



VERIP III

The recent announcements regarding the proposed offering of 3 years age, 3 years service, and 3 months transition assistance raises issues that are deeply disturbing for reasons that go well beyond the obvious personal concerns. The purpose of this sheet is to voice these issues and to suggest some possible courses of action.

The most serious of the issues is the interference by the Department of Energy in the University of California's decision regarding some of its employees. A decision that it is legally allowed to make under the terms of the contract between the DOE and the University. It is our understanding that the University, acting under the conditions of the contract, created the terms (3 + 5 & 3) of VERIP III without asking for DOE's agreement, *but* kept DOE fully informed at each stage of the development of VERIP III.

If this is correct, and we believe it is, then it is simply incredible that a new reduced offer, a *compromise*, should now be put forward. The apparent reason for this compromise is to try and establish a better working relationship with DOE, e.g., to maintain the contract even through its natural life!!! There are a number of questionable points about this reasoning. First, it is highly unlikely that compromising on an issue that had progressed as far as receiving Regents approval, and is allowed under the terms of the contract, will encourage the DOE to act as a more responsible contracting authority in the future. Appeasement never succeeds in the long term and "caving-in: on an issue that is totally within the University's legal jurisdiction can only be interpreted as appeasement. The progression of this episode looks very much like a matter of control—who's the boss? (With some envy thrown in.)

Perhaps it is worth recalling that the basic purpose of establishing the University of California as the manager of the weapons laboratories was to insulate the activities in the field of atomic energy as much as possible from the vagaries of politics. Is this no longer the case?

On a more personal level, the prospective retirees will *lose* some 5% of their retirement pay because of DOE's envy and desire for control of the laboratories they fund, even though the additional moneys do not come from funds they control. Is it feasible that the Federal Government would try to interfere with the

retirement benefits of General Motors because some of the funds came from government contracts? The difference is only a matter of degree, not substance.

There are certainly a number of issues that should, and will be, discussed in the future, but to keep this to a one sheet flyer we consider what are our courses of action. Perhaps the most important act is to inform the Regents and our members of Congress how we feel about this developing fiasco—listed below are the relevant names and addresses. A petition may also be sent out, but this will take more time, and individual letters/communications can be quicker and very effective.

Another option seems to be for individuals to put in a letter after July 1 accepting the Regents' May 20/21 VERIP III plan. (July 1 being the date on which the plan becomes active.) It appears that acceptance may be legally allowed until such time as the Regents rescind the 3 + 5 & 3 plan, a rescission we earnestly urge them not to carry out. In any case, it may be possible to get in "under the wire."

Finally, there is the option of legal action by either individuals or groups. This seems extreme to some of us, and would probably create chaos for a very long period, and at a time we should be getting on with the jobs at hand. But it may be the last resort to try and prove that we are truly employees of the University of California and not of DOE.

Where To Write:

Regents, University of California
%Secretary Bonnie Smotony
300 Lakeside Drive, 22nd floor
Oakland, CA 94612-3550

Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-0501

Dianne Fienstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-0502

William P. Baker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0510

Names and addresses of individual Regents are available from SPSE Executive Board Members, and the SPSE office.

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