CUCEA/CUCRA Joint Meeting

The Joint meeting took place in the morning at UC Santa Barbara's new Mosher Alumni House.

The agenda included three major items:

1. Joint Benefits Committee Report (JBC) – Adrian Harris

The JBC report was covered at both meetings. CUCRA voted to accept the report and its recommendations. CUCEA had a discussion on the report but did not vote to accept it primarily because of item #9 regarding Pension Obligation Bonds (POB). The UC Academic Senate voted in favor of issuing these bonds. Adrian does not favor this. He feels that the POBs would conflict with other University needs for bonds, such as capital improvements and that POBs would solve a problem for which the state needs to be more responsible.

2. Post Employment Benefits (PEB) Task Force - Randy Scott and Gary Schlimgen

This presentation is essentially the same one that has been given on all UC campuses this spring. The impression I got (reinforced at the CUCRA meeting) was that CUCRA has confidence that the Task Force is taking its work seriously and acting on our behalf. It will make recommendations that are favorable to our needs/concerns. However, it was stressed that the Task Force is not a policy making body. It recommends to the President, who then works with the Regents to make decisions and policy.

One of the items that got the most discussion was the suggestion that in regards to health care, older employees, retirees and emeriti be treated separately in negotiations for coverage than younger employees, i.e. a “non-blended” approach. The group, supporting the JBC recommendation, was against the potential elimination of the “blended rate” for health care. It would negatively impact annuitants.

There was specific mention of trying to protect the group of retirees and emeriti who do not have access to Medicare.

I didn’t hear quite as much information/discussion about workforce segmentation and comparative analysis with other appropriate workforces (mostly private universities and private sector), as I did in the fall. This may be because all of this information has been distilled to one slide. The comment that went with the slide indicates that salaries are lower and benefits considerably higher for most sectors of the staff and academic workforce. This is a personal observation and was not discussed.

The Task Force must make recommendations to the President by the end of June, and the Regents must act on some of these by September, particularly what percent current employees will contribute to UCRP.

Thanks to the work of the JBC, both CUCEA and CUCRA chairs are now included in the efforts of the Task Force.

3. Retirement Service Center – Joe Lewis

Joe reported that they have consolidated offices made significant improvements so that they can now be to be more responsive to retirees, especially on phones. In the discussion that followed, several campuses and labs reported that they were still having problems connecting. This will be an agenda item on the fall meeting, and a tour of the office will be available. CUCEA/CUCRA had a major role in the establishment and maintenance of this center in UCOP-HR/ Benefits (one or more of the Regents had wanted to outsource this function).
CUCRA Meeting

The CUCRA meeting was held in the afternoon. In addition to the JBC Report and the PEB Task Force discussed above, they discussed:

1. Advocacy for UC

Everyone was encouraged to become a UC advocate. The url is: http://www.ucforcalifornia.org/uc4ca/home/. In addition, some of the center directors suggested that it is a good idea to have some talking points about your campus that you can bring up in social situations to support UC.

2. Association of Retirees of Higher Education (AROHE)

Center directors, and some presidents of campus associations have attended the conferences of this national professional organization and found them useful. CUCRA currently sends one representative.

ACTION: CUCRA voted to send a second representative.

3. Online Discussion Forum – Lee Duffus

Lee gave a report and demonstration of the Online Discussion Forum that he is managing through Google Groups and encouraged us all to use it. In the discussion that followed, this forum was seen as an interim step to an interactive website for CUCRA.

4. Nominating Committee

The Committee recommended Margarite Jackson for Secretary, to replace Suzan Cioffi, whose responsibilities at the San Diego Retiree Center have increased exponentially.

ACTION: CUCRA voted to accept this recommendation.

5. Campus Reports

This agenda item was not discussed, but in reading through the reports, a couple of ideas jumped out that our association might want to pursue.

- Send out joint communications with Emeriti group as Irvine does.
- Start documenting contributions that retired staff is making to the campus and community in their volunteer work. This could be done locally through a column in the newsletter and/or a survey as San Diego has done, or through CUCRA. CUCEA is documenting research and other contributions of Emeriti. All this helps with visibility and positive relations with the university.
- IT help for retirees. Set aside one day a month/quarter for retirees to bring in laptops, Kendalls, etc. and receive tech help.

Both groups reaffirmed their commitment to meeting jointly so that center directors and committee chairs can attend both meetings. This not only improves communication it saves the expense of a separate meeting. The next CUCRA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2010 in Berkeley, the joint meeting with CUCEA on Thursday morning, and CUCEA’s meeting on Thursday afternoon.

Jenny Anderson
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Copies: Cathé, Maxine, Hilde