

Letter From Chair Newbrun

CUCEA Meeting October 2011, UC Davis

First I wish to thank all the CUCEA officers, but especially Louise Taylor, Information Officer, Marjorie Caserio, Web Manager and Newsletter Editor, and Doug Morgan, our Vice Chair, without whose advice, help and support I could not manage. Also Marian Gade, chair and Lee Duffus, vice chair, of CUCRA who have been pillars of strength as we work to preserve our retirement benefits and our status within the University of California. Secondly we are much indebted to Sue Barnes, Program manager at UC Davis Retiree Center, Bill Rains, president of UC Davis Emeriti Association, Ted Hillyer of UCD Retirees Association, Charley Hess and the local organizing committee for their hard work in ensuring this meeting runs smoothly and productively.

There are two issues that wish to address this afternoon:

- 1) concerns the University of California in general,
- 2) concerns the relationship of emeriti & retiree associations to UC

In both my message at our April CUCEA meeting and in the CUCEA Newsletter that you all received when you came here, I expressed my serious concern over the future of the University of California resulting from the State's inability to sustain support for higher education. Two score and ten years ago when I came as a graduate student to California, the attraction was that UC was the best public university system in the U.S.A., bar none. At that time, in 1961, undergraduate students paid a nominal amount of student service fees for athletics and the gym and for student health coverage, but their education was free. Those days are long gone, the sad thing is that UCOP's response to the recent draconian budgetary cuts by the State has been to view students and/or their parents as a cash cow from whom they can wring ever increasing tuition in an effort to balance the university budget. The Academic Senate has gone along with this policy of exorbitant increases in tuition; rather than opposing such measures, when asked to jump their response has been "how high?" One would like to think that the Senate agreed in order to preserve the UC's premier standing, but perhaps its members are motivated by self-interest in preserving their salaries. Without a firm commitment of State financial support we are unable to recruit the best and brightest young faculty. Over time we will lose our status of being "the best" public university. I do not have a solution to this dilemma; I do know that we have passed the tipping point of being a public university when student tuition fees of \$2.8 billion exceed the \$2.4 billion amount of state support.

The second issue concerns the relationship of emeriti and retiree associations to UC. We were surprised to learn at our last meeting that we lacked liability insurance and legally we were not really entitled to use the UC designation for our organization and campus associations. Accordingly we proceeded to try to remedy this problem by drafting Regents Policy 5204 that would grant us official UC status and liability insurance coverage, analogous to that enjoyed by UC alumni associations. In June we submitted this Policy to President Yudoff with a request to transmit it to the Regents for approval.

We expected plane sailing, as this Policy was little different from Regents Policy 5203 that had been approved to include UC alumni associations. To quote Bobby Burns: "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft a-gley." (The best laid schemes of mice and men / Go oft awry.) The Chairs of the Academic Senate and UCFW objected to one paragraph that would have entitled emeriti to be represented on Senate committees addressing benefits and related issues. The committee chairs consider that is a matter for Senate determination and should not be directed by Regental policy. We subsequently modified the wording of our request to the Regents to satisfy these objections from UCFW and Academic Senate chairs. However they still insisted on going back to their campus committees (it's called covering your backside). This has delayed the issue from going to the Regents' September meeting and has now been scheduled, as best as I can determine, for the November meeting. Until such time neither UC emeriti nor retiree organizations are covered by UC liability

insurance nor are we officially recognized by UC. So please be very careful driving or flying home from this meeting.

The fact that the Senate was not asked to review the policy before it was sent to the President may have been a reason for finding fault with the policy. Currently CUCEA is represented, ex officio, by its Chair on statewide UCFW; similarly at each campus emeriti serve on the campus faculty welfare committees, albeit the Academic Senate selects them. I consider the whole issue a storm in a teacup, but it has consumed a considerable portion of my time.

Ernest Newbrun

CUCEA Chair, 2010-2012