

Select Committee Hearing
UC Riverside
Friday, May 4, 2018

Vicky McLeod representing CSUEU (7 minutes)

The support staff of the CSU are the backbone and brain trust of the university, but often overlooked. The first interaction a student experiences when calling or walking into a CSU office is with a staff member. The service provided to students, parents, and the on/off-campus community is thorough and embodies a caring characteristic to promote the CSU mission statement of investing in our students to prepare them to enter the community and contribute to California's future.

Many employees have worked at a CSU campus for years – I have worked for the CSU for over 30 years and an honored mother of a CSU graduate. In order to assist students, support staff positions should be fully funded and employees need to move through the salary range to retain the campus workforce. CSUEU is sponsoring AB 1231 (Weber) that will bring back steps to allow support staff to move through the salary range. (I will discuss further in a moment)

In 2008, employees received furloughs and layoffs followed. Numerous positions have not been filled, but the remaining employees continue to assume the duties of vacant positions. Staff are commonly told to do more with less and the additional responsibilities do not include an increase in salary. Staff are an important community player and dedicated to serving students. We are the trust that manages important tasks: enroll students in classes, hire student workers, keep campuses clean, run the front office, budgetary, financial, and technology assistance, support faculty and administrators, and care for our students. We share goals to build solutions to better our students. The financial status for many of our employees is grim and during the furloughs the task of taking two jobs was necessary to make ends meet. Many staff lost their homes. It is important that students, faculty, administrators, and the public know the challenges staff face. Our dedicated employees treat the CSU campus as their home away from home. The commitment and devotion our staff represent daily is comparable to being a proud parent. Staff want students to succeed and accomplish their dream with a degree in higher education.

Staff face challenges and are required to wear many hats. Employees who retired have not been replaced. Accepting additional students and committing to hiring diverse faculty is supported by staff, but our employees tend to not be mentioned. There is a void in addressing the need to increase staff positions. Support staff should be included when dialogue takes place that affects the campus so that employees can continue to serve students productively. Many departments house one staff member to assist a large student and faculty population. Support Staff are at the frontline and the first contact a student interacts with when being admitted, guidance, enrolling in classes, learning the department and faculty, and understanding the policies and procedures of the campus. Staff create, organize, collaborate, prioritize responsibilities that guide and monitor students towards their educational success.

The Master Plan and/or California's Higher Education system should take into consideration the knowledge, expertise, longevity, and dedication that staff supply to the CSU campuses. There are employees who have dedicated their career, encourage family to attend a CSU, and treat their place of employment as their family. CSUEU has requested to have a support staff seat on the Board of Trustees. There is a student, alumni, and faculty representative, but no staff delegate. Allowing input from support staff would give insight from a person who interacts daily with campus issues and concerns related to students.

Note: CSUEU has addressed this issue three times and unfortunately the bill has been vetoed and not supported by the CSU.

Supporting AB 1231 (Weber) to restore salary steps for support staff is an action that the state can support that would not require funding. AB 1231 will restore 5% salary step increases that were unilaterally taken away by the CSU nearly 20 years ago. All represented employees will receive an annual salary step increase based upon a satisfactory performance evaluation. The bill will re-establish parity with all other state agencies and parity with the half-million state employees who already have salary steps.

There has been a recent trend of newly hired support staff leaving the CSU due to no movement through the salary range. By not retaining the employee, the duties once again fall on the remaining employees for the institutional memory. Retention is an issue for our employees and this is a disservice to our students.

In August 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, Assembly Higher Education Committee and the Budget Subcommittee on Education held a special hearing to review the state audit of CSU personnel and budget practices. The audit was released in April 2017. The audit demonstrated the discrepancy between management personnel and staff positions.

The Assembly Higher Education Committee heard AB 1231 (Weber) in January 2018 where Senator Richard Roth suggested the CSU conduct an employment survey to determine if the university houses the appropriate number of management, faculty, and staff positions. This survey would determine if the appropriate number of employees are hired to effectively serve our student population. A survey is an action the state can take that may or may not require funding.

The university continues to function to support students as staff are employed 12 months. Staff remain on campus once the semester concludes, during the December break, spring break, summer session, etc. Support staff are present M-F serving students with a smile while demonstrating professionalism. Employees' number one goal is to support students so they have access to an excellent education.