

JBC Chair's Report - 4/23/2000

Some rather ominous and troubling signs have appeared in our dealings with OP, which I want to share with you:

First, is the lack of inclusion of the JBC letter to the Editor of *New Dimensions* regarding the highly deceptive article on health benefits. The Editor replied to my query about who made the decision not to include it, and the rationale for the decision, with the following statement:

"I received your note along with the attachment yesterday morning. I had certainly expected to receive some feedback about the *New Dimensions* November 1999 article "Medical Plan Costs" and was surprised when I didn't hear from anyone. Now, I'm dismayed to learn that the letter you sent on behalf of the *Joint Benefits Committee of CUCEA and CUCRA* last December never arrived.

"I'm hoping to rectify this matter by having a response sent directly to the entire Committee within the next couple of weeks. We're beginning to develop articles for the summer edition of *New Dimensions* so I will soon be back in touch with you. We will very likely be addressing medical plan cost issues once again.

"Please accept my sincere apologies to the entire Committee for whatever technical error may have occurred. I sincerely appreciate all the feedback and suggestions that have been provided to me over the years from both CUCEA and CUCRA."

What is disturbing is that my emailed transmittal to the Editor did not generate an "Undeliverable Message" reply from the UCLA server, the second transmittal was sent using the "Send Again" command, and was obviously received; the hard copy of the letter sent to Judy Boyette entered the OP distribution system and apparently didn't go anywhere useful; and lastly, and most importantly, the portion of the statement from the Editor: "I had certainly expected to receive some feedback about the *New Dimensions* November 1999 article "Medical Plan Costs" and was surprised when I didn't hear from anyone," leads me to the conclusion that the article was clearly considered to be inaccurate, misleading, unacceptable, or some other similar term, by the editor. If so, why was it included in that form in the first place?

The second concern comes from the following email message sent to members of the UCRS Board by its Chair, Julia Armstrong-Zwart:

"Dear Colleagues,

"At the last Board meeting, I allowed Adrian to ask a question during the meeting. I have been informed that guests are observers, not participants; therefore, I will not recognize guest questions or comments during the meeting in the future. Of course Board members and UCOP staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have, or hear comments you may wish to make, during breaks or after the meeting has been adjourned."

While this will hopefully be reversed by Wayne Kennedy, with whom I corresponded about our confirmed agreement about our representatives having privilege of the floor at UCRS Board meetings, the fact that the staff has attempted to eliminate that privilege, is most troubling. The comment made concerned the selection of a "default option" which was not the best for the vast majority of 70 ½ year olds. Something that was only learned through a one sentence comment by the staff in their presentation about the written materials given to the Board for their action. Now, having just received the Minutes of the meeting, I note absolutely no reference to this concern. It is like the staff decision was not questioned at all.