Bargaining update #5: UC seeks progress in contract negotiations with UPTE

Since bargaining began in mid-December, the University of California has been frustrated with the progress of negotiations with UPTE and believes that negotiations have yielded little movement toward a new contract covering 8,600 research and technical employees.

The March 20-22, 2013 bargaining session at UC Santa Cruz followed this pattern. The university and union had less face-to-face time than planned, either because UPTE could not meet at the scheduled time or because UPTE left a bargaining session early. In total, the university and the union spent about three hours and 15 minutes in face-to-face bargaining during this three-day period.

With substantial caucus time over the past 18 bargaining sessions, the university had hoped that by now UPTE would produce an initial proposal on each article that is open for bargaining. However, the union has only submitted 22 proposals when there are about 40 articles open. The university has presented 38 articles so far, including on key issues such as retirement benefits. Because the union objected to UC’s initial proposal on pension benefits, the university recently offered two alternative proposals in an attempt to advance negotiations.

The union has not responded to the university’s proposal on pension benefits or offered its own proposal regarding retirement benefits. UC invited UPTE again during the most recent bargaining session to make a post-employment benefits proposal.

UC is committed to reaching a fair and financially sustainable agreement before the current contract expires June 30, 2013. A seamless transition would provide certainty to both employees and the university.

UC hopes UPTE shares this goal and will work collaboratively toward an agreement.

The next bargaining session is April 8-9, 2013.