

Review of Joint Benefits Committee:

At its October 2010 meeting CUCEA adopted a proposal that a review be done of the 'form and function' of the JBC. That resulted in appointment of a Task Force from CUCEA and CUCRA, respectively, of Doug Morgan (UCSB, co-chair) and Marjorie Caserio (UCSD) from the former and Dick Jensen (UCSC, co-chair) and Pat Pelfry (PARRA) from the latter.

Summary:

The Joint Benefits Committee (JBC) was established by an agreement between CUCEA and CUCRA Chairs in 1994 as an effort to address benefit issues common to both retired faculty and staff. Neither organization has identified JBC in its By-Laws, and neither appears to have a formal statement of JBC's mission, membership, or operational practice. Apart from CUCEA and CUCRA representation (*ex officio* Chairs and two others) the JBC selects its own membership to include health-care professionals, public health faculty, economists & leaders in UC planning & budgeting, law-faculty, and faculty involved with Academic Senate policy. Members terms of service are apparently open-ended.

The Committee "meets" mainly through conference calls organized by the Chair who calls for and determines the agenda and drafts the semiannual reports submitted to CUCEA and CUCRA. There is no record of a budget or documented expenses for JBC's operations.

The JBC has focussed on: 1) individual topics affecting limited application of University programs, 2) major policy issues related to health care delivery, 3) insurance programs, and benefit systems.

Programs, their application, and the means for solving problems have changed over the nearly 17 years of JBC's existence. The Committee has examined issues, raised questions, proposed solutions, and offered expertise for the purpose of enhancing the functioning of CUCEA and CUCRA.

JBC has no independent role. It operates as an adjunct to CUCEA and CUCRA and forwards to these organizations proposals and recommendations for further action by the University's Office of the President. There is understanding that if either CUCEA or CUCRA do not concur in a JBC recommendation (which hasn't happened often) the item is dropped.

Joint Benefits Committee: Most of the Information on the background and operation of the JBC presented in the following section is based primarily on the historical notes from Adrian Harris' files and from other former and current members of JBC

JBC came out of the realization that CUCEA and CUCRA have common interests and, to address these interests effectively, a joint committee to study topics of interest to retirees and their dependents was created. The January 1995 notes included the following note from Adrian:

"A Joint Benefits Committee has been appointed including Ad Brugger, Ralph Nair (CUCEA Representative from UCSB), Moses Greenfield (CUCEA Representative from UCLA), and me. The four of us have added the following three representatives, who bring expertise in several areas to the Committee: William Klein (Professor of Law, Emeritus from UCLA), Adrian Kragen (Professor of Law, Emeritus from Boalt), and Eugene Lee (Professor of Political Science, Emeritus and former Director, Institute of Governmental Studies at UCB). We also expect to interact with Professor Daniel Mitchell, the current Chair of the Systemwide Faculty Welfare Committee. Several items have already been identified for future action: change the policy which requires spouses of deceased annuitants to remove from Regents investment funds all accrued 403(b) funds within nine months; urge the provision of a long-term care insurance plan for all annuitants (and active employees); discussion of future health benefit changes, before they are made; and the retroactive provision of more than 80% retirement benefits to those who retired prior to the change which allowed up to a maximum of 100% benefit..."

Although the JBC membership has been determined in the same way since its inception, the responsibility for identification of problems and potential solutions has not been codified; nor has the ultimate method of resolving problems which may be identified – through whatever means.

Despite the lack of a formal description of JBC in either organization's By-Laws, the form and functioning have been fairly consistent over the years. A consistent practice concerns disagreements between CUCRA and CUCEA on JBC's recommendations. If agreement is not reached, the issue goes no further. If there is agreement, the expectation is that the respective organizations will follow up on the issue.

The Problem:

As stated previously, CUCEA at its Fall 2010 meeting – noting changes in the University's approach to retiree/annuitant services - asked that a review be done of JBC's role in an effort to deploy the expertise of our organizations more effectively. This is a first step of that review.

As shown graphically in Figure 1, JBC has spanned 20 years and many different benefit environments. Among the topics discussed by JBC internally and externally with University officials have been

- Communication with Retiree Organizations & Individual retirees/annuitants
- Fiscal Matters

- Health Care
- Program Implementation & Delivery
- Administrative Organization
- Specific Problems/Opportunities

Similarly, JBC has interacted with its sponsoring organizations – CUCEA & CUCRA – when those organizations have had concerns or when those organizations need to be aware of issues JBC has been exploring. Typically, there is a JBC report at each of the semi-annual meetings of CUCEA and CUCRA.

What kind of ‘tool’ is the JBC?

As a problem identification group, as a recommending group, and to the extent that it keeps track of University action, it is an advocacy group.

Acquisition and Identification of Problems:

The JBC has functioned to acquire and identify problems through the study of systems as they are implemented by UC, by follow-up on problems identified in many different settings (Retiree Centers, concerns of individual retirees, awareness of JBC members who make a point of following such issues, and queries from the Office of the President.)

When JBC was created there were few mechanisms for individual emeriti or retirees to obtain help or clarification on their benefit-related matters. There has always been a Faculty Welfare Committee at each campus and a University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW), but the concerns of annuitants and the implementations of the UC programs were not seen as the foci for UCFW.

In recent years, the campus Health Care Facilitators and campus Emeriti/Retiree Centers are now able to identify specific problems. They have first-hand contact with annuitants and retirees that enables problem identification.

Recommending:

The JBC follows the topics/issues identified and recommends approaches and solutions to CUCEA and CUCRA. Periodically, JBC has also sent a summary of “successful recommendations” to CUCEA and CUCRA to get feedback on problem focus and to track acceptance by the parent groups.

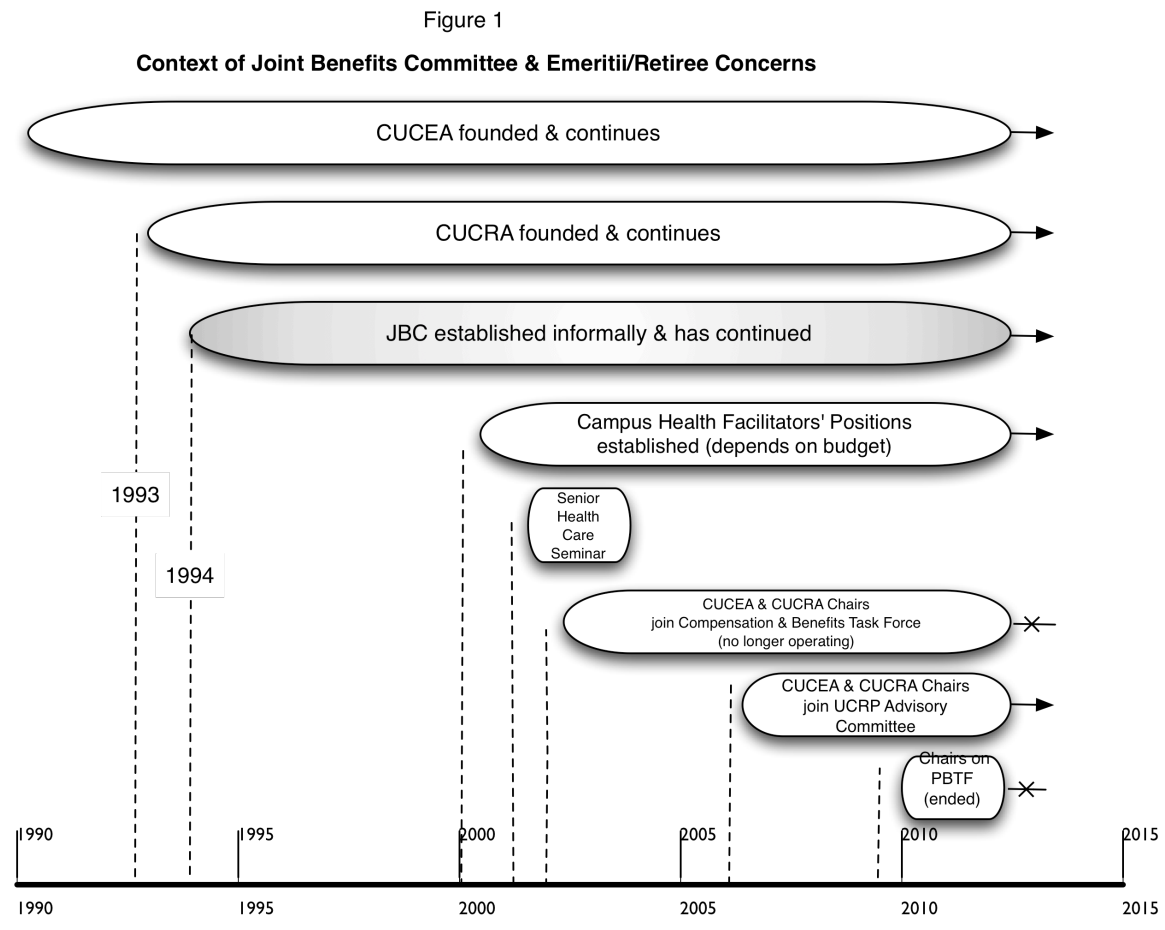
The JBC’s composition of specialists in benefit and fiscal issues and University budgeting has generated a rich set of recommendations over the years. It does not follow, however, that other forms of communication and problem-solving will not work as well, or better.

Advocacy/Tracking:

According to JBC, once CUCEA and CUCRA adopt the topics recommended by JBC, those recommendations are conveyed by the CUCEA and CUCRA Chairs to the

appropriate location in the Office of the President. Questions about those recommendations are answered primarily by the JBC Chair, if asked, and status reports are submitted on progress to the parent organizations. By tracking earlier recommendations, the JBC and the parent organizations can assure some accountability relative to the recommendations

The request to examine the JBC's form and functions seems particularly timely. Over the past ten years many changes have occurred – many of them in response to JBC, CUCEA, and CUCRA recommendations and requests. A timeline of JBC's age and UC's evolution may help to show the changes for handling issues



As shown in Figure 1, parallel with JBC's activity are a host of UC activities that are intended to improve UC's response to the issues JBC and others have raised. These include:

- The Campus Health Care Facilitator position, recommended by JBC among others, was established at two campuses on a trial basis and subsequently provided funding for all campuses.
- The Senior Health Care Conference proposed by JBC and others was subsequently funded by UC and held at UC Irvine.
- CUCEA and CUCRA Chairs were added as members of the UC internal Compensation and Benefits Task Force in the Office of the President. (That Task Force, however, no longer exists.)
- CUCEA and CUCRA Chairs were added by The Regents to the UCRP Advisory Board as *ex officio* members representing the views of retirees and annuitants. (Prior to this development, the Chairs were non-voting "guests" of the Board.)
- CUCEA and CUCRA Chairs were members (one a sub-committee Chair) of the UCOP Task Force on Post-Employment Benefits. (This Task Force no longer exists.)

Although not specifically recommended by JBC, the parallel evolution of the Campus Emeritii/Retiree Centers has now provided retirees and emeriti with links to the campus to aid in communication and advocacy. Another important parallel development has been the active involvement of the CUCEA Chair in the meetings of the Academic Senate's University-wide Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW).

The work of JBC and the recommendations of CUCEA and CUCRA continue to stimulate the functioning of UC to better serve its annuitants.

Looking forward – what is needed?

1. Problem identification by JBC has been anything but systematic. It has been ad hoc, anecdotal, and often narrowly focused, but important problems have been identified and sorted-out. Its 'free agent' status may make it more effective than internalized structures.
2. Analysis and Recommended Solutions have been strong points of JBC. Its membership with many perspectives and intellectual skills has aided in finding effective solutions.
3. Advocacy/Tracking by JBC has been a critical element of JBC effectiveness. Although JBC does not directly engage with UC administrators to bring about its recommendations, it actively tracks the problem areas and re-emphasizes the issue(s) until they are resolved or otherwise disposed of.
4. Membership is open-ended which, from JBC's perspective, has provided continuity and an historical perspective to benefits and retirement-related matters. Unlike the sponsoring organizations CUCEA and CUCRA, JBC has had a constancy of individual memberships which has lasted longer than the elected terms of the sponsoring organizations. CUCEA, for example, has a one-year term for its Chair and CUCRA a two-year (but two term maximum)

term. Often the complexity of the issues has a 'learning curve' longer than the term of the elected officer. This is a matter that deserves further discussion in the review of JBC.

Directions:

Although the question asked of the Task Force was about 'form and function' of JBC, further description may be required for JBC's function (or an alternative) should be developed. A possible framework for description of JBC and any alternatives follows.

1. How would a new or renewed committee be organized and function?
2. Relevance and engagement with the Academic Senate's UC- Committee on Faculty Welfare?
3. Relevance to Campus Organizations (Emeriti and Retirement Associations and Centers; HR Administration)?
4. Relevance to communications with the Office of the President should be made clearer. On the one hand, JBC regards itself as an advisory/advocacy arm of CUCEA and CUCRA, and on the other as a semi- independent entity that does deal directly with OP staff.
5. Relevance to the needs of each organization (CUCEA & CUCRA)

In conclusion, it appears time to both formally document JBC's role and to develop a newer model.

Key points for reporting progress to our respective organizations – CUCEA & CUCRA

1. The review committee has determined the definition of JBC – relative to our sponsoring organizations – should be better defined. It's history and relationships are not documented in the CUCEA and CUCRA By-Laws or historical records
2. Much has changed since JBC was started in the mid-1990's; yet, its role doesn't seem to have changed. (hard to say without better documentation.)
3. JBC or some similar structure performs a useful service and keeps benefits issues 'on the table' for consideration.
4. Each organization (CUCEA and CUCRA) should agree to have the Task Force study further and develop:
 - a. A proposal for JBC, an alternative, or combinations to continue to illuminate benefits issues.
 - b. Suggestions for assuring continuity, historical memory, and accountability to the sponsoring organizations.
 - c. A final report for the Fall 2011 meetings of CUCEA and CUCRA.