Bargaining Update 8: UC stresses fair compensation and reasonable pension reform

UC stressed with the California Nurses Association on Aug. 6-8, 2013 the need to reach a fair contract for more than 11,000 nurses that includes competitive compensation and reasonable pension changes that allow the university to continue offering sustainable retirement benefits over the long term.

UC has offered CNA continued step increases for all eligible nurses and annual wage increases of 1 percent to 3 percent for medical center nurses, based on salary survey data on the prevailing wages in each location's market.

UC's pension reform proposal calls for:

- 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

To date, CNA has refused to engage in substantive negotiations over responsible and necessary pension reform. CNA has not accepted UC's pension proposal, or two other alternatives the university developed to move talks forward.

Instead, CNA seeks to have its members pay less than their colleagues for pension benefits. UC believes this is unfair to other employees. On Aug. 8, UC encouraged the union to make a proposal that could lead to an agreement.

UC's proposed changes 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.
Even with the pension changes, it’s important to note that 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. UC offers both.

Also during the three-day session, the university and union exchanged proposals on bargaining unit classifications, educational/professional development and corrective action, discipline and discharge.

The next bargaining session is Aug. 21-23 and is tentatively scheduled for UC Irvine.