

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE
Update on Health Care, Child Care, Housing, and Salary

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

Throughout the 2011-12 academic year, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) has reviewed and consulted on several critical campus and systemwide issues. While many of these issues remain in process, the committee feels that in some areas we have made important progress, and others may yet require increased attention and collaboration across the campus. It is our hope that we can generate additional discourse and vigilance among the faculty in these difficult budgetary times.

Health Care

Major changes are currently pending at the systemwide level for health care. A systemwide Health Care Workgroup (with EVC Galloway as a member) is currently considering structural changes to our health care plans, including how they are funded and proposals for potentially major cost-cutting measures. CFW is concerned that this may result in unprecedented health premium increases in the next four years for both active employees and retirees. While still mid-process and thus unavailable for distribution, CFW is additionally concerned that UCSC employees may in particular face health premium increases steeper than those of other UC campuses, as they did with the change to the Blue and Gold health plan back in 2010. We observed that in 2012, this differential impact was mitigated at other campuses (Berkeley and Davis) and that Sutter affiliates (Mills Peninsula) near San Francisco have joined Blue and Gold.

CFW has identified this as one of the most critical issues for our campus. CFW has urged that the Senate take initiative in engaging with UCOP to obtain critical data and to form an effective well-informed advocacy group to partner with the EVC against potential hefty premium increases.

Child Care

CFW is encouraged by the revitalized interest and commitment to child care from the campus. Last year, the EVC's appointment of a Child Care Task Force (CCTF) to investigate the viability of various options for child care for the campus produced a blueprint report, for which CFW was consulted and thus helped to shape. For various reasons, including budget uncertainty and other factors, the path toward the option recommended by the CCTF of building or purchasing a facility is unclear in the short-term. Importantly, however, in consultation with the EVC, CFW has argued for the commitment of earmarked "Child Care Reserves" funding (as designated in the CCTF report for ongoing support) to be set aside toward the future development of interim support or permanent child care for our campus faculty and staff. At our February 2, 2012 meeting, the EVC concurred with CFW's recommendation, and has since identified the allocation of \$150k annually for this purpose.

Housing

CFW began consulting with Employee Housing on an earlier timeline, starting in December 2011, with the goals of more active participation and re-examining the housing re-pricing indexing methodology. The housing office usually submits their proposal to the EVC for approval in May. CFW has expressed some concerns about the long-term viability and affordability of the program in light of the persistent housing budget deficit and rapid cost increases over recent years. CFW plans to engage with the administration in order to examine how the long term goals of housing, namely generating short-term loans and offering affordable housing, are being met. CFW feels that the main goal of the employee housing program should be affordability for newly hired faculty, which is potentially undermined by unabated increases in the re-pricing index.

Faculty Salary

CFW has finalized its 3-year merit boost report (included in meeting call) which was distributed to EVC Galloway, VPAA Lee, and related Senate Committees. This effort was initiated back in Winter 2010. CFW believes that this report provides important insight into the impact of the merit boost plan on our merit review process, and will be valuable in formulating future local campus-based faculty salary policy plans.

The committee plans to briefly summarize its findings at the February 29 Senate meeting and open the floor to Q&A.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

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February 15, 2012