs for its duration.

SBC had cut more than 20,000 union jobs in core telephone operations over the past three years. CWA maintains that its members, whose skills and productivity helped SBC achieve profits of \$8.5 billion last year, deserve the opportunity to work in the growing parts of the company as it deploys new technologies and expands into new business areas.

CWA also held the line on most increases to health benefits. SBC had claimed it had to raise benefit copays to "remain competitive" at the same time it posted record profits, but union members said the increases to out-of-pocket health care costs were unfair.



SBC workers on strike

Research & tech bargaining Wage issues on the table

Bargaining for wages and other issues is currently underway for UPTE's technical (TX) and researcher (RX) bargaining units.

As the *Update* went to press, UPTE's bargaining team had just proposed a three-year settlement that would provide step increases and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). With the contract about to expire on September 30, 2004, the UPTE team is making a strong effort to wrap up bargaining prior to that date.

"UC is still offering zero percent salary increases across the board for all titles in the

vacation leave or leave without pay caused significant negative impact on UC employees' overall compensation.

UCOP is now following UPTE's advice and granting two days of paid administrative leave to non-represented employees. "We're pleased to see that the University is taking a step in the right direction," said Lisa Kermish, UPTE's systemwide vice president and one of the UPTE representatives at the meeting with UCOP.

"Holiday shutdown periods have existed on many campuses for many years," said Kermish. "With the University's budget in such doldrums, it's nice to see that, at least for this year, UC's non-represented employees aren't being asked to donate their accrued vacation leave to help UC stretch its budget."



Researcher and tech members and bargainers during negotiations in Berkeley in August. Left to right, Nancy Kato, Rodney Orr, Steven Butler, Pete Thuesen, Tanya Smith, Tom Breiner, Virginia Byron, and Brad Herman

RX and TX units," said Kevin Rooney, president of UPTE at UCSF and a bargaining team representative. UC head bargainer, Sharon Hayden, restated UC's position that while there is sufficient money available for normal step raises, UC has "other priorities." Its bargaining team continues to propose no increase or steps for this year and next year, and only a small increase for the third year. That would add up to 3 years without raises for many employees.

There is no overall cost to the University in UPTE's wage proposal. Step increases moving employees up in their pay ranges balance out with UC savings from employee turnover. UPTE won the step pay system for all TX and RX employees in the last contract, and will continue to insist that UC provide these increases.

Administrative professionals UPTE pressure results in two paid days of leave

This summer, UPTE representatives met with UCOP labor relations representatives to discuss UC employees' forced use of vacation leave to cover UC campuses' end-of-the-year holiday closure periods.

At that meeting, UPTE urged UCOP to minimize the financial pain caused to employees by the campuses' decision to cut costs by curtailing energy usage during these periods. UPTE argued that, particularly in light of lean budget years that have resulted in small or non-existent salary increases, the required use of accrued

Called the Bonus Leave Program, the policy is still in the proposal stage, though it is likely to be implemented. The paid administrative leave days may be used any time between December 15, 2004 and June 30, 2005, although it is expected that, at campuses that participate in the energy curtailment program, those days will most likely be used over the period of the shutdown. UC is drafting procedures for campuses that do not close, or that experience only partial shutdowns.

Health care professionals Improving HX pay, working conditions

Last fall, UPTE members ratified a new contract for health care professionals (the HX bargaining unit). But there are still many improvements to be made, both across the board and in specific job titles.

The first year's across-the-board wage increases were insufficient for health care professionals. Clinical social workers in San Francisco want to close the wage gap that exists with similar city-paid employees, who work alongside them. Among clinical lab technologists, low pay means vacant positions, which in turn means greater burdens on those who remain.

Getting paid time off has been an obstacle in many UC health facilities. But health care workers have come up with a plan that is simple and, they hope, effective.

"It is to enforce the contract," notes Wendy Mullen, a clinical social worker at UCLA and UPTE's systemwide secretary. "The HX contract allows establishment of

Professional Practice Committees (PPCs) at each campus to monitor equity negotiations and file grievances when workers are denied paid time off under the contract's provisions for professional development. So that's what we did."

These committees have made a good deal of headway. Here's what's happening campus-by-campus.

There is an active PPC committee in Irvine chaired by Angie Carrillo. Nuclear med techs who did not receive equity increases during bargaining received a special equity adjustment of 5% to 7% in April. Occupational therapists received equity increases in May of 7% to 12%. Speech pathologists also received increases of 14%. Physician assistants, who gathered market data and discovered they are making 20% below

market, are currently in equity negotiations.

At San Francisco, Kristin Jensen chairs the committee. Its first task was to address Clinical lab technologist wages. The committee completed market studies and prepared to meet with management. Clinical social workers and occupational therapists are also in the process of collecting market data and putting together equity proposals.

At Davis, Sue McCormick has been negotiating for audiologists, who just received a 10% equity raise and range adjustment, along with their 2% across-the-board, for a total wage increase of 12%.

In San Diego, Sheila Stittiams, Mercedes Garcia-Mohr and Michele Freeman are looking for others who are interested in forming a local committee.

In Los Angeles, the PPC has filed a grievance to eliminate the paid time off side letter, reinstating the traditional vacation and sick leave accruals as stated in the contract. Activists have begun distribution of a survey on utilization and denial of paid time off for professional development.

If you would like to participate, contact your UPTE local. – Wendy Mullen, Los Angeles

Unique Irvine plan saved

UCI Labor Relations recently announced it would discontinue a portion of the Re-Employment Program (an Irvine only plan), which involves UCI continuing to pay its contribution to health premiums of laid-off employees for four months following layoff.

A coalition of activists from UPTE, CNA, AFSCME and CUE met with UC representatives, and talked them out of discontinuing the plan. – Sue Cross, Irvine

Do-it-yourself health and safety

A number of do-it-yourself mapping tools are available to help you figure out why your work isn't working, or why you or your coworkers are becoming disabled, and what to do if your department isn't doing anything to prevent work-related injuries.

These are powerful, easy-to-use, online tools to help workers identify where they are hurting, the hazards to which they are exposed, the effects of work (or environmental) hazards on the rest of their lives – and what to do about them.

Mapping doesn't require experts and can be a lot of fun to do—especially with coworkers and others in your union or the UC union coalition. Mapping has been used effectively throughout the world among union and environmental groups to train and empower people to change their conditions.

The most complete resource is available from *Hazards* <www.hazards.org/diyresearch/index.htm#bodyofevidence>, an independent, nonprofit magazine regarded as an invaluable tool for unions worldwide and winner of an American Public Health Association international occupational health award. Material on the *Hazards* site can be translated into a number of other languages, which can benefit UC workers whose native language is not English.

Two UC programs offer invaluable resources through web sites, publications, libraries, and training: the Labor Occupa-

tional Health Program at Berkeley <www.lohp.org>, and the Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program in Los Angeles <www.losh.ucla.edu>. Both are part of the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health within the School of Public Health.

For example, one of the safety links on the LOHP site is *Haz-Map* – a web site of the US National Library of Medicine. It provides an easy-to-use database that shows the links among occupations (and hobbies), job tasks, hazardous agents, symptoms, and diseases. You can search by any of these variables or combination of variables at <hazmap.nlm.nih.gov>.

Finally, see “trainers’ tools” at National Council for Occupational Safety and Health <www.coshnetwork.org>, which links to training kits used by the International Labour Organisation. Among the topics covered are controlling hazards, reproductive health hazards, and using health and safety committees at work. This organization, formerly known as the National COSH Network, links to a wide variety of other resources.

Informing ourselves is the first part of what to do about work-related hazards. The second part – enacting a plan – requires a group effort, unless individual employees decide to solve their problems by walking away. – *Joan Lichterman, Berkeley*

IT reorganization at Santa Cruz

UCSC's executives have responded to a projected sustained decline in state funding by centralizing several, if not most, campus functions. Of particular importance to UPTE members is the creation of a new division, under a new vice provost, which will deliver information technology (IT) services, such as help desks, workstation support, server-based services, instructional technology, enterprise systems, and computer networks and telephones.

UCSC's IT has traditionally been delivered by individual academic and administrative divisions and this reorganization – or “transformation” as UC likes to call it – has brought great anxiety to staff and management alike.

There are several innovations, however, which give UPTE members a voice in the process, and after the first year it is clear that this is not a simple slash-and-burn downsizing. UPTE members are participating in several arenas as team members of the various work groups that are building the new division, and as consultants to Labor Relations staff.

UPTE and Labor Relations had a series of labor/management meetings to discuss the centralization projects. In one meeting with Vice Provost Larry Merkely and a team of directors and consultants, UPTE's IT Consolidation Committee presented a list of principles it hoped would be adopted as the recruitments, transfers, and promotions occur. It included no layoffs or demotions, no out-sourcing, no student replacement workers, and no unilateral changes in flexible work schedules.

“While the meeting could not end with the complete adoption of UPTE's principles,” said Linda Rosewood Hooper, an UPTE activist who is a programmer/analyst at UCSC, “the general feeling was that with more discussion everyone could agree to a process that excluded layoffs and reductions in time for non-managers, fair compensation if people are promoted out of represented units or into exempt positions, and a freeze on raises for everyone until the period of uncertainty is over.”

A more detailed description of the committee's work is at <www.upte-ucsc.org/news>.

Arts in the union

Many people think of unions in connection with bargaining wages, holding meetings, or resolving workplace problems. But there is also a cultural side to unionism that includes music, literature, art, and drama. For some of us, this is what has drawn us into activism, and gives us an enjoyable way to support our unions.

This was brought home to me at the 26th Annual Great Labor Arts Exchange, held in Silver Springs, Maryland, this past June. This year, in addition to the Labor Arts Exchange, several labor choruses around the country came together in a “choral convergence,” including my own, the San Francisco Bay Area's Western Heritage Rockin'

Solidarity Labor Chorus. I was among some 250 labor chorus members from places like Seattle, Washington, DC, New York City, and Raleigh, NC. Each chorus brought a song and taught the others. Authors gave presentations about newly published labor books, and artists talked about their projects.

It was great fun and it gave me an overview of all the wonderful union work going on that includes people all over the country with a variety of talents. People using their talents to inspire us to keep on working for the union, to reflect on what works and what doesn't, and to remember all those wonderful union activists who committed their lives to justice. – *Linda Segars, Berkeley*

Innovative Berkeley severance program eliminates layoffs

Like many other administrative units, UC Berkeley's library system is being hit with a 6% budget cut this year. But instead of issuing layoff notices or “reorganizing” employees out of their jobs, the Library has instituted a more progressive plan.

Called the Severance Incentive Program, or SIP, it pays up to \$50,000 severance to staff who voluntarily leave their jobs. The program is wildly successful, with 24 employees participating, which means layoffs are no longer on the agenda.

“This is a program that really benefits UC employees,” said John Zupan, president of UPTE's Berkeley local and a staff research associate in Plant and Microbial Biology.

According to the Library's website, SIP is a “successful partnership with the union representatives affiliated with AFSCME, UC-AFT, CUE and UPTE.” The one-time program was designed as an incentive for employees who were already considering leaving UC to voluntarily resign. SIP participants received 40% of their annual salary for their first 5 years of service credit, and an additional 4% for each year up to 20.

Employees with more than five years of service credit at half-time or greater were eligible. But because the Library agreed with union representatives that seniority should be the guiding principle, most of the accepted participants were long-term employees close to retirement.

Elena Balashova, a long-time UPTE member and library assistant V, is taking advantage of the plan to retire early: “It's a great idea, but the union bargaining was what ensured it would be applied fairly, using the principle of seniority.”

Funding for the program – \$900,000 in total – came from the Library's budget, not the UC retirement program.

While layoffs are no longer a concern for Library employees, with fewer people to do the work, speedup and overwork is. Union activists want to make sure that remaining employees taking on new duties are properly reclassified and compensated, and that any reorganizing happens as a collective process with staff closely involved.

UCLA administrative professional fights Orwellian treatment

The notorious Los Angeles Police Department would have treated her better than UCLA Human Resources – that was the conclusion of union activist Retha Hope who works in UCLA's Purchasing Department. She was summarily placed on “investigatory leave” in April.

UCLA's personnel managers refused to provide Hope or her union representative with any reason for why she had been placed on leave, or even reveal who had made the accusation against her. Her coworkers began distributing flyers pointing out that while both the LAPD and the U.S. Constitution guaranteed basic due process rights, UCLA apparently does not. The flyer asked UCLA employees to send emails protesting the situation to several key Human Resources staff. Within 48 hours, personnel managers had backed off, allowing Hope to return to work.

Shining a light on their behavior was all it took to get results. UCLA will still not say what evidence it had, if any, to place Hope on investigatory leave. “They string people around like this all the time, as a way to make people's lives difficult and get rid of them,” said UPTE rep Joe Biegner. Hope had been a member-organizer in the recent union campaign for UC staff professionals, and a thorn in management's side.

Hope says the experience has only made her more committed to organizing for a voice for UC's staff professionals. “I want to support the union more than ever because I found out that UCLA can do anything that they want to do to abuse their employees,” said Hope.

She also sees much room for improvement in UCLA's working conditions. “Management refuses to listen to or support their employees. They abuse the Incentive Award Program by distributing the money to their friends, or on recommendations from their friends, in a secretive manner. There is also extreme racial and gender discrimination at this university that needs to be addressed,” she adds.

If you want to get involved in organizing for change at UCLA, please contact UPTE at (310) 443-5484.



Retha Hope

Joe Biegner photo

Bear Pass at last

Union activists at Berkeley are celebrating after three years of organizing for a mass transit “ecopass.” UC Berkeley announced in July that it will offer staff and faculty a reduced-fare “Bear Pass” for use on city buses starting October 1. The pass, which will provide unlimited rides, will cost employees \$20 a month – that’s much reduced due to UC’s \$50-a-month subsidy.

UPTE and six other unions formed a coalition to improve alternative transportation. With support from the community, students, and faculty, the unions circulated petitions recommending changes to UC’s transit policies. They held rallies and press conferences demanding a free employee ecopass (modeled after similar programs at UCLA, UCSC, Stanford, and the city of Berkeley) to help reduce air pollution, parking, and traffic around the campus.

Last year, UC made a net profit on parking fees of \$1.7 million, and next year profits are projected to be \$2.3 million. These huge profits could be used to offset the cost of free transit passes that cover BART as well area buses, according to former coalition co-chair, UPTE’s Tanya Smith: “Free Bear Passes benefit everyone. An institution that ignores basics like these deserves a reputation for being stingy, backward, and downright unneighborly.” Activists will continue to push UCB to “do the right thing.”

CWA delegates pass anti-war resolution

Delegates to this year’s annual convention of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in Anaheim voted nearly unanimously on August 31 in favor a resolution that calls upon the Bush administration to abandon its policy of preemptive war and to support US troops by bringing them home. CWA is UPTE’s national union.

The demand to bring the troops home was part of an amendment to the original resolution sponsored by five CWA local presidents including UPTE’s own Jelger Kalmijn, which added this clause:

“That CWA demands that the president abandon his failed policy (of preemptive war) which has made our nation less – not more – secure, and support our troops and their families by bringing our troops home safely now, by providing adequate veterans’ benefits and promoting domestic policies that prioritize the needs of working people who make up the bulk of the military...”

Dozens of delegates from across the country formed a line at the microphone designated for speakers in favor of the motion. No one spoke in opposition. During the vote, only a few among the

1400 delegates raised their hands in opposition.

CWA joins the Service Employees, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Postal Workers, the Mail Handlers, and the California, Washington, and Maryland/DC Federations of Labor in adopting strong antiwar resolutions this year.

Dozens of labor councils, regional labor bodies, local unions and other labor organizations have taken similar action.

For more information, check out the website of U.S.

Labor Against the War at www.uslaboragainstar.org.



UC executive salaries skyrocket

“Where’s the dough?” That’s a reasonable question being asked by many in the UC system in the wake of big pay increases for executives. Anyone who thought UC’s practice of raising the salaries of executives might be put in abeyance during the state’s budget crisis is in for a surprise.

Over the past several years, executives have received yearly increases that are, in many cases, more than the entire annual salary of a typical UC employee. UCSD’s recently-appointed chancellor got \$98,000 more a year than his predecessor. The outgoing UCSC chancellor got an annual raise of \$100,000 to become a new UCOP associate vice president. UCB’s new chancellor was hired at \$390,000, up from the \$315,600 his predecessor received. He’s also getting a special boost in retirement benefits, a \$97,500 moving allowance and a free house.

More UC executives than ever are in the “\$200,000 Club.” Three hundred and sixty-one UC executives collectively make more than \$73 million per year – and that’s just base pay. It doesn’t include cars, expense accounts, and housing subsidies,

New regents = business as usual

In July, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger chose not to reappoint long-time labor activist Dolores Huerta to the UC Board of Regents.

Huerta, who worked with César Chavez and co-founded the United Farm Workers, served as a regent since September 2003, when Governor Gray Davis appointed her to the remaining six months of an unfinished term.

Letters and emails asking Schwarzenegger to keep Huerta on the board poured in to the governor’s office over the last few months. Supporters of Huerta’s reappointment included the Democratic Latino Caucus, League of United Latin American Citizens, the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and many UC unions, including UPTE-CWA.

But in early July, Schwarzenegger instead appointed investment banker Paul Wachter and businessman Frederick Ruiz, saying they better reflected his own political views. Appointment to the 26-member Board of Regents is considered prestigious, and is often given to campaign donors.

In a letter to Schwarzenegger, Huerta said she brought a “unique voice” to UC’s ruling body. “My civil rights and labor experience provides the worker and community perspective which is essential to the regents,” Huerta wrote. The mother of 11 grown children, Huerta, now 74, has had extensive experience with California’s educational system.

But Huerta also criticized Schwarzenegger’s proposal to increase student fees 10% and cut funding to UC’s Institute of Labor and Employment. She spoke out strongly against Schwarzenegger during the recall campaign in which he ousted Davis. “We’re tired of his lies,” Huerta said, according to an October 5 story in the *Los Angeles Times*. “And, hey, we’re tired of his groping.”

“One would think the Terminator’s skin would be a little tougher,” Huerta told the *Sacramento Bee* (July 3), when the paper asked for her reaction to not being reappointed. While disappointed to no longer serve as a regent, she says she has many other opportunities to work for public education in California.

which can amount to over \$1 million per individual executive. Of those 361, more than a third make over \$200,000. (See the actual figures at www.upte-cwa.org/200000club.pdf).

Still, UC claims it can’t afford even to reinvest the salary savings made from high staff turnover into step increases for rank-and-file staff. UPTE activists on every UC campus launched a petition campaign this summer to pressure chancellors to support fair wages for technical employees and researchers who are currently at the bargaining table.

“My step increases over the next three



Dolores Huerta

years should amount to just over 6%,” the petition reads, “but the UC bargaining team has already refused to implement any steps, claiming there is no money for the step increases promised to technical (TX) and research (RX) unit employees. *But UC will save, on average over those three years, more than 7% through staff turnover and vacancies. This is more than sufficient to fund our step increases.*”

The petition asks chancellors to call on President Dynes to support fair wage demands, and to “make sure every penny designated for our raises actually ends up in our pockets.”



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