Regents tell students to pay more, while giving executives pay increases yet again

In what seems to have become almost a pathological habit, the regents have granted huge increases for top executives while at the same time approving yet another increase of student fees. More than that, in a closed-door meeting, the regents voted to raise undergraduate student tuition by 8 percent in fall 2011. This follows a 30 percent increase over the past year and increases the cost of a degree for California residents to $11,000 per year, not including assorted campus fees or room or board.

The regents also voted to raise graduate school fees by up to 10 percent. At the same time, in a closed-door session, the regents approved pay increases ranging up to $132,000. Several executives received increases of $30,000 or more, while UC created a new “Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer” position at UCSF for $230,000.

The regents also approved hiring one UC Davis vice chancellor at a salary level $132,000 higher than that of his predecessor, with an additional $110,000 one-time bonus.

Unconscionable decision

“The regents need a lesson in ethics, but I don’t think another executive earning $320,000 a year will help,” says Jelger Kalmijn, a staff research associate at UC San Diego and UPTE’s systemwide president. “This is unconscionable at a time when they are proposing to take more money from the families of students and workers.”

Campus unions and student organizations brought six busloads to the UCSF Mission Bay meeting and were joined by scores of others to contest the decision. In what some activists have noted as a significant change, this time five regents voted against the fee increases, whereas in the past only the student regent has been willing to oppose such policies.

Following the meeting, state Senate president pro tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) objected to the action in a letter to UC representatives, stating, “I am deeply concerned about the recently adopted fee increases by CSU and UC and the impact they will have on our students, their families and our economy....Passing more costs on to students and families threatens to price more Californians out of a quality higher education.”

Every regents’ meeting in the last year has been marked by student, staff and faculty coalition action. “It is this kind of mutual support that will help us preserve the university as a quality public educational and research institution for the people of California,” said Elizabeth Wilks, UPTE’s systemwide treasurer, who is an administrative professional at UCSB.

More actions are planned in the near future. Be sure to stay tuned to UPTE’s webpage at <www.upte.org> for updates, or contact your local to learn what’s happening at your campus.

UPTE fights UC’s proposals to cut pensions and retiree health care

Although the Update goes to press, the UC Regents will vote on proposals made by UC President Mark Yudof at a special meeting December 13. Employees are lodging their protests with UPTE, which will pass those on to UC.

“The university has to bargain these changes with those of us who have union contracts, and we plan to fight,” said UPTE’s systemwide president Jelger Kalmijn.

UC wants new employees to pay more for less. The employees will get less because the university plans to balance its bottom line by cutting its contributions to the pension plan for new hires. “This 2-tier contribution system will divide the work force and will pressure UC to get rid of what it calls ‘legacy’ employees, or get us on to the new system,” notes UPTE’s vice president, Lisa Kermish, a 30-year employee at UC Berkeley.

Among the changes UC wants to make is to increase the age for maximum retirement benefits to 65. “This means that if you retire at 60 your pension will less than half of what you would get under the current system once you add in the planned cut to retiree health benefits,” said Kalmijn.

We aren’t alone

2010 saw an unprecedented assault on the ability of workers to retire with dignity and financial security. Since 2005, private sector companies, such as United Airlines and LTV Steel, have dumped billions in pension obligations on the federal government, and 172 more companies did so this year. In the public sector, employers have sought to delay benefits, force workers to pay more for

(continued on page 3)

UC president Yudof’s proposed changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PENSION</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>After 7/1/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Contribution</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC Contribution</td>
<td>10% to 20%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age for Maximum Benefit</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Retirement Age</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lump Sum Pay out</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor Benefit Subsidy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-of-living Adjustment for Inactive Retirees</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retiree health care

| Eligibility Age | 50 | 55 |
| UC contribution at eligibility age | 50% | 0% |
| Percent of premium employees pay | 11% (7% last year) | 30% |
| Age for maximum UC contribution | 60 | 65 |
Get a union scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the CWA's Joe Beirne scholarships. Fifteen scholarships of $3,000 are offered for the 2011-2012 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment.

CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren are eligible. Apply online at <www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>.

Union Plus <www.unionplus.org> also provides college scholarships which are accessible to all UPTE members. UPTE San Diego member Xiaodian Song’s daughter Lezhi Wang (below) was one of last year’s recipients. She produced this video to say “thank you” to the union: <http://www.scholarship-contest.strutta.com/entries/89444>.

UPTE’s 2,500 health care professionals receiving wage increases of 4% plus

Over 2,500 health care professionals ratified a union agreement with the University of California on October 29, which includes fair wage increases as well as new contributions to their pension plan.

The late October approval means that, just in time for the holiday season, health care (HX) professionals will see a 2% raise for everyone, with step increases, for those who are eligible, to follow in January.

Employees at the top of the pay scale will receive a 2% lump-sum cash payout instead of a step. In addition, many employees will receive equity increases depending on their work location and job titles.

“We knew UC had the money to be paying its highly-skilled health care professionals market wages,” said Wendi Felson, a retired clinical lab scientist and chief negotiator for UPTE’s health care professionals. “This agreement proved it.”

Enthusiastic ‘yes’ vote

With a more than 50% voter turnout, health care professionals ratified the agreement, with 90% voting “yes.”

Nearly 100 new members joined the union during the ratification process to participate in the vote.

By April 1 of next year, the HX unit will have the opportunity to decide on paying 1.5% into the pension plan in return for an additional 1% raise and a step increase (lump sum for those at top of their pay scale).

“If we accept this portion of the agreement the contract will be extended until December 31, 2011,” said Felson, “and if we do not, the contract will retain the current expiration date of June 30, 2011.”

The health care professionals unit (HX) includes job titles such as Clinical Social Workers, Case Managers, Clinical Lab Scientists, Pharmacists, Nuclear Medicine Technologists and Occupational Therapists, among others.

Union members in the HX unit will have the opportunity in the spring to decide if they want to end the existing contract on June 30, 2011 and begin full contract bargaining, or to accept a 1.5% pension contribution in exchange for a 2% step increase and an additional 1% wage range increase retroactive to December, 2010.

Details of the pay increases are available at <www.upte.org/2010TA-HX/01.pdf>.

Fill our your survey

The HX contract expires next year, either June 30 or December 30. UPTE will soon be circulating a bargaining survey to get feedback on the wage, benefits, pension and other priorities of union members.

Make sure you and your co-workers voice your opinion. The surveys will be tallied and discussed at our systemwide bargaining conference on January 29, 2011.

If you’d like copies of the survey to distribute to your HX co-workers, please contact your local (see list on page 1).

TX/RX workers to get equity increases

Last spring, UPTE’s 10,000 techs and researchers (TX/RX) received raises of up to 14.5% over three years, plus an additional $1.7 million in equity funds to bring job titles lagging the market up to a better level.

After the union undertook research to examine where the equities would be most needed, UPTE and UC began negotiating over the specifics of the equity increases and who they will affect.

While we were able to obtain much needed equity adjustment for computer resource specialists at UC San Diego, studio projectionists at UC Los Angeles and some other titles, UC refused to agree to critical equity needs at UC Davis. “This agreement proved it,” said Kevin Rooney, UPTE’s chief bargainer, an environmental health and safety tech who is currently in a battle to return to his union for the union (see story, page 4, for how you can help make sure Kevin is there to advocate for UPTE members in the future).

A complete list of equity increases will be released shortly when it has been officially signed off.

These equity increases come out of a pool equivalent to 0.5% of payroll. Any portion that is not distributed as a targeted equity increase on a campus will be distributed equally among all TX/RX employees retroactive to October 1, 2010.
Senator Leland Yee (D-SF) goes for three

The impending change in governor has inspired state Senator Leland Yee (D-San Francisco) to introduce his higher education transparency bill for the third time.

For several years, Yee has been concerned with the operations of so-called “auxiliary” organizations at both UC and the California State University systems. Auxiliary organizations include university foundations, which ostensibly are independent of the universities but often have university officials on their boards of directors and operate in close coordination with university bodies.

The most prominent example was the 2009 scandal at Cal State Stanislaus. The university foundation there negotiated a speaking contract with Sarah Palin but then refused to disclose the contract’s terms, claiming immunity from public open records laws.

Other examples underscore Yee’s arguments for “sunshine.” Sonoma State University issued a $1.25 million loan to one foundation board member two days after he resigned. Because of shortcomings in existing law, the Fresno Bee was unable to investigate the identities of individuals and companies that received luxury suites at the Save Mart Center arena at Fresno State.

Campus executives at San Francisco and San Jose city colleges used foundation funds for personal and political purposes. Cal Poly, in San Luis Obispo, cancelled a guest lecturer at the request of the Harris Ranch Beef Company, which threatened to withhold $500,000 for a new campus meat-processing center. Harris Ranch may also have forced the resignation of a faculty member who taught a course on sustainable farming.

While the universities are subject to open records acts, which allow public scrutiny of expenditures and practices, auxiliary organizations are not. Governor Schwarzenegger has vetoed this transparency bill twice before.

Yee was optimistic that governor-elect Jerry Brown would do the right thing. “Our public universities should not be allowed to hide billions of dollars without any accountability. Most of these auxiliaries are fully staffed by public employees who administer public funds, yet their decisions are made in complete secrecy. Taxpayers and students deserve better.”

UPTE’s convention sets top priorities: protecting pensions, AP organizing

UPTE-CWA members met in Concord in mid-October for the 21st annual UPTE convention, hosted by the Lawrence Livermore union local. The convention is the highest decision-making body in UPTE-CWA. Convention delegates participated in lively discussions that resulted in the passage of resolutions and constitutional amendments designed to guide the course of UPTE’s activities for the next year.

The opening day of the convention included workshops on a diverse set of topics, including what’s happening with our pensions and benefits, laboratory safety standards, bargaining for work/family balance, organizing, layoff rights, what’s new in the RX/TX contract, peace and justice issues, and legislative and political work.

The convention’s keynote speaker was Jennifer Washburn, author of University, Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education. She discussed the dangerous effects that increasing corporate funding has on the direction of research, the increasingly secret nature of research products, and academic freedom.

Working to expand the union

A highlight of the convention was a plenary session on the ramped-up organizing drive to achieve union representation for administrative professional (AP) employees at UC. The session focused on the need for all members to support the effort by talking with their co-workers and sharing the positive effects of an UPTE contract.

Convention delegates passed resolutions in support of the administrative professionals organizing drive, mobilizing to fight attacks on public sector pensions and public education, internal training programs for diversity and inclusion, and in opposition to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There was a particularly poignant resolution and tribute to founding UPTE president Pete Goodman, who passed away on May Day this year. The convention voted to set up a scholarship fund in his name and to make him a convention delegate in perpetuity.

Next year’s convention will take place in October in Los Angeles. We hope to see you there!
UC’s TAs, readers and tutors win wage increase

Academic student employees at UC systemwide -- 12,000 teaching assistants, readers and tutors represented by UAW 2865 -- approved a new contract in late November, after much debate.

The three-year contract provides a 2 percent minimum salary increase per year, and if the state budget improves to the point where the state gives UC more money than it did in 2007, increases of up to a maximum 4% increase per year.

The union tripled the total annual amount of childcare expenses that are reim- bursable (from $900 to $2400 a year). In addition to doubling the amount employees can receive each term during the academic year, the program now covers summer.

The agreement also includes partial remission of nonresident tuition and more input into health benefits.

Berkeley’s KPFA fights unfair layoffs

CWA members and outraged listeners are fighting to save union jobs and restore a popular morning show at America’s first listener-sponsored radio station, KPFA 94.1 FM in Berkeley.

In November, the station’s parent company, Pacifica Foundation, abruptly laid off three hosts/producers of the Morning Show, yanked the show off the air and is piping in programming from its Los Angeles station. Pacifica killed the Morning Show – a staple of bay area civic life for three decades – even though it is the most profitable program for station fundraising.

Pacifica owns five radio stations across the country. The hosts and about 35 other KPFA employees are represented by CWA Local 9415. The union’s Christina Huggins said voluntary leaves and partial layoffs combined with work-sharing arrangements previously kept job losses to a minimum.

That led Local 9415 to file unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board and drew hundreds more angry listeners and union supporters to a rally in front of the station. The City of Berkeley’s Labor Commission passed a strong resolution in support of the workers in early December.

“We understand the fiscal situation and our members have bent over backwards to help the station save money, with some of them even leaving their jobs voluntarily,” Huggins said. “What happened isn’t about economics, it’s about political intentions.”

Show your support for the embattled employees by sending a letter to Pacifica from the KPFA workers’ website: <www.KPFAsigner.org>.

One Nation, working together for change

On November 2, hundreds of thousands of Americans came together at the Lincoln Memorial, and in communities across the country, for the One Nation Working Together rally.

CWA’s national president, Larry Cohen, was one of the speakers: “There was so much energy, much of it coming from the more than 10,000 CWAers determined to work with our allies to restore jobs and justice to working families. Workers and activists from civil and human rights communities, religious groups, the green community and many more, were one loud voice for jobs, justice and a government that works for us all. We can’t be ignored.”

To learn more and sign up for alerts, go to <action.onenationworkingtogether.org>.

Send UC a message: stop interfering with UPTE’s representatives!

It takes people and time to make any organization run. In labor relations, employers have executives and managers who work full-time for the employer’s interests.

Running an organization like UPTE, which represents tens of thousands of employees statewide, requires that rank-and-file workers have time off to be able to work on union business. It’s obvious that employers wouldn’t want this, and one of the big gains unions have made in the past 50 years is securing release time for its stewards and representatives.

UPTE has had a long-standing agreement with UC for the union’s local San Francisco president, Kevin Rooney, to be on leave for union business. But UC recently forced Kevin to return to his UC job as an environmental health and safety tech full time — with no good reason to justify this action. His UCSF workplace didn’t even know he was returning.

Running the union with people power

“Leave to work for the union is critical,” said UPTE systemwide president Jelger Kalmijn, who also works as a staff research associate at UCSD. “It lets UPTE preserve its rank-and-file power giving representatives such as Kevin the time to devote themselves to representing us effectively, in activities such as bargaining, organizing and stewarding — without trying to squeeze all this in between putting the kids to bed and doing the dishes.”

The union reimburses UC for all salary and benefits costs for the person on leave. Along with serving UPTE members at UCSF, Kevin Rooney is also responsible for systemwide duties on behalf of all UPTE members. His essential contributions include technical research (TX/RX) unit coordinator and chief bargainer. After he successfully negotiated a contract this spring for 10,000 TX/RX members that included up to 14.5% in salary increases over 3 years, “it is hard to escape the conclusion that this move by UC is in retaliation for his good work,” said Kalmijn.

We need Kevin Rooney back on the job to represent UPTE-UCW members. If you have not yet lodged your support for Kevin, please do so right away at our website <www.upte.org/kevinrooney>. Take a few minutes to support a union member who is so dedicated to working for all of us.

Senate Republicans kill pay equity act

Senate Republicans used the filibuster in early December to kill the Paycheck Fairness Act that would have made sure that laws requiring equal pay for women are enforced and would have helped women in their claims for pay fairness. GOP senators unanimously refused to let the bill be debated and proceed to a “yes or no” vote on the Senate floor.

Today, 45 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act, women still earn, on average, 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, the National Women’s Law Center said. “In this difficult economy, in which nearly 40 percent of mothers are primary breadwinners, women cannot afford to have employers discounting their salaries,” the center said.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would have given women the right to have thousands of their male colleagues earn so that they’ll also know whether they’re experiencing discrimination. Without the Paycheck Fairness Act, an employer still can retaliate against or even fire an employee who just wants to know what her co-workers are earning.

Learn more at CWA’s National Women’s Committee webpage: <www.cwa-union.org/issues/entry/c/women>.

Rules & Privacy Policy

| UPDATE | 4 |