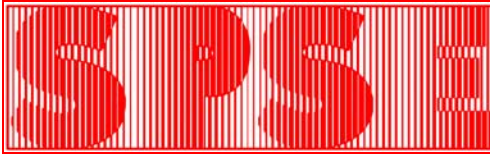




UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONAL  
& TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES  
C W A 9119, A F L - C I O



**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS**  
Affiliated with  
the University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE),  
Local 9119 of the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO

PRESS RELEASE, FEBRUARY 13, 2003

The Union of Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE/CWA Local 9119) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), and the UPTE affiliate at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) the Society of Professional Scientists and Engineers (SPSE) announce their support for the continuation of the University of California (UC) management of their laboratories.

The three organizations acknowledge that the alleged credit card and government property fraud at Los Alamos, along with allegations of LANL management cover-up as a result of the firing of two investigators, have created a crisis of confidence in the ability of the University of California to manage the Laboratories. Efforts at reform of the business practices at the Laboratories have begun by both UC and by the Laboratories' management.

The organizations maintain that these events have highlighted needs for reform at the Laboratories that they have long advocated. The best way to prevent the recurrence of this kind of problem in the future is for the Laboratories' management, the University, and DOE to take seriously their duty to protect, rather than persecute, laboratory employees who dare to point out wrongdoing when they see it.

Other reforms still needed include:

- Strengthened enforcement of whistleblower protections. The whistleblower protection office in the Laboratories should report to the UC Vice President for the Laboratories rather than to a department within the individual Laboratories.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) should improve the effectiveness and the reporting lines of its whistleblower protection office.
- The Laboratories and the University should hold its individual managers accountable in cases of fiscal or employment abuse.
- End the practice of the DOE covering all legal costs of the Laboratories and the University in defending against employee claims of retaliation and discrimination.
- Improved labor-management relations.

The UPTE organizations cite that, while UC is not a perfect employer, the alternatives are much worse. The three organizations are calling for a more responsive UC management, but not another contractor. Workers only recently won the right to organize at LANL, for example, and that right could be seriously jeopardized with a change in contractor.

Other benefits of UC management, the organizations point out, include

1. UC provides a unique atmosphere of creativity, independence and scholarship to its management of the Laboratories;

2. The UC culture is more supportive of basic research than the bottom-line culture of private industry;
3. UC manages the Laboratories as part of the public service ethic of a great university;
4. UC, as an internationally respected research university, aids in the recruitment of top people to the Laboratories;
5. There is an integration of science and support staff under the single employer of UC that is critical to the success of the national security mission;
6. Change in contractor could lead to unanticipated negative consequences such as
  - a. loss of weapons program knowledge and skills
  - b. potential loss of critical staff
  - c. disruption of the economic sector of northern New Mexico
7. Corporations, by their very structure, are ultimately responsible to stockholders. UC has a 60-year proven record of commitment to the public good in its operation of the Labs;
8. UC's training of IAEA Weapons Inspectors, critical to the current international crisis, is only one example of the critical support UC has provided to world security through its management of the Labs;
9. Labor has the right to organize under UC; this right could be jeopardized with a new contractor;

The three UPTE organizations support the progress underway in reform of Laboratory business practices. However, talk of changing the contract is premature as UC begins to implement reform. UC is still the most robust agent of change for the Laboratories. Its position of leadership in the nation's nuclear complex makes it both a target for criticism as well as an agent for positive change for the entire complex. This is an opportunity for change -- let UC continue to demonstrate its capability to make improvements.

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