

Debbie Ceder for CUE Statewide Treasurer (Candidate Statement)

I am Debbie Ceder, a clerical working in the Physics Department at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Since May 2005, I have been acting Treasurer for the statewide union, and in these 15 months, I have developed a clear understanding of what is involved - what the work is, how to do it, what problems to avoid, and what changes we need to make in the future.

CUE's yearly income is approximately two million dollars, and the accounting system is necessarily complicated. It exists on two levels - one is the statewide level, and the other is based on the coordination of 10 local systems run by the locals and their treasurers. I am frankly proud that for the first time in CUE's history, statewide is now producing reports of local and statewide expenditures in a timely and regular fashion - an accomplishment that is necessary for setting sound organizing and representational goals locally and statewide. In the area of spending and record-keeping, there are many legal requirements for unions, and I have worked with CUE's accountants and lawyers to make sure that we operate within those constraints.

We have just moved to a system in which locals can choose to pay their own bills or have them paid by statewide staff. As a result of this shift, for which I advocated, many problems of unpaid bills and budget uncertainties have disappeared. Credit for this accomplishment must be shared with local treasurers and our excellent statewide accounting staff.

I put a high value on positive interpersonal interactions as one way to arrive at the best work product, and I believe that I have developed a positive relationship with CUE's staff. No one can be an effective Treasurer without the contributions of staff.

I've made many recommendations for improvements in CUE's financial practices, and I expect to make more. The most basic of these have to do with the union's need to be able to plan pro-actively, not just reactively, and we need to be more closely guided by realistic budget setting. I look forward to working with others on this. Another goal of mine is to work with local Treasurers to enable them to better oversee their locals' financial dealings. The Local Treasurer is a complicated position, and since CUE is a member run union, it means we need to help each other develop the needed skills. I'm happy to do this.

The statewide board appointed me to fill the Treasurer position when it was vacated by the previous Treasurer's mid-term resignation. Through this experience and because I've held other positions in CUE, I think I have a well-rounded understanding of CUE's needs. I have served as President of the Santa Barbara CUE local, as a member of the statewide Executive Board and as the Statewide Southern Vice President. I have been on the bargaining team for CUE/UC and for CUE/LWU (our staff members' union). I hope to be elected because I think that in this position, I can contribute significantly to CUE's mission - providing strong representation to UC clericals and fighting the University when it acts against our interests, as in the case of UC's plans for our pension. CUE's financial health is a critical basis for effective contract bargaining and individual representation, and that is what CUE is all about!