



MEDIA ADVISORY

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UC researchers and techs to picket at all 10 campuses over poverty wages, stalled contract negotiations

While the regents meet in Riverside on March 18, University of California researchers and technical employees will conduct pickets and other actions at all UC campuses to show their concern with management's intransigence at the bargaining table.

At UC Berkeley, picket lines will be up from 7:30 – 9:10 am at

- Telegraph & Bancroft (excellent visuals & sound available)

At UC San Francisco, picket lines will be up from 7:30 – 8:30 am at

- 513 Parnassus Ave (Medical Sciences Building)

Funding for research and education, not executive pay

UC continues to prioritize sky-rocketing salaries for its executives, rather than basic funding to keep the university providing high quality research and education.

Over 400 execs made upwards of \$200,000 a year – some individuals make as much as \$1.8 million – in addition to a wide variety of lucrative perks. Meanwhile, UC continues to raise student fees and short-change the staff who provide the world-class education and research for which the university is known. Some 10,000 researchers and techs, represented by UPTe-CWA, are bargaining for basic cost-of-living increases, improved health and safety, and preservation of their health care benefits.

“After a year at the table, we are preparing for a possible strike this spring,” said Kevin Rooney, UPTe’s chief bargainer and an EH&S tech at UCSF. “UPTe bargainers are not asking for anything unreasonable. Some of our members earn as little as \$10.98 an hour — that qualifies as poverty wages in California.” Thirty percent of techs and researchers leave each year, due to wages that are 20 to 30% below market. “Over 40% of these employees earn less than a family-sustaining wage,” added Rooney.

While some 35,000 other UC employees — from health care workers and nurses, to lecturers, police and custodians — have received average cost-of-living increases of 2 to 5% this year, UC has refused to settle with UPTe’s researchers and techs, a substantial portion of whom are among UC’s lowest-paid workers.

MEDIA ADVISORY from UPTe-CWA (continued)

“A 20% pay cut to UC’s 400 top executives would save \$24.4 million, and would help the university do two critical things,” said Paul Brooks, a mass spectroscopist at UCB and a member of his union, UPTe-CWA. “First, it could finally pay a family-sustaining wage to its lowest-paid workers, and second, it would not have to curtail freshman enrollment as drastically as was predicted last January.”

UC has the money, should stop using state budget excuse

On the day of UPTe’s statewide actions, UC’s regents will meet in Riverside to discuss ways to deal with the state’s budget cuts, which at approximately \$400 million for a two-year budget, were rather modest compared to other state agencies.

“Even aside from the issue of high executive salaries, UC has operating revenues of over \$19 billion per year, so this represents a loss in funding of less than 1.2%,” said Rooney. “Overall, this is a very small dent.”

In its most recent budget report, UC lists assets of over \$6 billion in cash and short-term investments. “UC clearly has enough money in reserve to support its obligations to provide fair wages to hard-working employees,” said Rooney. “There is reason to think UC’s overall funding will increase, because the federal stimulus bill contains billions in increases for medical and other scientific research, a good portion of which will end up in UC research facilities.”

“UC can clearly afford to support the basic needs of its employees and students,” said UPTe-CWA member Michele Hammond, a researcher at UCB. “If the university doesn’t want to use its existing funding, how about reducing the salaries of the 400 highest paid executives even further by 50%, which would yield savings of up to \$60 million a year?”

“Research and education are key elements in creating jobs and renewing California’s economy,” said Hammond. “We’ve seen a new push from the Obama administration in strengthening these areas as part of a national economic recovery. It makes no sense for UC to be underfunding them in favor of compensating highly-paid administrators.”

Over 200 UC faculty have signed letters of support for UPTe’s technical employees and researchers. State legislators Leland Yee (D-SF), Anthony Portantino (D-Pasadena) and Alberto Torrico (D-Fremont) also back the union’s demands for fair wages and a contract. UPTe also has the ongoing support of the UC Union Coalition, which represents some 80,000 workers at UC.

(Please note: figures on executive pay follow)