

What Did the UCLA Faculty Association Do For Me in 2004-2005?

FALL, 2004

ISSUES

Faculty Salaries

The FA at UCLA published a newsletter on the subject of faculty salaries in the fall of 2004, analyzing UC salaries in terms of the change in CPI over the past ten years; the CPEC (California Post Secondary Education Commission) methodology, a formula for determining a fair salary increase for UCLA faculty based on the increases awarded to faculty at peer institutions; and the continued unfair practice of delaying any salary increases three months to October 1. UC's current budgetary priorities do not place faculty salary increases high even though CPEC has calculated that UC faculty salaries have fallen to 14% below those of peer institutions. In addition, UC is continuing its practice of using funds allocated for faculty salary increases for off-scale increases for the purposes of recruitment and retention instead of range increases for ladder faculty.

(www.uclafaculty.org/Newsletters/Jan2005.htm and www.uclafaculty.org/Newsletters/cpec_methodology.htm).

Grade Inflation

The UCLA FA invited Professor Valen Johnson, U of Texas, Houston and author of *Grade Inflation: A Crisis in Higher Education*, to come to UCLA on Friday, April 15, 2005 and speak to faculty about his research on this important topic. Johnson believes that grade inflation hurts students who do not discover their true strengths and weaknesses in the fog of grade inflation and hurts teachers who are prevented from acknowledging the true level of achievement of students. Johnson bases his conclusions on an experiment he conducted at Duke University in which students evaluated courses online and then selected courses for the next quarter for which they could see the grade distributions of those courses in past years. In one case a group of freshmen evaluated courses before receiving their grade and again after; the change in their evaluations demonstrated the influence of the grade on their perceptions of the teacher, the material they learned, and the overall success of the class. They also tended to select courses with the highest past grade distribution. (www.uclafaculty.org/Newsletters/grinfl.htm).

WINTER-SPRING, 2005

LOBBYING

UCLA Faculty Association Launched a Statewide Pension Reform Initiative

Governor Schwarzenegger and several members of the state legislature tried to pass legislation that would eliminate Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans for all new public employees in California in favor of Defined Contribution pension plans. UC lobbied unsuccessfully to eliminate UC from this pension reform because of the success of the DB UCRP pension plan and the effective oversight of the plan by the Regents. The UCLA FA then proposed a similar pension plan to what the Governor and legislators wanted but eliminated UC. The FA was opposed to pension reform for UC because the upper limit of the employer's contribution in most public agencies would be 6%, a limit that would, if imposed on UC, make its pension plan uncompetitive with its peer institutions. Pressure from the FA's statewide initiative helped persuade Governor Schwarzenegger to back off his plan to privatize California's public employee pension system. (www.uclafaculty.org/Newsletters/FAInitDis.htm). For the wording of the FA Initiative see www.uclafaculty.org/Newsletters/fainit.htm.

FA Invited CA Senator Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles, to Speak with Faculty

The UCLA Faculty Association invited Senator Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles to the campus to meet with the faculty and emeriti on Friday, May 20, 2005. She discussed the issue of lobbying and the image of UC in Sacramento. She said that in general, UC did a good job of presenting its issues to legislators in a favorable light. The high quality of the University is a powerful argument to gain support in Sacramento. When legislators travel, many people have questions about California and the economic contributions of UC to the state. For example, Kuehl has had questions about the California wine industry from people who know about wine research at UC Davis. Legislators want to know UC contributes to the economic greater good in California in sciences, medicine, economics, business school, and mathematics. A practical message about economic success resonates with state legislators.

Kuehl also discussed her healthcare bill, the CA Health Insurance Reliability Act of 2005 (CHIRA), "Affordable Health Insurance for All Californians." According to Kuehl, CHIRA would provide fiscally sound, affordable health insurance coverage to all Californians, provide the right for them to choose his or her own physician, and control health cost inflation. The concept eliminates waste by consolidating the functions of many insurance companies into one comprehensive insurance plan, saving the state and consumers billions of dollars each year. Under CHIRA, California could use its huge purchasing power to buy prescription drugs and durable medical equipment in bulk.

