Nurse Bargaining: Setting the Record Straight

A recent bargaining alert published by the California Nurses Association (CNA) on September 17, 2010, contained a number of misstatements regarding the University’s bargaining proposals. So that Health System nurses have accurate information, the following summary of corrections is provided. A copy of UC’s complete response to CNA (including CNA’s bargaining alert) is attached to this email.

Misstatement #1: “3% Pay Cut to Fund UCRP”: False. There is no proposed pay cut for nurses.

Misstatement #2: “UC is considering … reducing the pension formula that could result in a 30% or more decrease in retirement”: The University is proposing no changes in pension benefits for current employees – nor for employees hired before July 1, 2013 (other than proposing increased UCRP contributions). Further, UC is not proposing any decrease in the level of accrued, vested retirement benefits for nurses.

Misstatement #3: “UC is also considering 401Ks instead of pension for medical center employees”: The University is not proposing that any employee be required to elect a 401K instead of participating in the UCRP. The University is considering the feasibility of offering clinical enterprise employees the choice between a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan (such as a 401K).

Misstatement #4: UC proposing “Drastic Retiree Health Changes … for most current and all future employees”: The proposed modifications to the University’s retiree health program are not “drastic.” The recent Task Force Report recommendations to modify the cost-sharing structure and eligibility criteria are necessary to sustain the retiree health program into the future. And there would be no changes to eligibility criteria for employees whose age plus years of service equals 50 (with 5 or more years of University service).

Misstatement #5: UC “Cutting Ed Leave”: False. UC has made no proposals to decrease the maximum allowable hours of education leave from the current 40 hours per year.

Misstatement #6: “PTO … forces nurses to come to work sick, endangering patients”: False. Current nurses will be able to choose whether or not to have PTO. UC’s proposal does not say that nurses should report to work while ill, nor has UC made such a statement at the bargaining table.

Misstatement #7: UC “Cutting current staffing and nurse protections”: UC has not proposed to cut current staffing and nurse protections, and CNA has not pointed to any proposal that does so.

Misstatement #8: “No economic proposal yet from UC”: False. The University’s current wage proposal includes a within-range step increase for nurses during each year of a proposed four-year contract.