Nurse Bargaining Continues at Irvine

The University of California continued negotiations with the California Nurses Association (CNA) for a new contract for Registered Nurses on September 20-22 with sessions in Irvine. Staffing, break relief, wages, pension/benefits and educational leave were among the topics discussed at the bargaining table:

- **Wages:** Contrary to CNA’s assertion that the University hasn’t offered a wage proposal yet, during the first bargaining sessions in August, UC proposed to guarantee a within-range step increase for all UC nurses in each year of a four-year contract. These within-range step increases would be in addition to the increases nurses received in July and September 2010 as provided by the current contract.

  The University relies on statewide data from the Allied for Health surveys to ensure that nurses’ salaries remain competitive. We anticipate receiving data from the 2010 survey in early October, at which time we will have a better understanding of whether additional increases will be necessary to ensure that UC nurse salaries remain competitive again this year. On August 20, UC sent CNA a letter reviewing this process, which can be viewed on UCNurses.com.

- **Staffing:** Several nurses provided testimonials during bargaining this week. Most noted that when they had raised specific staffing-related concerns to their supervisors, their concerns were addressed sufficiently. The University is confident that its staffing policies are both safe and in full compliance with state law. In fact, current contract language requires the University to comply with state law and provides the union with a formal process to raise staffing complaints.

- **Break Relief:** In line with current contract language, the University’s break relief proposals would provide nurses with premium pay and allow nurses to report to their supervisor when they believe they are going to miss a meal or rest break due to patient care needs.

- **Educational Leave:** The University has proposed to incorporate verbatim language from the Board of Registered Nursing into the contract to help safeguard the standards for acceptable educational leave courses. The Board’s description of acceptable course content is available on the BRN web site.

- **Contract Extension:** As the current contract would have expired on September 30, 2010, both the University and CNA agreed to an indefinite contract extension while bargaining continues. Please visit UCNurses.com for more information.