

CAPSule

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CAPS Aims High in Bargaining

On June 5, Governor Brown's contract negotiator told the CAPS Bargaining Team that any new contract agreement must be cost neutral. The CAPS Team's response was clear: without a substantial salary increase, there will be no agreement from CAPS.

In fact, CAPS gave the state a very specific salary proposal: ***"CAPS proposes a general salary increase for all Unit 10 employees, in all classifications, at all steps of each classification, of 30% effective January 1, 2014. This increase lessens the inequity between the salaries of state scientists and comparable classifications both inside and outside state government. It further improves the state's competitiveness for scientific personnel, at a time when recruitment and retention of scientific talent is essential for the long-term viability of the state's scientific programs. This proposal does not restore the financial loss sustained by scientists over the past several years when unpaid furloughs were in place."***

CAPS backed up its proposal noting the fiscal health of the state budget, and with detailed salary information. A salary survey jointly agreed to by both Cal HR and CAPS in the current MOU (Section 17.3) shows a salary lag of between 26% and 37% for three state scientific classifications that are representative of most state scientists. For scientists working closely with state

engineers, the salary differential is comparable, between 29% and 33%. Specific comparisons can be found on the CAPS webpage.

CAPS made other significant proposals:

- allowing more state time for professional development,
- providing accidental death and dismemberment insurance to scientists injured or killed while working,
- maintaining health, dental and vision care benefits,
- increasing the annual reimbursement available to all scientists for professional society dues,
- using the federal government's schedule for travel reimbursements, just as the state currently does for mileage reimbursement.

The CAPS Bargaining Team told the state's negotiator that there will be no tentative agreement with anything close to a contract that is revenue neutral. That's in spite of the recent agreement announced by SEIU Local 1000 which calls for raises of no more than 4.5% over three years. The vast difference between CAPS and CalHR suggests that a new agreement is nowhere close. In the recent past, other labor groups have settled first, and for far less than a living salary. CAPS urges all scientists to support CAPS in achieving a just settlement. Such an agreement must aim much higher than the low bar set by Governor Brown.



Taking a Break From Bargaining. (L-R) CAPS President David Miller, Public Health Microbiologists Jan Lidgard and Cassandra McQuaid, and CAPS Vice President and Bargaining Chair Patty Velez. On June 12, PHMs Lidgard and McQuaid made an outstanding presentation to Governor Brown's bargaining team in support of higher salaries for scientists at the Richmond Campus.



Like Pay For Like Work! Also on June 12, three Environmental Scientists presented detailed information about the need to close the salary gap with state engineers. Between David Miller and Patty Velez are Hazardous Substances Scientist David Rist (left) from the Dept. of Toxic Substances Control, and Environmental Scientists Jeremiah Puget (center) and Jon Marshack (right) from the Water Resources Control Board. Both presentations can be viewed on the CAPS web page.

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25TH ANNUAL STATE SCIENTIST DAY MAY 15, 2013



CAPS' 2013 Honorary State Scientist, Assemblyman Richard Pan, M.D. (D-Sacramento), helps out with the "Mad Science" program.



Michelle Robinson with DWR's "Water Burger."



(l-r) Fred Mehr and Edward Newman (Cal EMA) answer questions about Fire & Rescue.



(l-r) Shawn Winterton and Chris Borkent (Food and Ag) show students live insects from the Entomology Lab.



Smokey Bear, helping out the Department of Forestry, poses with some fans.

Revenue Neutral

By David Miller, President

Governor Brown's negotiators until very recently said he wants a new labor contract but it has to be revenue neutral. The CAPS Bargaining Team wants a new contract too, and it has to be anything BUT revenue neutral.

Governor Brown doesn't mean quite zero. That became apparent when SEIU announced a labor agreement on June 11 -- a 4.5% wage increase over three years. In fact, all of it could come as late as July 1, 2015. There apparently are modest increases in other areas of that labor agreement. The total is nowhere near the goal set by the CAPS Bargaining Team: salary equity.

The CAPS Bargaining Team's proposed salary increase exceeds the SEIU labor agreement, to say the least: a 30% salary increase for ALL state scientists effective January 2014. This proposal would close the salary inequity gap for most state scientists. The amount comes from two separate salary surveys, one comparing state scientists and state engineers, and the other comparing state scientists with various government jurisdictions. The latter survey is conducted jointly with CalHR prior to each round of bargaining in accordance with the CAPS MOU.

How does the CAPS Bargaining Team justify a 30% wage proposal in the face of revenue neutral? Easy. The numbers show it, and the need is great, not just for state scientists, but for the programs in which we work. State government needs to be a more competitive employer, and it starts with salary.

I've spoken with several young scientists in recent weeks. They are feeling the pinch on salary, as we all are. Many have young families. When I ask them why they took the job, the answer is always the same: they love the work -- compared to the alternatives -- but they don't like trying to pay their bills on a state salary. ALL of them are considering other jobs. Many will, absent a substantial salary bump soon, end up working somewhere else. Some have already returned to graduate school and earned an engineering related degree.

If there's any good news it's that unpaid furloughs will end this month, and scientists at the top step of their salary classification will see a 3% wage increase in July. That's good, but not enough. Planning for the future means making state government more competitive for scientists and properly compensating career scientists who are doing an outstanding job!

We have lived with this salary inequity for too many years. We have endured pay and benefit cuts. We are all frustrated with the lack of wage growth. Less take-home pay in the face of rising costs means tough choices on the expenses we all have as responsible adults and parents. As state scientists, we've done more than our part to help the state solve its budget woes. We need to see substantial salary growth, and the numbers support us. We want something done about it!

"We need to see real salary growth and a path to salary equity."

The state is flush with cash, in spite of what Governor Brown and his Department of Finance profess. Most of our positions are funded principally from Special Funds, not the General Fund.

So what happens now that SEIU has agreed to a new contract with a very modest salary increase? Modest won't

close the gap between the salaries of scientists and engineers who are doing the same work. It won't make it any easier to buy a modest \$9 breakfast when reimbursement is only six bucks. It won't restore the subsidy provided to scientists in rural areas who must pay thousands more each year for health care because they have no access to an HMO.

The CAPS Bargaining Team insists that the state spend more to support scientists in their work. We need to see real salary growth and a path to salary equity. We must have the financial support that enables us to get our jobs done, to attract young scientists to state programs and keep them there. Governor Brown is apparently big on investment in infrastructure, such as tunnels for Delta water and high speed rail. But infrastructure investment involves people too. That means scientific programs and the scientists who staff them.

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SEIU Reaches Agreement



SEIU Local 1000 announced on June 11 that it had reached a final agreement with the Brown Administration for a three-year contract covering its nine state employee bargaining units. Their members will receive wage increases totaling 4.5 percent over 3 years. According to SEIU:

- A 2 percent raise would become effective July 1, 2014, if the state achieves certain revenue targets; that increase would be followed by an additional 2.5 percent increase, effective July 1, 2015;
- If the state does not achieve those revenue targets, the entire 4.5 percent increase would be effective July 1, 2015;
- Seasonal employees will receive a 50 cent hourly increase, effective July 1, 2014.

Other key contract provisions in the SEIU Local 1000 agreement include no new furlough or PLP days during the term of the contract, reduction in health care dependent vesting from two years to only one, increases in business and travel expenses, removal of the expiration date for PLP earned in 2010 and 2012, workplace violence and bullying prevention, and a grievance procedure for their "dignity clause." The agreement is subject to ratification by both the SEIU Local 1000 membership and the State Legislature.

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