



Santa Cruz Faculty Association / American Association of University Professors  
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President Mark Yudof and UC Regents  
University Of California  
1201 Franklin  
Oakland, CA 94612

February 3, 2011

Dear President Yudof and Members of the Board of Regents:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Santa Cruz Faculty Association, the bargaining agent for the Academic Senate faculty at UCSC. We are writing to urge you to negotiate in good faith with the Coalition of University Employees (CUE-Teamsters), which, as you know, has been seeking a contract with the University since 2008. Aside from the issues of justice and equity for the CUE members, we are concerned that the University's failure to reach an agreement with CUE has a substantively negative impact on UC's reputation and its ability to deliver a high-quality education.

First, the equity issues are obvious. Virtually all other unions, and many unrepresented employees, have been able to come to agreement with the University administration during this financially difficult period. Many of the other unions have negotiated significant compensation increases. CUE has been ignored. CUE believes that this shows bad faith on the part of the University, and this may legally be the case.

Our point here, however, is not a legal one but an ethical and substantive one. Why has CUE been ignored when others have been able to reach agreement? Why is it acceptable for University employees in CUE, who typically have multiple skills and responsibilities, to be paid much less than their counterparts in the city and state bureaucracies, who often have fewer skills and less responsibility? Why is Santa Cruz, among others, still designated a "rural" campus even though the housing prices and cost of living here are comparable to those in Berkeley? As a result of this injustice, CUE members and other skilled secretarial staff are seeking employment elsewhere. When the economy picks up, this trend will be exacerbated. It is wrong for our skilled and valuable staff to suffer financially for the privilege of contributing directly to the University's most important mission: support of the faculty and students who are its *raison d'être*.

Second, failure to recruit and maintain skilled staff harms the students and faculty, who are the heart of the University, as well as individual CUE members. For several years, more and more petty detail work has been "offloaded" onto faculty who are obliged to do it because the staff

numers have been thinned out or are overburdened. This workload shift constitutes a distraction from our efforts to continue doing high-quality teaching and writing. This University's high reputation has been, in the past, based on the fact that faculty have provided a first-class education to students and done first-class research, and we would think that a University Administration that understood its own long-term interests would understand that fact and would do everything possible to facilitate and encourage necessary support of teaching and research. Competitive salaries are only one part of recruiting and retaining faculty: having the support staff to help us do our work and negotiate the University bureaucracy contributes significantly to job satisfaction and productivity.

A demoralized and thinned-out staff is bad for the students, as well. Obviously, they suffer if there is inadequate help and guidance negotiating requirements and the bureaucracy, and floundering and frustration takes time and energy from their academic work and from the jobs that many have taken on –far too many hours, in the opinion of many faculty—that they are obliged to work to pay for their education, a situation made worse by the fee increases of previous years.

We recognize that the University functions systemically. All its parts are connected, and the CUE issue is an expression as well as a cause of some of the difficulties we find ourselves in right now. The University administration could make a substantive gesture to reward rather than to punish and ignore its hard-working, skilled, and public-spirited employees in CUE, and it would have a good ripple effect throughout the system.

Finally, the discrepancy between the administration's treatment of its highest-paid employees, on the one hand, and its lower-paid employees, on the other, is deeply troubling to the citizens of California, to the Legislature, and to the people who ought to be your main constituents and supporters: the faculty, staff, and students of the University you are charged with leading. Recent bad publicity about executive compensation, particularly when juxtaposed against the struggles of the people who do the learning, teaching, research, and support of the direct academic mission of the University, is deeply undermining public confidence in your Administration and in the UC Regents, which translates into an undermining of confidence in the University. This, in turn, threatens the direct academic mission of the University, toward which the faculty feels a tremendous responsibility. We urge you to consider that stonewalling a union, as you appear to be doing CUE, does not translate into a clear "win" for the University. It would be excellent, therefore, if you instructed your lawyers that the University's "winning" against unions or stonewalling unions, including ours (the SCFA has a pending ULP, you may know, and a brilliant solution for settling, but so far to no avail) in the short term does not mean that the University will thrive over the long term, and even in the short term.

The SCFA urges you, therefore, to do what is best for the entire system. That includes negotiating a fair and rapid settlement with CUE.

Cordially,

Shelly Errington  
Chair of the Executive Board  
Santa Cruz Faculty Association