Bargaining Update 16: UC meets with AFSCME regarding new contract for patient care technical employees

Following the May strike at various locations and the continued impasse, the University of California agreed to meet with leaders of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Thursday, July 11, 2013 about retirement benefits and other contract terms for patient care technical staff.

AFSCME requested this meeting and assured UC that it would present new proposals.

Pension reform has been the primary sticking point in these negotiations. UC is engaged in reasonable pension reform to protect the long-term viability of retirement plans so it can continue to provide quality pension benefits to all employees. AFSCME has summarily rejected the university’s pension reforms since negotiations began last summer.

At the July 11 meeting, AFSCME leaders still did not present any formal proposals, but discussed what they might agree to if the university met other new contract demands. What they discussed would give more of an advantage to AFSCME employees than all other UC employees.

UC declined the union’s idea, because the cost of the AFSCME alternative is higher — both in annual cost and employer contribution — than UC is willing to accept.

AFSCME leaders later issued a statement that does not reflect what was discussed. In addition, formal proposals about complex issues in the bargaining process should be detailed and in writing so that they may be thoroughly and fairly evaluated. AFSCME did not present such a proposal.

UC greatly values the talent and skill that its patient care technical staff brings to campuses and medical centers every day. The university is committed to reaching a fair, financially sustainable contract.