

Council of University of California Retiree Associations (CUCRA)

Executive Committee

*John Meyer (UCD), Chair
Sue Abeles (UCLA), Vice Chair
Patti Owen, (UCB) Secretary
John Dahl (UCLA), Treasurer
Pat Price (UCI), Information Officer
Marianne Schnaubelt (UCI), Past Chair*

April 16, 2023

An Update to Our Membership: April 2024

From John Meyer, Chair, CUCRA

ROUTINIZING COMMUNICATION WITH UCOP

At our hybrid conference in October, we discussed some of the initiatives to promote more routine communication with the UC Office of the President. A goal was to ensure we could provide prompt feedback when issues of concern were emerging and to share when trends have been improving. The relatively new **UC Emeriti-Retirees Advisory Committee** (ERAC) appointed by UC Vice President for Human Resources Cheryl Lloyd has now met four times and is on a schedule of meeting every other month. While still an emerging “work in progress,” the committee allows us, on a regular basis, to have a meeting with senior UC leadership to address important issues and learn of future benefits actions or changes that may affect retirees. We have often asserted with our CUCEA colleagues that reviewing contemplated actions or communication with our Councils prior to release allows us to comment and ensure the principles and reasons for such actions are understood and that communications are clear for our constituents.

Another long-standing mechanism for our communication with the Office of the President has been biannual reports from our **Joint Benefits Committee** (a joint committee of retirees and emeriti). A draft amendment to our bylaws which addresses the administration of the JBC is to be considered at our conference. The intent of these changes is to increase the influence of this committee and ensure it is in sync with the activities of the UC Emeriti-Retirees Advisory Committee and that the JBC’s membership terms are clear. If the CUCRA membership is supportive of the proposed changes to the JBC administration, a formal bylaws amendment will be presented at our fall conference.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Principles: At our upcoming Advisory Committee meeting with UC Office of the President leadership, we will present a proposed “Statement of Principles” related to UC health insurance. These principles are found as an appendix to the JBC report which is posted on our CUCRA website with other conference materials. These principles were initially drafted by a group of Bay Area retirees and emeriti. As you will note, the principles focus on preserving a choice of health insurance options, full disclosure of plan costs and inclusion of CUCRA/CUCEA in developing and evaluating health insurance RFPs among other items.

Delta Dental: CUCRA as well as campuses and labs and retiree centers may be hearing increasing concerns about Delta Dental and dentists hesitant to accept this plan. UC is aware of this issue, but it is uncertain if any actions in response are contemplated. CUCRA and CUCEA have suggested that UC offer some additional **Delta Dental** plans that provide enhanced coverage for an additional cost to those insured who would wish to have an enhanced plan.

UC Total Remuneration Study: UCOP Human Resources has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire one or more consultants to conduct a project, which they are calling “Understanding UC Employee Experience”. This is a four scope RFP and includes the following: 1) an Employee Engagement Survey; 2) Exit Surveys; 3) Benefits Survey; and 4) Total Remuneration Study. CUCRA has been asked to participate in the Total Remuneration Study and Vice Chair Sue Abeles is representing CUCRA in this work group. Initially, the work group evaluated the written responses to the 4-part RFP with a focus on the section regarding the total remuneration study. It appears that the work group will continue working on the workstreams with the named awardee(s) as the project moves forward.

Health Plan Administrator RFP: UC is preparing to conduct an RFP for a health plan administrator partner (current contract is with Anthem) for the PPO health plans (UC Care, CORE and HSP). The RFP is intended to look for a health plan administrator partner to fill the primary functions of claims processing and providing a contracted network of providers for UC employees, retirees and their families from whom to receive care. UC is not intending to bid the Pharmacy Benefits Manager (PBM) function currently performed by Navitus or our health navigator, Accolade. Accolade will continue to serve as the primary member service point of contact and health navigator for members. Benefit design will not change as a result of this RFP. UCLA’s Jack Powazek, who is also a member of the Joint Benefits Committee, is the CUCRA representative to this process.

RASC Monitoring: And, of course, we continue to be engaged and consulted regarding the rebuilding of the Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC). As will be reported at our Joint conference session with CUCEA on April 24, the metrics related to RASC’s performance continue to improve. This has been a long journey, but the efforts of many seem to be resulting in a system that is increasingly stable and service oriented.

Experian “Experience”: That said, a new wave of complaints and confusion is now arising about the availability of an Experian identity theft protection program. We will learn more about this at our meeting with UC Leadership next week. Frankly, I do not yet know if this is primarily an Experian issue and whether the RASC has any relationship to it. I am sure this will be addressed at our conference. We were unaware such a program was to be offered, but it does seem clear there were problems in its launch (Houston, we have a problem...).

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Nominations committee: At the upcoming conference Vice Chair Sue Ables will be seeking volunteers for a Nominations Committee for positions subject to election at our fall conference. Officer position subject to election include Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. As many know, an often-used strategy not to be recruited for office is to serve on a nominations committee (just sayin’).

Retiree survey: It is also time to initiate efforts for an updated retiree survey. The results of prior efforts and their publication have helped greatly in communicating with campus/lab officials the value of supporting retiree programs and retiree centers. Some have volunteered for this project and more are needed.

Financial Update: At our conference Treasurer John Dahl will provide an overview of CUCRA finances. Please review these materials in advance as it is part of our fiduciary responsibility to ensure council members have an awareness of our organization's finances. We are so fortunate to have John Dahl overseeing our funds, but his competency is not a substitute for ensuring you understand how funds are allocated. Of special note will be a summary of funds returned to local associations.

Travel Program: And as we reflect on the recent program to provide funding (when available...) to local associations, it is an appropriate time to acknowledge the good work of our travel program led by Sue Barnes and her cast of adventurers. Sue's efforts have been extraordinary in not only providing an array of interesting travel opportunities for retirees but administering the program in such a way as it brings financial benefits to our core missions.

New investment options: We have just learned that effective June 30, 2024, several new investment options related to the UC individual retirement accounts (403B, 457M,) will be available to UC retirees:

- UC Short Duration Bond Fund: The same exposure currently used in UCRP. Participants will be able to take advantage of higher yields at the shorter end of the yield curve
- Certificate of Deposits: can be purchased through the Fidelity brokerage window
- UC Blue and Gold Fund: the same endowment "light" fund offered to our 10 campuses that can be used as a drawdown strategy vehicle in retirement

Additionally – the Savings Fund is anticipated to reach 3+% annual return by end of 2024 as the monthly exchange of expiring instruments with new, higher yield ones, continues.

This information was initially presented to the CUCRA session in October at UC Davis by members of the Chief Investment Officers staff. A fuller explanation will be coming out to all retirees by June of this year. Thank you to Eric Vermillion for raising this issue and organizing and facilitating the session with UC staff at our last conference.

Summer Sessions: We hope to again offer informal "summer sessions" in both northern and southern California in July. I believe these were successful last year in providing an informal and in-person opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges of local associations and retiree centers and how CUCRA can provide support. We will identify dates and locations for each session after our upcoming conference.

A NOTE ABOUT OUR CUCEA PARTNERS

As we know, most issues related to post-employment benefits are the same whether one is a staff retiree or faculty/academic emeriti. For this reason, CUCRA partners with our colleagues within the Council of UC Emeriti Associations (CUCEA) on an ongoing basis as we discuss issues with the Office of the President. This will be Jo Anne Boorkman's last meeting as CUCEA Chair. As she is from the Davis

campus, I first knew her through our local association activities. It was a pleasure to work with her during her service as CUCEA Chair. It is hard to describe the volume of work (and meetings and Zooms) these positions require. Jo Anne's work was even more involved as CUCEA is also engaged with UC Academic Council activities. Jo Anne has been dedicated to our joint issues and has approached her work in a manner that is open, positive and always in search of successful and lasting solutions. On behalf of CUCRA, I wish her the best as she approaches "real" retirement.