Bargaining Update 7: UC, Nurses’ Union discuss benefits, workplace safety

UC and the California Nurses Association held further contract negotiations July 25-26, 2013, talking extensively about key issues such as health benefits and post-employment benefits.

In addition to providing employees with excellent health benefits while they work at UC, the university also works hard to offer quality post-employment benefits upon retirement including retiree health benefits and a traditional pension plan.

The university and CNA remain far apart on the key issue of post-employment benefits.

Like many other employers, including the state of California, UC is enacting responsible pension reforms that enable the university to continue offering financially sustainable retirement benefits over the long term.

UC’s reasonable proposal calls for, effective July 1, 2013:

- **Employees hired before July 1, 2013**: UC would contribute 12 percent of pay to the pension, up from 10 percent now. Employees would contribute 6.5 percent, up from 5 percent now.
- **Employees hired after July 1, 2013**: Employees hired on or after July 1 would receive slightly modified pension benefits, and contribute 7 percent of pay. UC would contribute 12 percent of pay.
- Revised eligibility rules for retiree health care

Even with these changes, UC’s retirement benefits compare favorably to those offered by most other employers. Many private companies and some public organizations do not offer a pension plan and very few offer retiree health benefits.
These reforms already apply to the general UC employee population, including faculty and non-represented staff. Unions representing 14 bargaining units also have agreed to this approach.

During the two-day bargaining session at UC San Diego Medical Center, the university and union reached tentative agreement on contract terms for work-incurred injuries and illness, and medical separations. And the university presented its proposal on workplace health and safety.

Although the current contract expired on June 30, 2013, the university is firmly committed to continuing good faith negotiations that will lead to a fair contract that rewards nurses for their skill and protects the quality of UC’s patient care.

The next bargaining session is Aug. 6-9, 2013 in Oakland.