

CSU-ERFA SURVEY OF AFFILIATES (Distributed at State Council Meeting 04/25/2009)

The Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns Committee: Preliminary Questionnaire Results

This is a preliminary report (in fact, premature) of the results of the questionnaire circulated by the Committee on Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns to CSU campuses since the October ERFA meeting. The questionnaire is intended to offer an update on the retirement conditions on campuses throughout the CSU system. For this effort, 18 of the campuses were selected for the questionnaire; it was believed that five campuses [San Marcos, Channel Islands, Monterey Bay, the Maritime Academy, and Bakersfield] are so new that they do not have a sizeable population of retirees as yet. With 12 of the 18 campuses presently responding, the committee's task for the meeting in next October is to push for a larger representation of fact and opinion so that we can present recommendations to the State Council on future policy.

This collection of documents is an update of a questionnaire first circulated in the mid-1990s. That first effort yielded a range of responses which differed widely in focus and in completeness; the current efforts was conducted by e-mail, with the intent to get a fuller and more complete set of documents, returned conscientiously and promptly. Thus the initial hope was to get full results, presented in a format which was inexpensive and which could be easily stored and readily consulted many times in the future. But—the plan to enlist modern technology so as to anticipate such results in this task was, as will be seen, quite naive.

As was true in the questionnaire circulated ten years ago, there is considerable variation in the quality of, and in institutional support for, the retirement experience among the CSU campuses. At the outset, there are widely differing criteria for the granting of emeritus status throughout the system: sometimes it comes automatically with retirement, sometimes there are required years of service (6 or 10 or more), sometimes there are judgments by the campus Provost or President, at other times the decisions are initiated in the department and the faculty senate, and in a few cases the award of emeritus status is made only after qualitative judgments about a person's career and contributions. These separate practices attest to the marked independence of values and practices throughout the system.

Moving to the areas of principle concern on the questionnaire, in what follows there will be a discussion of the nature of the retirement organizations on each campus [considering whether or not these are separate from ERFA itself], followed by a mention of the campus policies in support of retirees. There will then be a discussion of the last major item on the questionnaire: the desirability of a formal set of presentations designed to aid faculty members as they approach retirement.

Independence of Retirement Organizations:

The following campus have developed local and independent retirement organizations, for the most part in the 1980s (total local membership—when available—is shown as well: Dominguez Hills (102), Los Angeles (400), Northridge (286), Sacramento (150), San Diego (400), San Francisco (373), and San Jose (250). The following campuses have retirement organizations which are centered in the local ERFA chapters: Fresno, Fullerton (168), Humboldt (396), Long Beach (212), and Pomona (200).

Rights and Privileges on each campus:

All campuses reporting thus far (Dominguez Hills, East Bay, Fresno, Humboldt, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, Pomona, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose) offer retirees library privileges, e-mail (and usually we) access, and usually free parking—except at Humboldt in the latter instance. Laboratory space may be offered at Dominguez Hills, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose. Some campuses offer assistance in applying for and in administering grants: Dominguez Hills, Humboldt, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose. All the campuses provide a seat on the local academic Senate except Fresno and Pomona; the retiree senator from San Francisco has no voting rights. Throughout the system, CSU retirees are not commonly offered on-campus offices, campus mailboxes, or the use of campus vehicles.

Most of the campuses extend an enduring welcome to retirees who wish to stay involved as members of the academic community and as participants in the campus culture. Retirees may by invitation attend department meetings and serve (also by invitation) as committee members, other than personnel—although some responding to the questionnaire express relief at never having to do these things again. Retirees also ordinarily attend university ceremonies, and use the campus recreational facilities. Some campuses have highly active and well-supported retirement organizations, in particular Dominguez Hills, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco. Much to their credit, the retirement organizations through scholarships and donations in substantial ways give back to their host campuses, especially Dominguez Hills, Humboldt, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco. And the idea that the affiliate might “aid or facilitate through presentations or informal meetings the approach of retirement for present full-time faculty” appeals to most respondents so far.

For the fall meeting of 2009 members of the Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns Committee will make every effort to gather a larger representation of responses and opinions on these subjects, and we will offer a fuller analysis and policy recommendations at that time.