

Testimony Before

The California Performance Review Commission

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University of California Accountability and Future Viability: Staffing Policies

Presenter:

Jelger Kalmijn

President UPTE-CWA 9119

Representing 11,000 University of California technical and professional employees

Staff Research Associate at the UC San Diego campus

Contact Information:

Email: fueralinea@igc.org

Phone: (619) 406-2327

Mail: PO Box 4443, Berkeley, CA 94704

I. Introduction

My name is Jelger Kalmijn. I am the President of University Professional and Technical Employees affiliated with the Communications Workers of America. UPTA represents 11,000 University of California technical and professional workers at the 10 campuses, 5 hospitals and 3 national laboratories.¹ I also work as a Staff Research Associate in the Department of Psychiatry at the San Diego campus of the University of California.

I will provide testimony about the lack of accountability of the University of California to meet certain important performance standards and make policy recommendations to incorporate in the final report of this comprehensive review of California state government.

In addition to tens of thousands of faculty and hundreds of thousands of students, the University of California employees more than 100,000 on whom the institution depends to fulfill its education, research, and health care missions.

Does the University of California attract and retain sufficiently qualified and appropriate staff to fulfill the state's needs for accessibility and quality of higher education as well as keeping the University of California as the world's premier research institution. Neither the university nor state legislators have adequately reviewed whether appropriate staffing policies to carry out its mission now and in the long run.

The ability to bring in more than \$3.5 billion in grants and contracts, manage the more than \$4.1 billion budget of three Department of Energy laboratories, and attract nearly \$1 billion in gifts and capital grants, depends on a staffing backbone to consistently maintain the University of California as a first rate educational, research and health care institution.²

II. Indicators of Concern:

Two significant issues of concern justify the urgent need for the development and assessment of performance measures.

Critical Staff Retention Problem

The University of California entered the decade of the 1980's as an employer of choice where talented workers dedicated to the University's mission made a career commitment. Over the past 25 years UC has brought a dramatic change to the quality of employment resulting in university jobs playing the role as a stepping stone to a more desirable job, a choice of last resort or a part-time job to make ends meet.

Research and technical staff now have annual turnover rates between 35% and 40%. Clerical staff turnover is approaching an annual rate of 50%.³

The research and instructional support staff usually require extensive training and specialization upon hire to make the effective contributions demanded of them.

Existing staff must expend substantial resources to recruiting and training new hires. The level of work in research labs and many other university projects attain artificial ceilings due to the disruption of institutional and professional knowledge caused by staff turnover.

The university must have a strong staff base to continue on as one of the world's premier education and research institutions. Recent UC policies resulting in stagnant pay have greatly undermined this base.

[Distribute copies of UC Research Threatened pamphlet]

[Distribute copies of legislative audit on casual work force]

Demonstrated Lack of Financial Accountability for Staff Support

The University of California has a pay system that diverts savings from the high staff turnover from the wage pool resulting in chronic wage stagnation.

Each year, the university provides no longevity increases resulting in many new hires staying at the bottom of the pay scale for years. When the state does provide an across-the-board pay increase for UC staff, the university deducts up to 1.5% from that increase to pay for longevity increases, once again pocketing the savings from staff turnover.

The university receives a majority of its funds from federal grants and university enterprises, including the medical centers. These all provide either annual escalators for wages or budget in regular increases as part of their business plan. Each year the lack of longevity increases leaves extra money.

[Provide figures with calculation for staff turnover]

[Mention accountability supplemental report language agreed to by UC this year]

III. Accountability Recommendations

The CPR has made two recommendations addressing accountability in higher education: ETV02 suggesting the creation of an Education and Workforce Council and ETV21 proposing the establishment and assessment of performance goals already begun with the passage of SB 1331.⁴

These recommendations focus primarily on important measures of accessibility and student success but do not explicitly identify how to address how to evaluate either the effectiveness of UC staffing to meet the educational needs or research mission. The ability of the University to effectively utilize the more than \$4 billion state allocation and attract and raise nearly an additional \$14 billion for education, research and health care depend on quality staff to accomplish the promised mission.

The problems of staff retention and fiscal accountability for funding received for staff wages strongly suggest the need for a more detailed assessment of the university staffing policies for its more than 100,000 state employees.

The following two recommendations should be added as components of ETV21 and SB1331, the accountability recommendations, and considered carefully by the Education and Workforce Council recommended in ETV02.

- (1) Identify and evaluate performance measures for appropriate and adequate staffing at the University of California. Evaluating accountability for these measures includes acceptable staff turnover rates, sufficiently qualified staff and staff moral.
- (2) Audit of UC distribution of all funding sources for staff including state funds, federal grants and revenue from university enterprises and endowments.

¹ For more information on UPTE-CWA: www.upte.org

² Budget figures extracted from UC Facts in Brief for 2003;
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/annualreport/2003/pdf/facts.pdf>

³ Calculated from University of California Corporate Payroll System payroll data for FY99/00, FY00/01, FY01/02, and FY02/03

⁴ For more information on SB1331: http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb_1301-1350/sb_1331_bill_20040823_enrolled.html