

High Staff Turnover Threatens Quality Research and Education at the University of California & Diversion of Staff Raises Requires Audit

Action Requested:

GAO audit of federal funds received by University of California (see below for specifics)

Background:

- ◆ UPTE-CWA represents nearly 10,000 researchers and technicians at all the campuses of the University of California. Over 85% of researchers and 75% of technicians are not funded by the state of California.
- ◆ Approximately 1/3 of all research related staff leave the University each year.
- ◆ The University and independent sources estimate that researcher and technician pay lag the market by 10% to 20%.
- ◆ Pay for researchers and technicians has fallen 20% behind inflation in the last decade.
- ◆ The University annually budgets 1.5% for merit costs while an independent consultant has estimated the costs between 0.3% and 0.5%.
- ◆ The University of California received \$2.6 billion in federal grants (excluding DOE labs). Main granting agencies include: HHS (56%), NSF (15%) and Dep't of Education (8%) and Department of Defense (7%)
- ◆ University of California researchers and technicians perform critical and extremely diverse work from seeking cures to AIDS and cancer to developing the next generation of the internet and studying earthquakes on scientific ships over the entire globe.
- ◆ Congressman George Brown inquiries in late 1990's were left answered and the concerns of where staff wages went unresolved. Likewise, California state legislative requests for turnover savings remain without response.

Audit Requested:

- ☞ How much of the federal grant funds allotted for staff wage increases was spent on increases?
- ☞ If not all was spent on wages, where was it spent?
- ☞ How much have average researcher and technician wages increased at the University of California compared to average grants escalators and consumer price index?
- ☞ How much does the University's merit program increase the researcher and technician payroll by annually?
- ☞ What policies and practices does the University of California have to ensure a full distribution of wage increase money?
- ☞ What measures could the University of California take to moderate staff turnover by being more accountable with money received for wages from federal grants?

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