



Campus Update – Office of the President December 2004

This fall UCOPA revised our mission statement to more directly capture the current direction and focus of our staff assembly. Our mission statement now includes the following:

“UCOPA supports the mission of the University of California by encouraging communication between staff and the Administration and other members of the University community on matters of interest to staff career employees, in accordance with California laws and Regental policy. UCOPA is an organization for staff dedicated to promoting a sense of community among UCOP staff.”

This wording helps to capture the expanded role we see our group playing in the creation of community at UCOP. This fall, in keeping with the direction of our revised mission, we continued to provide opportunities to increase the exchange of knowledge in our noontime series, focusing on the individual needs of UCOP staff, as well as our sponsorship of various noontime interest groups that enhance our goal of community building throughout UCOP.

This fall, UCOPA hosted three noontime educational programs, sponsored one charity walk, and created seven employee interest groups.

In September, our featured speaker was Lynne Withey, Director of the University of California Press. UC Press is among the largest and most distinguished university presses in the nation. Publishing about 180 books and 50 journals annually, UC Press represents all ten campuses plus ANR and the NRS within the UC system and attracts authors from around the world. With topics ranging from anthropology, ecology, nature, art history to food and wine, UC Press books appeal to scholars, students, and general readers. Director Withey brought a display of recent publications and spoke about the Press's 110-year history, and the future of digital publishing. As a result of this presentation, UCOPA was able to obtain a 15% discount for all OP staff on all purchases of UC Press books.

In October, UCOPA sponsored the “East Bay Walk to Cure Diabetes” team. Approximately 18 million Americans suffer from diabetes, including hundreds of thousands of children affected with this lifelong disease. Each year, more people die of diabetes and its complications than die from AIDS and breast cancer combined. In the past two years, the UCOP team has raised almost \$15,000 to find a cure for diabetes. This year colleagues from UC Berkeley and both nearby labs joined the UCOP team. UCOPA was proud to sponsor a team that joined hundreds of family teams, corporate teams, and individuals from the East Bay in support of this worthy cause.

Also in October, UCOPA hosted a noontime educational program highlighting The Lakeside Speakeasy Toastmasters Club. This club, whose membership is mainly UCOP employees, presented an entertaining and informative program designed to acquaint employees with what Toastmasters is, what it can do for people, and why people might be interested in joining. Participating Lakeside Speakeasy club members told employees about Toastmasters by describing their individual experiences in the organization, as well as the benefits they've received from their membership. In addition, the presentation included a mini-meeting that included: a prepared speech, a speech evaluation, and a short session of impromptu speaking.

In November, UCOPA hosted a Noontime presentation entitled "Stress Management." Our featured presenter was Jude Sharp, Employee Assistance Coordinator at UCOP. During this program, Ms. Sharp focused on: identifying stress by helping employees zero in on the effects of stress, including the physical and emotional plus the social signals that suggest distress. The presentation continued with tips on dealing with identified stress, including: ways to retain good stress while minimizing bad stress by (i) learning to manage transitions, (ii) the practice of "enlightened selfishness"; (iii) including priority setting; and (iv) maintaining limits. Ms. Sharp concluded with tips on ways to stay healthy.

This past summer, UCOPA distributed a web-based staff interest questionnaire to explore ways of developing a greater sense of community among UCOP staff. A targeted goal was identifying information for facilitating the creation of group activities. Results of the questionnaire indicated strong interests in languages, a book club, a golf club, and crafts. Based on these results, UCOPA Steering Committee members focused our efforts on sponsoring the following interest groups (lead by staff volunteers) for the enjoyment and participation of UCOP staff.

Classes in basic French and Italian

These classes are designed for beginners, or for those who may have studied the languages but need a refresher course. Enrollees learn pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence formation. Much of the vocabulary, grammar, and discussions are centered on travel and culture. The main objectives are to understand the spoken and be able to read the written word.

Conversational Spanish and German Groups

These groups do not include formal instruction. Instead they meet on an informal basis for brown bag lunches. These gatherings provide members with an opportunity to improve speaking skills in a friendly atmosphere while meeting other UCOP staff. For those who are fluent and/or native speakers, these groups are a wonderful way to keep conversational skills going while informally helping others to improve.

Book Club

For those who love to read, and who enjoy discussing what they have read with others, the "UCOP Lunchtime Readers Book Club" was formed. The first meeting was a huge success with many attendees. It was decided by the group to form two branches: the

Kaiser Building Branch and the Franklin Building Branch. The club is one in spirit, despite being located in two OP buildings. To maintain the joint feelings, the groups meet monthly on the same date and time to discuss the same book. The books are chosen on a 4-month cycle (2 from each location). The following four books were read during the September – December time period: Samurai's Garden by Gail Tsukiyama, The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd, The Piano Tuner by Daniel Mason, and The DaVinci Code by Dan Brown.

Golf Group

The UCOP Golf Group was formed to assist UCOP golfers in getting together at designated courses and times to play golf. Interest in the group has been large enough that the group will be seeking USGA approval with official handicaps established, and members paying an annual fee. The group meets on weekends at designated locations and times.

Knitters and Crocheters Group

This informal group offers a place where those who love to knit and crochet can gather together once per week. Experienced knitters and crocheters are able to socialize while working on their individual projects and beginners find a safe environment where they can learn from those already accomplished in the art.

Any questions regarding this report or other issues at UCOP can be sent to Debra Richerson, Senior Delegate (Debra.Richerson@ucop.edu) or Kathy Mendonca, Junior Delegate (Kathy.Mendonca@ucop.edu).