

# WHAT IS UPTTE?

## WHO WE ARE

University Professional and Technical Employees, CWA 9119, is the union of technical and professional employees at the University of California. We are Staff Research Associates, Computer Resource Specialists, Clinical Lab Techs, Editors, Student Affairs Officers, Social Workers, Writers, Museum Scientists, Lab Assistants, among many other titles. There are more than 11,000 UC employees covered by UPTTE contracts.

UPTTE was founded in 1990 by a group of employees who believed that UC workers would benefit by having a union to safeguard and expand our rights in the workplace. There are active UPTTE locals at all campuses, labs and medical centers of the University of California.

In 1993, UPTTE members voted to affiliate with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), a 700,000 member union in the AFL-CIO, in order to better organize and represent UC workers.

In November 1994, UC's 4,000 technical employees were the first to vote for UPTTE representation. In 1996, 3,700 research professionals voted for UPTTE, and in 1997, 2,000 health care professionals followed suit. All three groups now elect rank-and-file bargaining committees that negotiate union contracts with UC. Members of each unit also engage in workplace actions to support bargaining, provide assistance to members with problems, and participate in UPTTE leadership.

*UPTTE protects and improves the rights of employees. We stand up to the university to ensure that professional and technical employees receive the respect and fairness they deserve.*



*UPTTE members in the technical (TX), research (RX) and health care professional (HX) units bargain with UC over wages and working conditions.*



*UPTTE represents employees who face problems on the job, including unfair layoffs and performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, and much more.*



*UPTTE promotes diversity, and opposes discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.*



*UPTTE works in coalition with other unions, and faculty and student groups, to influence UC policy and to inform the media legislators about UC employees' issues, such as retirement and health benefits.*



*UPTTE is working for a better University of California. We are committed to building a UC that is well-managed and accountable; one that will provide secure jobs with fair wages, along with high quality research and accessible education.*



*UPTTE believes that collective bargaining is the way to make our voices heard and to ensure a strong future for all.*

## WHERE WE'RE GOING

There are other large groups of UC employees working through UPTTE to gain a voice for themselves on the job. Union activists among UC's 10,000 staff professionals – including Student Affairs Officers, Analysts, Programmers and many others – work with UPTTE to address problems such as a flawed merit pay system and increasing workloads. UC employees at Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico have built an UPTTE chapter. In 2007, the Society of Professionals, Scientists and Engineers at Lawrence Livermore National Lab, became a chapter of UPTTE, and is working with staff at Lawrence Berkeley and Los Alamos Labs to make sure UC employees at DOE facilities are represented.

UPTTE is a democratic, member-run union made up entirely of UC employees. Decisions are made by UPTTE members and their elected representatives. Our success is due to the high level of activism among our members.

We invite you to join us. For more information, return the postcard below, or call UPTTE at (510) 704-UPTTE in northern California or (310) 443-5484 in southern California. You can also visit us on the web at <[www.uptte.org](http://www.uptte.org)> or email us at <[info@uptte-cwa.org](mailto:info@uptte-cwa.org)>.

# UPTTE AT WORK

## WAGES & BENEFITS

A statewide mobilization of thousands of UPTTE members to protect our retirement plan gained a big victory in July 2007, when the regents put on hold a planned reinstatement of employee contributions and also committed UC to paying more towards the pension plan. UPTTE, in coalition with other UC unions, pressured the university to move closer to its historic levels of pension support, rather than redirecting employees' pay to fund any pension shortfall.

In 2007, as UC moved to increase benefit premiums and co-pays for employees, UPTTE members made their voices heard through petitions, demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns. After only a month of actions, UC backed off on the increases. The union is continuing its campaign to contain costs and improve benefits at UC, as well as working on the legislative front for health care reform in California.

In 2006, UPTTE researchers and techs won a new three-year contract providing raises averaging nearly 14%. The union had previously negotiated a return to step-based pay for techs and researchers, a system that delivers much higher base salaries than the "open range" system, which UC prefers in order to keep salaries down. In 2007, UPTTE's health care professionals at UC's medical centers also won a step system, as well as equity increases of up to 14% to compensate long-term employees for years of service.

## ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

As part of the UC Union Coalition, UPTTE is advocating in Sacramento for more transparency in UC policy-making and executive compensation, as well as "joint governance" of the University of California Retirement Plan (UCRP). Unlike many other public institutions, UC's retirement program lacks any mechanism for meaningful representation from plan participants. Studies have shown that jointly-governed plans are far healthier than employer-governed plans.

In 2006, UPTTE activists launched a large-scale membership campaign, contacting thousands of employees spread out across UC's labs, clinics, field stations, libraries, shops, hospitals and offices, to explain the benefits of a strong and united workforce. In addition to increased bargaining clout, the statewide campaign brought new activists into UPTTE, who are committed to working on issues such as pay, health and safety, fair reclassification and workload.

*UPTTE works to influence UC policy to better reflect our needs as employees. We challenge the university when it violates employee rights.*

## JOB SECURITY

UPTTE has long worked to change UC's policies creating "casual" jobs that lack benefits and job security, and launched a new campaign in 2007 to make sure UC is complying with existing contract language. In 2000, an arbitrator decided in favor of an UPTTE grievance filed on behalf of a UCLA tech who had been working as a "casual" for 6 years, which led to UPTTE's negotiated changes with UC, effectively phasing out casual employment. As a result, thousands of employees have been converted from casual to career, and thousands more have received additional retirement credit for the years they worked as casuals. In 2003, UC's use of similar temporary positions called "floaters" was ended under UPTTE's researcher and tech contracts.

UPTTE negotiated the first ever mandatory UC severance pay for researchers and techs. During its first year, laid off workers received more than \$500,000 in severance pay, and many retained their preferential rehire rights.

## FAIRNESS & RESPECT

In a precedent-setting 2007 case, UPTTE stewards at the San Francisco campus won a grievance guaranteeing the right to bring signs and other materials expressing workers' viewpoints into regents' meetings. UC had tried to prohibit such displays at a 2006 meeting, attended by several California legislators. UC administrators later apologized and signed an agreement guaranteeing employees' rights to free speech.

UPTTE's "Campaign for Quality Research" took off in 1999, as the union released a major study on how the university's employment practices negatively affected UC researchers. It showed that UC was jeopardizing research by diverting some \$16.2 million dollars away from staff salaries, and that research staff were leaving the university at a rate of 33% a year. The study prompted the ranking Democrat on the U.S. House Science Committee to ask the National Institutes of Health to investigate UC's employment practices.

After aggressive grassroots pressure in 2000, UC announced the dismantling of the "incentive award program." This program diverted money away from fair and equitable wage increases into an arbitrary bonus program. The money previously diverted has now been returned to employees' base wages.