

Council of University of California  
Staff Assemblies (CUCSA)  
Diversity Committee Report  
June 2006

**Committee Membership**

Doug Padley, Chair (UCLA)  
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**Executive Summary**

The University of California system includes more than 200,000 students and 160,000 staff and faculty, with more than 1 million alumni living and working around the world. UC staff and faculty work together in order to maintain UC's reputation as the world's preeminent public research university system. Their efforts chart the course for the University's future and enrich the communities in which they live and work. UC's ten campuses, three labs, along with the Office of the President, provide exciting environments that foster world-class education and research opportunities and generate a wide range of benefits and services that touch the lives of Californians every day.

The diversity committee is a standing committee that has been in place for two years. During the first year, the committee focused its report on providing a broad overview of diversity on all campuses, medical centers and the Office of the President. This year the committee narrowed its focus. The committee's goal was to collect information from each location and identify ways to increase and diversify membership on the respective board/staff assemblies/staff associations, which will in turn increase the diversity of the Council of University of California Staff Assemblies (CUCSA). Although this does not appear to be a traditional "diversity report", the information included provides a glimpse of successful practices at locations that can be shared with colleagues.

**Social Events**

Social events have proven to be a successful way for staff to interact with each other across departmental and school lines. Several UC campuses utilize this forum for administration to connect with staff, in both formal and informal settings. In addition, many campuses sponsor or co-sponsor social events with the support of their departmental sponsor which serve as an important and vital tool for staff moral and appreciation.

UC campuses in Los Angeles, Riverside, Irvine and San Diego host a version of a staff picnic. UCLA's event, in its second year, already attracts almost 5,000 people. UC San Diego's Staff Appreciation Picnic involves not only staff, but their families as well. UC Irvine uses their event as a "Birthday Party" for the campus. UC Riverside has the ever

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popular “UCR Idol and End of the Year BBQ”, which also includes a talent competition. Lastly, UC Santa Cruz has an annual Staff Appreciation Breakfast with close to 50% of staff in attendance (1,250 in 2006).

Other events on campuses include, but are not limited to, UCLA’s “Casino Night”, which also serves as a way to earn money for staff scholarships and awards; UC San Diego’s Chancellor’s “Take Me Out to the Ballgame”, in which all faculty and staff are invited to a pre-game party with food and fun -- then are treated to an evening at the ballgame; and UC Irvine’s successful “Salsa in the Park.” This year’s “Salsa in the Park” event celebrated the end of the academic year and the beginning of UCI’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary -- complete with a Mexican buffet and live salsa band!

Many campuses have smaller events, which are equally important. UCLA sponsors a Faculty and Staff Tailgate party at one of their popular football games; UCSB produces a “Walk at Lunch” event while UCR coordinates outings to local theater productions such as *Cats* and *Riverdance* at the historic Pantages Theater.

### **Topical Forums**

Topical forums encourage participation of all staff in the campus community and are widely attended by a diverse group of employees. The campus wide forums have fostered awareness and communication by providing staff with an opportunity to express their concerns and opinions, while educating them in university operations and planning.

Best practice styles for current topical forums include:

- Lunchtime Series of Lectures
- Staff Quarterly Brown Bag Meetings with the Chancellor
- Guest Speaker Series
- Learn at Lunch forums
- Topical discussions at Assembly General Meetings
- General Forums
- Seminars, Debates, Workshops
- Town Hall Meetings

Popular topics for forums include:

- Transportation and Parking
- Maximizing Your Career Advancement Opportunities
- Reclassification Process & Mentorship Opportunities
- Succession Planning
- Campus Business Transformations & Budget Initiatives
- Ergonomic Awareness and Worker’s Compensation
- Elder Family Planning
- Retirement Benefits

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- Crime Prevention - Staying Safe
- Becoming a Homeowner

Topical forums continue to strengthen workplace communities and foster effective communication between employees and the administration. The sharing of information leads to a clearer understanding of each of our roles in supporting the mission of the University.

**New Employee Orientation**

The majority of campuses and labs continue to struggle with membership as well as participation in their respective staff councils/assemblies. While a few Staff Assemblies play a role in their respective orientation programs for new staff members, most do not. In order to continue addressing diversity issues – and recruit a diverse group of CUCSA delegates, all campuses are encouraged to participate in New Employee Orientations. Research from this committee found inconsistent levels of participation in new staff orientation programs. Committee members feel that an early presence with new staff members can build a viable network of colleagues interested in participating in Staff Assembly programs.

Early exposure to new staff employees is critical in establishing a presence on campus that would, ideally, lead to a more diverse organization both on-campus and with the CUCSA delegation at large.

Several campuses are making concerted efforts to participate in New Staff Orientation programs; however, most have little involvement with newly hired staff:

Davis, Irvine, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Merced, Office of the President, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz

- No involvement in new staff orientation.

Berkeley

- Staff Council brochures and applications are made available at orientation.

Los Angeles

- Currently in discussion with Training office to include Staff Council in New Hire Orientation. Brochures always available.

Riverside

- At least 2 speakers discuss staff assembly at new staff orientation.

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San Diego

- Currently working on a program that would provide every new staff member with a “Welcome Packet.”

Suggestions for involvement are varied and can include any number of the following:

- Presentation on Staff Council/Assembly
- Distribution of publicity material in packets
- Tabling at the event and answering questions
- Providing a display/poster of Staff Assembly

**Print Media**

There are several types of print media that can be used to benefit/advertise campus Staff Assemblies. The more creative and eye catching, the better print media works. Some campuses print these in multiple languages for staff members who are not fluent in English. Developing a partnership with printing and reprographics departments can be extremely helpful for local assemblies. The object is exposure and visibility.

- Brochures: Brochures can be used to let staff members know what staff assembly is about, how to become a member of staff assembly, and how staff assembly can benefit staff. These should be eye catching and concise. Use of photos is beneficial, as people like to identify with other colleagues. These can be distributed during staff orientation programs, social activities, meetings and at various campus departments/locations.
- Flyers: Flyers can be used to advertise meetings, activities, events, elections, and new information that impacts staff. Flyers are especially useful for staff that do not have e-mail access and staff not subscribed to list servs. Ideally, flyers should be colorful and eye catching. As with brochures, use of photos is beneficial, as people like to see themselves or someone they know on anything in print. Flyers can be many different sizes, depending on available resources and amount of information being disseminated. For larger posters, consider having them laminated for long-term use.
- Calendars: Calendars can be used to advertise events but also to provide essential information. List board members’ contact information, department phone numbers, the Staff Assembly and CUCSA web site addresses. Annual calendars can also be used as a fundraiser for staff scholarships or events.
- Banners: Purchasing a vinyl banner has been a great investment for many Staff Assemblies in publicizing the organization to the larger campus community. A re-usable banner should include your logo, organization web site and even the

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CUCSA web site. A banner can be hung at every event as well as new employee orientation programs.

- Newsletters: Newsletters can be used to spotlight staff members and share staff information such as weddings, births, deaths, etc. Newsletters can also be used to advertise meetings, events, elections, board positions descriptions, board member roles/responsibilities, board member contact information, staff updates and information on getting involved.
- Email: Email can be a very effective way to get information out to staff – especially on campuses with multiple sites. The key to a successful email listserv is getting staff registered. This can be accomplished in several ways: announcements/sign up sheets at meetings and events, word of mouth, during new staff orientation programs, or attending departmental staff meetings. Staff Assembly representatives should partner with other groups who have established email listservs to gain a better understanding of implementing and sustaining such a communication tool.
- Special Invitations: Special invitations are useful but should not be overused. Invitations can serve as a way to invite staff to an event or to invite participation in elections. Labels can be requested from Human Resource departments on campus. Invitations can be time consuming and are best coordinated as a group.
- Novelty Ideas: Novelty ideas such as candy wrappers can be used as advertising. This is an unusual form of advertising; however, it is sure to attract a great deal of attention!

The more creative, fun, and unusual -- the better print materials are going to work. Use photos and consider personalized print materials when possible. The object is to get exposure and visibility

### **Partnering**

People and organizations tend to have the same concerns and issues across the university campuses and laboratories. These include but are not limited to housing, parking, health care issues, day care issues, etc. What might be thought of as just housing, parking, health care, day care, diversity, career development etc., is actually “everyone’s problem.” Partnering with other organizations provides a means for new ideas and incentives to be deployed in a positive value added way and a much needed avenue for partners to learn about Staff Assembly and CUCSA.

Good examples of effective partnering already exist:

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- Brown Bags that address issues such as balancing work and home and health issues that arise from stress if unable to do so. Tips on how to get your life back on track. Partner – Employee Assistance Groups
- People Helping People Award – a \$500 cash award annually to a UCR staff member honoring outstanding or exemplary service within the county of Riverside. Partner – Service Plus Credit Union
- Many campuses have staff scholarships (\$200.00 - \$500.00) for completing training activities that aid in their career development. Notices are sent out about the process and returned for committee review and awarded during a staff assembly function. Partner – All staff participating in the fundraisers such as Casino Night.
- Thumbs-up Awards - is a small form of recognition that can be given to an individual UCSC staff member, a team, or an academic in an administrative role (Dean, Dept. Chair) for special service she or he has rendered as a member of the campus community. Each nominee is a winner! Winner is given a certificate and a small token of appreciation. Partner – Staff Human Resources
- Working with local banks to receive fee waivers for banking transactions on accounts. Partner – Local Banks

The challenge is to think “outside the box” to enlist partners that once might have been overlooked. This not only publicizes staff assemblies, it also expands the scope of membership by utilizing unique partnerships.

### **Internet-based Tools**

In order to create a Web site that attracts users and effectively communicates the information that Staff Assemblies and CUCSA wish to publicize, users need to feel confident that the information they seek is readily available, user-friendly (preferably no more than two clicks from the home page), accurate, and up-to-date. Visitors also need a reason to return to the site. Updated news and reports should be included so that users feel the need to visit the site on a regular basis. In reviewing the various CUCSA and Staff Assembly sites for usability, several areas of web design and information architecture were looked at:

- Did the local Staff Assembly have a web presence?
- Was the information on the site up-to-date? Were links useful (and working)?
- Does the home page communicate fundamental information about the Staff Assembly? Its purpose? How it serves the staff community?
- Was there a clear link to Staff Assembly contacts to request additional information?

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- Did it include information on joining an email list or listserv?

Additional tasks considered for the usability test:

- How easy/difficult was it to find the names and contact information of the CUCSA representatives?
- How easy was it to sign up to receive email announcements?

General Impressions:

- Of the 14 UC locations (including three national labs and the Office of the President) the three national Labs do not have a web site developed and supported by CUCSA or Staff Assembly representatives.
- On several sites, a link to the CUCSA web site is included; however, no description of CUCSA is provided. If visitors are unfamiliar with the acronym or the organization; there is no incentive to visit the link.
- In addition, finding contact information for local CUCSA representatives proved to be a challenging task – usually leading to the CUCSA website which then requires users to navigate the CUCSA site to find their respective campus representatives UC Merced currently hosts the only site that includes the role of the Staff Assembly and CUCSA, as well as the delegates' contact information, as the first item. UC San Diego also had this information on their site, however the information connection was not as clear.
- Many of the sites have extensive information about staff events, the Staff Assembly organizations, and its members. Several sites included photos of Staff Assembly members and/or events, which tended to make the sites more personal and accessible.

### **Top Down Communication**

The relationship between Campus Staff Councils and campus senior management has a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the council, and its value to its members. The most active and successful Councils are those where structured communication and involvement with management on crosscutting campus policies and issues exists. These practices vary significantly from campus to campus.

Best practice examples of access *to* and communication *with* senior management include established monthly or quarterly meetings with a Chancellor or Associate Vice Chancellor. On the UC San Diego campus, the Staff Council officers alternate monthly meetings with the Associate Chancellor (Chief of Staff) and the Chancellor. Officers meet as needed with other Vice Chancellors depending on the issue or concern. At UC Santa Cruz, Staff Assembly board members meet with the Chancellor three times a year for a “Touch Base” meeting to discuss issues and concerns on both sides. Board members also have an established monthly meeting with the Assistant Vice Chancellor, who serves

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as the liaison to the Staff Assembly Board. At UC Riverside, the Staff Assembly convenes three “general meetings” annually and each is attended by the Chancellor or other senior leaders. At each meeting, the Chancellor provides a brief campus update. On several campuses, the Staff Assembly holds quarterly meetings with their sponsor, who is often the Vice Chancellor for Business or Human Resources.

Where a strong working relationship with the administration has been developed and nurtured, the Staff Council is most likely to be kept “in the loop” and consulted with on a wide variety of topics, for example, child care, transportation and parking, housing access, strategic communications, staff diversity, climate surveys. Frequently, these communications are simply through ordinary channels, such as e-mail, but are often more formalized. At UC Riverside, the president of the Staff Assembly is a member of the Chancellor’s Leadership Council, a bi-monthly gathering of senior leaders, deans, and directors of major campus units to share information on campus initiatives and events.

Additionally, management calls upon the Staff Council to serve on institutional committees, such as search committees, taskforces, and events. This is an effective tool for involving staff in campus issues and getting staff input and perceptions. Since the chairs of the committees and task forces are often top administrators and/or faculty, participation provides broad exposure for staff representatives. The list below reflects a sampling, and the scope of Staff Council representation on campus committees:

- Bookstore Advisory Committee
- Campus/Community Planning Committee
- Chancellor’s Budget Committee
- Institutional Bio-safety Committee
- Light Rail Transit Work Group
- Vehicle Accident Review Committee
- Advisory Committee on Sustainability
- Electronic Information & Communications Policy Committee
- Title IX Advisory Committee
- Campus Welfare Committee
- Student Judicial Board
- Long Range Development Plan Committee
- Tent U Task Force
- Classification Review Process Task Force
- Chancellor’s Inaugural Planning Committee

Other ways communication with management is fostered is through forums and brown bag sessions. Holding jointly sponsored forums with management/administration on specific “hot” topics is an effective way to quell rumors and misinformation, which can lead to staff morale issues. More information on Topical Forums is included in this report.

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**New Employee Orientation Recommendations**

In order for Staff Councils on all campuses to participate in New Employee Orientations, the following can be established:

- Communicate with campus administrations the intent of the Staff Assembly's efforts on recruitment and exposure of Staff Assembly to new employees.
- Communicate with Human Resources the intent of the Staff Assembly's efforts on recruitment and exposure of staff councils/assemblies to new employees.
- Each campus assembly should identify and meet with campus departments and individuals responsible for New Staff Orientation Programs. In this meeting, share the desire of the leadership to participate in New Staff Orientation in order to promote Staff Assembly.
- Each Staff Assembly should develop and compile informational brochures and flyers about opportunities for staff involvement that can be distributed during New Staff Orientation.
- Work with those responsible for New Staff Orientation to arrange for allotted time to speak with new employees about Staff Assembly.
- If Staff Assembly representatives are unable to participate in the actual orientation program, arrange to "table" at Orientation events.
- Provide a sign-up list at orientation events for any individual interested in becoming a member of Staff Assembly.
- Hold information meeting/session (advertising at New Staff Orientations and in all departments) about Staff Assembly for all employees. Direct invitations could be sent to those that indicated a desire to learn more or become actively involved
- Staff Assembly leadership should follow-up with all interested individuals as necessary.

**Partnering Recommendations:**

Invite members of organizations (African American, Asian American, American Indian Heritage, Umbrella Group), internal organizations (HR, Compensation, Wellness, upper management, facility) and outside organizations (banks and credit unions, local merchants) to a meeting to discuss cross cutting issues and solutions, and thus creating a partner for a new venture.

Collect and highlight partnering activities from campuses and laboratories and print in UC publications.

Implement an annual CUCSA award for best partnering activity.

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**Web Tools Recommendations**

Using the Web to raise awareness of CUCSA, with the goal of increasing participation and diversification of the council, is a relatively easily attainable goal. For the Staff Assemblies that already have a web presence, the following recommendations could help disseminate information about CUCSA:

- Include a brief definition of CUCSA and the role of the Staff Assembly. . By letting people know what CUCSA is and how they can participate could increase interest in the organization. Do not always default with a link to the main CUCSA Web site — focus on the role CUCSA has in relation to the Staff Assembly’s location.
- Create a generic email address for each location (i.e., [cucsa@lbl.gov](mailto:cucsa@lbl.gov)) with the two CUCSA delegates as recipients. This also serves to immediately set up an email/contact list for future correspondence and can provide continuity in membership as the new delegates are appointed.
- Get those listservs going! While the Web is a fount of information, it is in many ways a passive resource — one has to have the incentive or need to visit a particular web site on an ongoing basis. By simply sending an email update of recent CUCSA meetings, or alerting staff about upcoming events and including a link to the Staff Assembly or CUCSA web site, you establish an active mode of communicating with the UC community at your location.
- To get those email lists going, each site should ensure a prominent place on the home page for a quick and easy sign up. Don’t risk the loss of a potential member by asking for unnecessary information.
- The national labs should have a web presence as soon as possible, even if limited to only one page to let staff members know about the organization and the opportunities available as a result of participating in CUCSA. This would help in attracting candidates for delegate positions.
- All web sites should be kept up-to-date to reinforce that information is pertinent to UC staff. All web sites should include dates of the most recent updates. This reassures visitors that the pages are maintained on a regular basis and that returning to the pages for new information is encouraged. In addition to keeping the pages updated, links should be checked regularly.
- Finally, photos of staff, Staff Assembly members and CUCSA delegates are an excellent way to not only show the diverse nature of staff participating in the assemblies, but also makes it easy for others to identify and contact representatives, thereby opening another method of communication.

**Final Summary**

This report includes several “best practices” that will benefit local Staff Assemblies. We would like to summarize what the committee feels is important and why. As outlined in the report, our committee looked at several different areas that could have a positive

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effect on the diversity of the population of campus Staff Assemblies and CUCSA. Below is a summary of the recommendations that could potentially achieve this goal.

- Sponsor large events that will include both staff and administration. This is an opportunity for campus administrators to connect with staff. Many campuses currently sponsor or co-sponsor social events with the support of their respective department sponsor and/or Chancellor's Office, which makes these events very important for staff moral and appreciation. This practice should be encouraged throughout the system. Sponsor forums that will serve to strengthen workplace communities and foster effective communication between staff and administration. Early exposure to new staff employees is critical in establishing a presence on campus. This can be accomplished by having a role in New Employee Orientation programs. Campus-wide exposure could lead to a more diverse organization both on locally (Staff Assemblies) and statewide (CUCSA).
- Print materials have proven to be very important in increasing exposure and visibility. Staff Assemblies are encouraged to develop updated materials to distribute to the campus community.
- Staff Assemblies are encouraged to partner with local diversity groups (such as cultural-based campus organizations), internal organizations (i.e. Human Resources, Compensation, Wellness, faculty) and outside organizations (banks and credit unions, local merchants, etc.) as this has proven to be very important in increase membership and visibility on several campuses. Staff Assemblies are encouraged to "think outside the box" in enlisting partners that once might have been overlooked. In addition to publicizing Staff Assemblies, new partnerships and collaborative efforts are formed.
- Create web sites that attract users and effectively communicate information that Staff Assemblies and the CUCSA wish to publicize. Accessing information should be user-friendly (preferably no more than two clicks from the home page), accurate, and up-to-date.
- Formal communication models help to ensure that staff has a voice on crosscutting campus issues. On-going scheduled meetings with Chancellors and Vice Chancellors are an effective way for management to have a pulse on staff perceptions and morale. Staff assemblies are encouraged to promote the need for staff participation on campus committees and task forces. This level of participation and communication with management will increase the vitality and credibility of the Staff Assembly.

We believe these best practices, when put into action, will help increase diversity in Staff Assemblies, CUCSA and the faces of our campuses.

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If you would like to hear more about any of the events or ideas presented above,  
please contact any CUCSA representative from that campus.

Links:

<http://www.staffassembly.ucr.edu/>

<http://www.staffassembly.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/display.cgi>

<http://www.hr.uci.edu/staffassembly/>

<http://staffassembly.ucla.edu>