



Committee on Faculty Welfare

Annual Report 2000-2001

Renee Binder, M.D.
Chair

During the 2000-2001 academic year the Committee on Faculty Welfare enjoyed a productive year during which it met six times, with a quorum present at each meeting. The Committee's work was augmented by the use of electronic communications to gather data and facilitate communication among Committee members.

Issues reviewed and acted on by the Committee included:

- System-wide faculty welfare and health care issues.
- Current housing problems.
- Disability and mental health benefits for UCSF faculty.

Systemwide Issues

R. Binder, Chair acted as representative to the Systemwide Faculty Welfare Committee in 2000-2001 and will act as systemwide chair in 2001-2002. Various system-wide issues were discussed at the University-wide meetings which took place during the months of October through June. These topics were then reported to the membership:

- The cost of health plans is currently rising at a rate of at least 15%-20% while the University budget for health plans is rising by only 9%. Thus, in order to maintain current health benefit coverage, the cost to faculty (defined contributions) may rise. The Systemwide Committee considered whether faculty members would prefer to have fewer benefits, pay higher premiums, or to pay increased co-pays. The merits of all of the options were discussed, and the issue will be revisited in the new year. Most faculty members preferred keeping the option of a high benefit package, which would be supported by an increase in premiums and co-pays.
- The target for implementation of the educational fee waiver for dependents, domestic partners and spouses of UC faculty and staff with over five years service has been delayed because of California budgetary problems. This project will continue to be addressed by systemwide faculty welfare.
- Due to the current energy crisis, there is the threat that funds that were allocated to UC for new projects may be redirected to cover rising energy costs. New programs for the provision of childcare may be postponed or scaled down. The systemwide committee will continue to work to ensure that this initiative continues to have a high priority.



Housing

The issue of housing and the current housing crisis was discussed at length at both the systemwide and campuswide levels. Furthermore, N. Oppenheimer, Vice-Chair, reported regularly to the Committee on the meetings of the Chancellor's Housing Committee. Across these three forums, several issues were raised:

- The UC system hopes to hire 7000 additional faculty members over the next decade. Housing costs in certain areas, especially the Bay Area, are a significant barrier to recruitment. A blue ribbon systemwide Housing Task Force has been appointed to examine the housing crisis, and come up with proposals that will meet the housing needs of faculty, staff, and students. The Task Force will include representatives of the Academic Senate, students, campuses, the Office of the President, the Board of Regents, and outside consultants.
- A survey designed to collect data from faculty regarding their current housing situations was sent out to all faculty by the Chancellor's Housing Committee in January, 2001. The results of this survey will be presented to the Committee in the new year.
- Housing development at Mission Bay may provide some relief for the current housing crisis. Over three hundred new homes will be constructed at Mission Bay. However, the University continues to grapple with problems related to housing, and may be restricted in subsidizing housing and parking because these are generally recognized as being self-financed.

Campus-Wide Issues

Mission Bay and the Redevelopment of Parnassus Heights

The Committee welcomed Allan Long, Principal Educational Facility Planner, Campus Planning to its February meeting to update the Committee on the program of demolition and development at the Parnassus Heights campus and the Mission Bay site. Mr. Long outlined:

- A projected demolition schedule to span the next ten years.
- Issues regarding a space ceiling at the Parnassus Heights campus and resultant limitations on development.
- Ambiguity as to the relocation of the current UCSF hospital with options including: relocation to the Mission Bay site, relocation to the Mount Zion site, the purchasing of new land for the building of the hospital. (Mr. Long noted that a decision regarding the future site of the hospital would be made within one year).

The Committee believes that it is imperative to continue to have regular updates



regarding the Mission Bay development and redevelopment of the Parnassus Campus. Specifically, The Committee continues to be concerned by housing provisions for faculty and staff in the Bay area (above), and is concerned that the issue of housing not be overlooked in the planning of Mission Bay and Parnassus redevelopment.

Mental Health Benefits and Health Plans Available to UCSF Staff and Faculty

The Committee welcomed Michele French, Director of Workforce Planning, Office of the President, to its March meeting. M. French discussed with the Committee current Mental Health benefits available to UCSF staff and faculty. This meeting provided a valuable opportunity for M. French to gain feedback from faculty on this issue and for the Committee to receive a valuable update. The following points were raised:

- Certain health plan cards are easier to understand than others. It is important that all be “user friendly”.
- Each card should clearly display a telephone number for customer queries.
- The “carve-out” feature of the health plans segregates mental health from general health care, and may impede fast and effective referrals by primary care physicians.
- Direct access to providers by patients is desirable, but would entail cost inflation.
- Current levels of communication between health care providers, health plans and patients are inadequate.
- Many of the problems associated with mental health benefit provisions within health plans are encompassed by larger problems regarding managed health care in general.

In response to these issues, a proposal from the Office of the President to provide UCSF with a Health Care Facilitator has been approved. This Facilitator will provide liaison between vendors and faculty members who are consumers of health care, and will act as a source of advice and knowledge for faculty members. Pilot schemes run at UC Berkley and UC Irvine have been enormously successful, and will provide the template for future programs.

Disability Coverage Available to Faculty at UCSF

The Committee welcomed S. Norberg, Senior Benefits Counselor, to its May meeting.

S. Norberg summarized the range of disability coverage currently available to faculty at UCSF. The Committee raised the following points:

- There is confusion among faculty regarding current definitions of “disability” under short-term and long-term disability plans. (S. Norberg noted that while general definitions exist, the determination of whether an individual meets the



- criteria of disability is based on physician documentation and determined by the insurance company on a case by case basis).
- It is unclear whether long-term disability benefits are useful for faculty. Older faculty who are close to retirement age might do better by accessing their retirement benefits. Younger faculty with fewer years of service may do better financially with long term disability benefits than with retirement income.
 - Current coverage is unsatisfactory because it does not cover the Y and Z portions of health science faculty incomes. Faculty members need to consider buying supplemental policies to cover these portions of their income.

Issues for Academic Year 2001-2002

- The Committee will revisit the issue of increasing costs for health insurance. R. Binder will convey recommendations to the Systemwide Committee.
- The Committee will continue review of the current housing crisis and will extend invitations to relevant staff and administrators to provide updates regarding Mission Bay and Parnassus Heights development.
- The Committee believes it imperative to make full use of the revised Academic Senate website in order to provide faculty with up to date information regarding benefits and welfare. The Committee will regularly suggest possible links for inclusion on this website.



Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Faculty Welfare

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