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University Professional
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U.P.D.A.T.E

More reorganizations from UC, more organizing by UPTE's administrative professional activists

News of two large reorganizations at UC, one systemwide and one local, broke this month.

In the first, systemwide UC management has announced that starting in July 2013, UC Riverside will be the location of a new "shared services center" to consolidate many finance, HR, IT, and

research support functions across the UC system.

Operations at campuses will be transferred to Riverside, and UC is projecting \$100 million in reductions across the system, affecting large numbers of employees across the state. The center will "require fewer positions" than now exist, say UC officials, adding that "affected employees will have the option of applying for jobs at the UC-Path Center" and to consider new "opportunities that may emerge."

In the second case, UC Berkeley library management is surveying students, faculty and staff about the campus' multi-faceted and world-renowned library system, in preparation for a massive reorganization which could close entire libraries and dramatically cut services.

While layoffs in the library system are not under consideration at this time, staff say many of the proposed changes don't make sense and could cost much more than they save. Over the last year, Berkeley's students, staff and

faculty have responded to library service changes with a series of protests and occupations.

Protecting our rights

These are just two examples of the challenges facing UC employees, and many of those on the front lines are UC's 16,000 administrative professionals (APs) who do not yet have the protection of a union contract.

"With union representation, we'd have a strong voice in any reorganization process," noted Susan Orlofsky, a UCSD administrative professional. Union representation allows affected employees to share information, discuss their concerns, and evaluate their situation with the experience of the union.

While most workers may not have gone through a reorganization, this isn't the first one the union has dealt with and it won't be the last.

"Experienced union representatives know what was tried before, what works and what to avoid," said Elizabeth Wilks, an AP at UCSB, who also serves as UPTE's systemwide treasurer. "They can advise employees based on expertise and knowledge. The union has the power to demand meetings with management and challenge actions that are detrimental or simply boneheaded."

The union asks questions such as: Who will be affected? What happens to their workloads and quality of worklife? Do such massive consolidations make sense, and will there really be savings or improved services? What

does the systemwide consolidation mean for the employees currently in those operations at the campuses? What alternatives to layoffs are there, and how hard will UC try to make those alternatives work? Will employees have choices when reorganizations go through?

And these are just for starters. "The list of concerns is long and will only get longer," added Orlofsky.

Especially important in situations such as this is that the union can demand – and UC must legally provide – information in response to its questions. "We are all aware that management generally knows more than it reveals," said Orlofsky.

Information employees receive is often only a fragment of the total picture – many times, people don't even know what questions to ask. "The union can help formulate the questions and compel responses," said Wilks. "But most important, the union can help change the outcome. We don't just have to sit there," she said, "we can do something about it."

For APs, the first step is to sign a card supporting UPTE representation. Check UPTE's webpage to see a list of titles that are eligible <www.APsforUPTE.org>. If you've already signed, ask one or two coworkers to sign. The cards will be given to the state's labor board, which will hold a secret ballot election in which all eligible employees will have a vote.

"We're coming down to the wire," said Wilks. "If APs are to gain protections, it needs to happen soon."

APS: SIGN YOUR SUPPORT FOR UPTE HERE:
<WWW.APSFORUPTE.ORG>



UPTE-represented health care professionals sign letters to UC officials during May 1 actions demanding to bargain on any pension changes.

Faculty at 3 California community colleges vote to join UPTE-CWA

Union-represented faculty at three community college campuses recently voted overwhelmingly to join UPTE-CWA.

Twelve hundred part-time faculty at Butte Community College in Chico, College of the Sequoias in Visalia and Mount San Jacinto Community College were previously part of CWA Local 9414, which supported their transition into UPTE-CWA, a local with many similar higher education members.

The part-time faculty members at these colleges face challenges such as insufficient work, no health care and little job security. "They are paid an hourly rate to teach classes, but are often hired for only one or two classes, resulting in the need to find other work to support themselves," said Mitch Crooks.

"Some are what has come to be known as 'freeway flyers' who commute hundreds of miles a day teaching classes at different colleges," added Crooks. Such work-

ers make up a large proportion of the academic contingent workforce in the US.

The community colleges feel the state budget crisis even more acutely than UC, because they are more dependent on state funding. These three colleges provide the essential functions of academic teaching and vocational training for tens of thousands of students.

Many of their students are the first in their family to attend a college. The colleges offer a unique opportunity out of poverty for communities with limited options.

UPTE looks forward to collaborating with

these part-time faculty members. "We will learn much more about the struggle for affordable quality education as we work for adequate state funding," said Jelger Kalmijn, UPTE's president and a staff research associate at UCSD.

UC Berkeley students and staff demonstrating this spring in support of public higher education.



Tanya Smith, photo

UPTE LOCALS

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Irvine:

(949) 854-UPTE

LBNL:

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Livermore/SPSE:

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Los Alamos:

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Los Angeles:

(310) 443-5484

Merced:

(510) 848-UPTE

Riverside:

(951) 781-7922

San Diego:

(858) 458-0845

San Francisco:

(415) 753-UPTE

Santa Barbara:

(805) 685-3661

Santa Cruz:

(831) 429-UPTE

Organizing for fairness

UPTE's health care professionals and their supporters demonstrated around the state on May 1, sending a strong message that they want a place at the pension bargaining table next year with UC's other unionized workers. At right, UPTE members at the UCLA medical center.



Aaron Rosenfield, photo

Using your purchasing power

Given our lagging pay at UC, the last thing you may be thinking about is shopping.

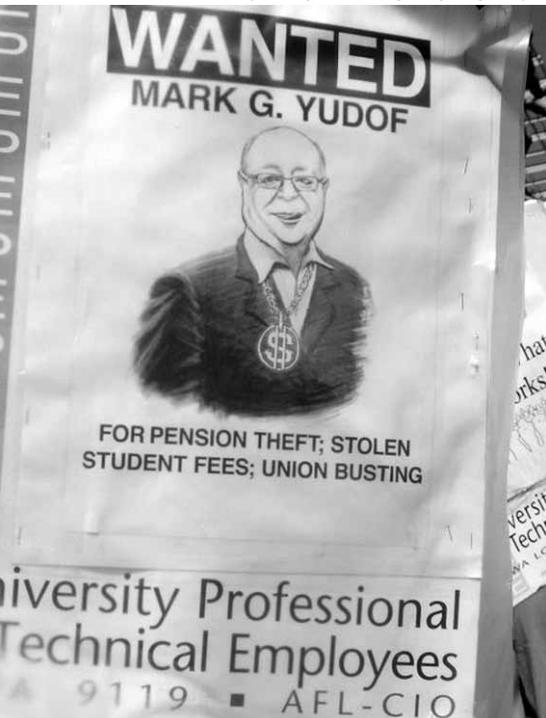
But just in case you are, we thought we'd share this resource. Surveys have repeatedly shown that Americans are eager to show their support for workers by purchasing union-made products and services. But many also say that buying union is easier said than done – simply because they don't know which products make the cut.

The nonprofit group American Rights at Work has set out to change that with their online resource, Union Shop!

Each week, the site features a new union-made product or service. You can find out which union is responsible for the product and where to buy it.

Check out Union Shop when you get the urge to spend at americanrightsatwork.org/blog/unionshop.

One of the creative picket signs that appeared on the UC Berkeley campus during a spring rally.



The central principle in health care professional negotiations: UNITY!

UC's medical centers and their executives are raking in the profits, but are holding health care professionals' (HX unit) wages hostage in an attempt to force us into a multi-year contract with an inferior two-tier pension and dramatically reduced retiree health care benefits.

"We want a fair one-year increase," said HX bargaining Wendi Felson, a retired UCSF clinical lab scientist who heads UPTE's bargaining team. "The UC medical centers reported \$843 million in profits last year, and their CEOs have been getting raises of 21-67%. There is no excuse for UC's intransigence on this issue."

There are 3,000 HX employees in the UC system. UPTE HX negotiators has sought a contract that allows them to bargain any pension and retiree health care changes next year, with their 30,000 UC colleagues in UPTE's research & technical units, AFSCME and CNA. That bargaining is scheduled for next year. "We are stronger together," said Felson.

Since wages, like pensions and health benefits, are a component of overall compensation, UPTE can't negotiate one without being able to negotiate the other. That's why the union has sought a one-year agreement that does not lock up wage rates past July 1, 2013.

On May 1, members of the three unions brought bargaining demands and a plate of "crumbs" to their medical center CEOs to make a point: "We want more than crumbs for our work making UC a leading teaching and research institution," said Felson.

May 1 is the anniversary of International Labor Day, a fitting time for union members to insist that they will not accept UC's proposals for inferior two-tier pensions and reduced retiree health benefits. If UC's proposals go through, the second tier for retiree health benefits would affect half of current UC employees. The second tier for pensions would apply to those hired after July 1, 2013, but have an impact on us all, as UC divides the work force.

Even worse, said Felson, the medical centers "have gone one step further than UC Office of the President, proposing that new employees be put on a 401k-style defined contribution retirement plan *instead* of the defined benefit plan we currently enjoy."

"UC administrators must understand that we all care about our retirement benefits and costs, even if we don't plan to retire from UC any time soon," noted UPTE's president, Jelger Kalmijn, who works as a researcher at UCSD.



TX/RX: safeguarding health benefits

What does it mean to "have a voice" in the terms and conditions of our employment? Does having a union contract really make a difference? Recent negotiations in the TX and RX units show that it does.

The contract protects us from UC unilaterally imposing changes. Earlier this year, when UC management wanted to impose an additional pay cut to fund the pension plan, the law required them to bargain the change for UPTE-represented technical and research (TX/RX) employees.

"In return for UPTE-represented workers agreeing to pay an additional 0.5% for two years," said UPTE's president Jelger Kalmijn, a researcher at UCSD, "we set up committees with UC to get more input on our health benefits, retiree health benefits and our pensions."

The committees set up as a result of

this bargaining have more access and input to UC's decision-making process for our health benefits than we have ever had before. UPTE representatives have had a chance to review and comment on the benefits plans that UC puts out to the health insurance companies to bid on, and later this year, we will assess the results. UPTE also forced UC to pay each TX/RX member \$100 to make up for pension payments lost while the university's team stalled bargaining.

The UPTE committee reviewing retiree health benefits will make a proposal for how to

pre-fund our retiree health benefits so that there is a fund like the pension fund that can be invested and set aside to cover our future benefits. Under the current system, UC pays for retiree health benefits out of current income. With ever-tighter budgets, the trend to cut retiree benefits or reduce the employer contribution is likely to continue, because current income continues to decline with respect to UC's growing student population and many programs.

Under the current UPTE contract for RX/TX workers, we are in the third year of three 5% annual pay increases, plus step increases if eligible. This reasonable three-year wage package negotiated in 2010 exceeded or equaled those of all other employees at the university, except of course the UC executives who continue to line their own pockets with exorbitantly high pay rates.

UPTE's RX and TX workers are looking ahead to the negotiation of their next contract starting later this year.

Becoming a health and safety steward

In March 2012, UPTE dedicated its research (RX) and technical (TX) unit contracts to Sheharbano “Sheri” Sangji (11/2/85 – 1/16/09), a UCLA staff research associate who was fatally burned in a UCLA chemistry lab fire at the end of 2008, during her 11th week on the job. (After three earlier delays, the UC regents, UCLA, and Sheri’s boss, chemistry professor Patrick Harran, will be called to account on June 7 in Los Angeles Superior Court for labor code violations that led to her death.)

Sheri’s death was a large motivating factor in getting UC to agree to important changes that allow UPTE-CWA to significantly address health and safety issues for our members.

If you are an RX or TX employee and have received your contract but not yet received the dedication sticker, please contact your UPTE local to get one. When you do that, ask if your local has a health and safety committee and which member heads it. If there is no committee and you care about any aspect of health and safety, consider becoming an UPTE health and safety steward and start to work with a small but dedicated team of members throughout UC who focus on hazards related to safety, health, and working conditions.

Everyone should be able to return home from work no worse off than when they left home. Workers everywhere face a range of hazards, some immediately life-threatening and some whose tolls accumulate over time. University staff are hardly immune.

and work with UC, to prevent injuries and illnesses and promote workplace health on a broader level.

UPTE health and safety stewards have guaranteed access to members, work areas, information, and meetings with management and UC EH&S specialists. Like all stewards, they are allowed up to 10 hours per month of paid release time to conduct this business. Pending UC approval, full-time employees may be able to take up to 40 hours of paid release time for job-related training per year.

Present members of the systemwide committee have largely learned on the job, while addressing issues, and have a number of resources and contacts to train new stewards. These include grants to provide training certified by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Department of Energy. – *Joan Lichterman, UPTE’s health and safety director*

April showers bring May activism

May 2012 was a busy month for those fighting to preserve quality, affordable higher education. It kicked off with May 1 actions by unions at UC systemwide to fight UC’s two-tier pension proposals and demand fair contracts.

With the UC regents announcing that they’ll decide in July on yet more fee hikes, leaders of the University of California Student Association are gearing up for another fight. “We won’t stand for it,” declared UCSA president Claudia Magaña. “Students can’t take on the burden any longer.”

Faculty at the CSU system voted to

authorize a strike for the fall after almost two years of contract negotiations. “Faculty don’t want to strike, but they will if that is what it takes to protect our system,” said Lillian Taiz, CFA president and a professor of history at Cal State Los Angeles.

The CFA wants smaller class sizes, better job security, academic freedom, and a small pay increase. A strike by the CFA would be the largest among faculty in US history.

The corporatization of California’s higher education system was ably illustrated by the CSU trustees, who had come under fire after handing the incoming president of San Diego State University a 34% pay increase, or \$100,000, over the outgoing president. On the same day, they approved a 12% student fee increase. Last week, the CSU trustees voted to allow increases greater than 10% for executives, if the excess were paid from “non-public” CSU foundations.

Administrative professionals speak out

UC’s 16,000 administrative professionals are in the middle of an organizing campaign for UPTE-CWA representation. “Thousands have signed cards in support of UPTE, as we come down to the wire in our drive to win better protections and fair compensation,” said Keith Pavlik, a senior publications coordinator at UCSF. Below, we reprint just a few of those from around the state who are speaking out on the issues.

“UCR employees are dedicated to their jobs and are hard-working individuals. We need to have the same type of union working for us.” – **Monica Wicker, Analyst III, UCR**

“We need to ensure equity and fair play.” – **Christine Camicia and Sandy Ewart Ashley, Budget Analysts, UCSC**

“We support UPTE because we need representation to protect our salaries, pension, and other benefits.” – **Lance Yamada, Programmer Analyst III, UCSD**

“Plain and simple – it’s in our best interests, as administrative professionals, to have a seat at the table. It’s good for us, for students, and for the university.” – **David Maldonado, Student Affairs Officer III, UCLA**

“I support administrative professionals seeking UPTE representation because we get overlooked for raises; overworked for project completion; over-utilized for salary reduction (furloughs); overcharged for retirement contributions and under-supported during staff shortages. I made my pledge!” – **Lisa Thomas, Student Affairs Officer II, UCD**

“Being represented by a union would give me the peace of mind that I have a group of people working to protect my rights as a worker; in the meantime, I can fully concentrate on helping the students I serve.” – **Juan Villegas, Admissions Officer, UC Merced**

“I support UPTE because I believe in the mission of UC, and believe that to ensure the continuation of quality education and support to students and the state of California we need to protect those that provide it. UPTE does this.” – **Lindsey Low, Public Administration Analyst, UCLA**

To sign a card supporting UPTE, see <www.APsforUPTE.org>, or call your UPTE local.

Administrative professionals quoted above, from left to right below: Monica Wicker (UCR), Christine Camicia and Sandy Ewart Ashley (UCSC), Lance Yamada (UCSD), David Maldonado (UCLA), Lisa Thomas (UCD), Juan Villegas (UC Merced), Lindsey Low (UCLA).



Besides exposure to “everyday” hazards – potential trips and falls, ergonomic hazards that lead to chronic back or nerve pain, air quality issues that lead to or worsen asthma and other respiratory problems, noise that can lead to hearing loss – some of our members are exposed to infectious agents or chemicals that have serious immediate or cumulative effects on our bodies and may lead to cancer and other serious conditions.

Stress is one of the hazards we usually don’t think about as a health and safety issue. However, it contributes to a number of conditions and diseases, such as heart disease, chronic fatigue, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, high blood pressure, eating disorders, peptic ulcers, poor immune function, chronic pain, viral infection, headaches, alcoholism, and smoking-related respiratory ailments.

By using changes to our contract, UPTE members should be able to work together,

Survey results show effects of budget cuts

Cuts to UC aren’t only affecting students – financial troubles also are driving what could become a major exodus of skilled professional staff in the coming years. A recent online survey that UPTE commissioned from a professional survey firm shows that among a non-scientific sample of more than 1,200 UC administrative professionals, 83% agreed that “students are suffering as a result of understaffing,” 74% agree that UC’s “core missions are at risk,” and 80% agree that UC “is losing many of its best people due to lagging wages and benefits.” Nearly 70% said they had thought seriously about leaving UC.

Survey respondents said they remain proud of UC and committed to its mission, but many said excessive workloads and lagging compensation made it difficult to picture a long-term future at their jobs. “I just want my work to be valued,” said one respondent. “Taking side jobs with a master’s degree is unreasonable... but very real for many of us here at UC.”

“I’m worried about continued increases in the amount I pay for retirement and health insurances causing my net pay to go down, down, down,” wrote another.

“Clearly, if UC wants to keep these staff members, something has to change,” said Keith Pavlik, a senior publications coordinator at UCSF. “Union representation will help us improve pay and protect benefits – and by working together, we can also fight for stable funding to preserve UC.”

The administrative professionals who answered the survey include student advisors, tutors, library professionals, computer programmers, project and financial analysts, accountants, research project managers, writers, editors and others.

Where's the real waste in California's budget?

One billion dollars. That's how much California gives away every year to big corporations, thanks to a wasteful tax loophole that actually incentivizes companies to close up shop in California and move those jobs elsewhere.

Makes no sense, except for the companies using the loophole while profiting from selling their products here in the nation's largest consumer market. You wouldn't even have voted to pass such a mind-boggling law. But then you aren't a member of the California Legislature – especially a Republican who believes that any corporate tax loophole is good, any loophole closure is an evil tax increase.

Well, yes, closing the loophole would raise taxes for some out-of-state outfits – but only to the level already paid by California companies that hire and invest here heavily, and contribute substantially to our economy.

As if a billion-dollar giveaway to out-of-state corporations isn't bad enough, this "single sales factor" loophole is just one of several corporate tax breaks California is wasting big money on, while at the same time slashing funding for schools, health care, public safety, vital services, assistance for the poor, roads, bridges, parks and just about everything else that makes California a great place to live and work.

While the rest of us are struggling in the face of high unemployment and draconian budget cuts, corporations are actually being paid to shed California jobs, and it's all thanks to their high-powered corporate lobbyists in Sacramento who know just how to sneak these loopholes into budget negotiations. In addition to the "single sales factor" loophole, corporations also benefit hugely from the "enterprise zone" tax loop-

hole, which doles out \$37,000 to employers for every worker they fire and replace in a "targeted" part of the state. According to the California Budget Project, enterprise zones have cost the state \$3.6 billion since the program began – that's money that could have gone to funding schools, rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, keeping firefighters and other public safety workers on the job. It's almost overwhelming to think about the cuts that could have been avoided if not for these excessive and abusive tax breaks.

With California's unemployment hovering around 11%, we ought to be investing in creating jobs, not rewarding companies that lay off hard-working Californians for no other reason except to boost their bottom line. That's why Governor Jerry Brown has voiced his strong opposition to enterprise zones and other wasteful tax breaks for corporations.

The governor isn't alone on this. Economists, legislators, labor unions and working families have been fighting for years to expose the fraud and abuse in our state's corporate tax loopholes. Even some members of the 1% recognize the need to close these loopholes.

That's why closing these tax loopholes is a top priority and integral part of the California Labor Federation's "Invest in California" jobs plan. Because that's where the waste, fraud and abuse in our budget really lies, and it's time to put a stop to it. — *Rebecca Band, California Labor Federation*

CWA activists work to recall WI governor

With Wisconsin's recall election around the corner, members of UPTE's national union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), have been working around the clock to get Republican Governor Scott Walker out of office.

Walker pushed through anti-worker



Union members at Livermore holding a copy of their National Labor Relations Board win.

Illegally laid-off Livermore lab workers look ahead to October trial

When a consortium led by Bechtel took over operations of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2007, it was hailed as the means to move the lab "to industrial standards and capitalize on private sector expertise." The standards it moved to, however, were among the worst private enterprise had to offer.

Soon after the merger, and despite a promise to retain existing workers, LLNL laid off waves of workers from its 7,000-member workforce – 440 permanent workers, most of whom had been with LLNL for years. Most of them were over the age of 40.

Discrimination lawsuit follows union victory on layoffs

One hundred and thirty workers filed suit for discrimination, and their lawsuit has been scheduled for hearing in October 2012. Marian Barraza, for instance, will be one of the first five plaintiffs to be heard in court. She worked more than 38 years at the lab as a purchasing specialist, in a office of five. When the layoffs were issued, the two oldest and most experienced employees, including Barraza, were laid off, and their duties redistributed to younger workers.

UPTE's affiliate at LLNL, the Society of Professional Scientists and Engineers, late last year won a victory when the National Labor Relations Board ordered the reinstatement of 9 other workers who had been illegally laid off after management refused to bargain with the union (see photo above).

measures in Wisconsin's Legislature last year, stripping public employees of their bargaining rights. He was confronted by hundreds of thousands of protestors in the capitol, Madison. A coalition of union and community groups has been working on recalling him since then.

"It's a civil war here," said Lindy McGraw of CWA Local 4630, who devotes 10 hours a week to the recall effort. "I just hope that people see the light."

McGraw and members of her local women's committee have been helping out wherever they're needed, from data entry to educating people about Walker's anti-worker, anti-family budget. Every weekday at noon, they join the Solidarity Sing-Along for a singing protest at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

Getting out the vote

CWA is doing phone-banking to union members around the state.

"We're telling union households to get out the vote and educating members about the legislative climate," said Mark Frey of CWA Local 4630. "It's a very powerful tool."

The recall election — scheduled for June 5 — will be a rematch between Walker and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, who won Tuesday's primary to become the Democratic Party's nominee. Polls show the race is currently tied.

British workers strike over pensions

Paralleling the assault on workers' wages and benefits in this country, the British government announced changes to the state pension system that would force workers to retire later and pay significantly more toward their pensions as a way of reducing government deficits.

The proposed changes affect hundreds of thousands of public sector workers, who have already had their salaries frozen and may face rounds of job losses under the government's austerity plan.

More than 200,000 public sector workers took part in a 24-hour strike on May 10 to protest the government's plans and the refusal of government negotiators to bargain with the public sector unions.

This was the third one-day strike in the past year and followed a strike by 1.5 million workers in November last year, the largest strike Britain has seen in decades.

Among those participating in the strike were immigrations and customs officials, train operators, police, prison officials, university workers, and civil service employees. Even National Health Service doctors, who are represented by the British Medical Association and who will see their pension deductions climb to more than 14% under the reforms, have been voting on whether to take their own "industrial action," the first since 1975.

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