

MARY G. HIGGINS
CHIEF STEWARD

I am not an active candidate since I was the only person nominated for this position. However, I was told that I could post a statement, and I welcome the opportunity. I have worked at UCSF since June of 1970, and have been an active steward since 1976. In 1976 we did not have a collective bargaining agreement. The various campus unions had only “employee organization” status. Nevertheless, we did represent in grievances in accordance with the personnel policies, but we had few rights. For instance, we could go to arbitration to try to get a job back but the arbitrator’s decision was only advisory to the chancellor – unlike a decision today - which is final and binding. My first demonstrations were in front of the chancellor’s office - encouraging him to support a favorable arbitration by returning a clerical to work. Today, with our contract we no longer have to depend upon the whims of a chancellor. Our union contract guarantees a grievance procedure and final and binding arbitration. We have come a long way.

Margy Wilkinson has held this office for the last two terms. The CUE constitution only allows for two consecutive terms, so Margy has to take a break. Margy has done a great job in getting UC Merced clericals up and running – she won the first ever arbitration at Merced. She overturned a dismissal. She has been tremendously effective in establishing various committees for stewards, as well as monitoring monthly triage meetings for stewards with our attorneys. She has been unfailingly available to stewards across the State. I pledge to continue the good work she has put in place, and I hope to make further contributions. I would like to have a more interactive website; a regular stewards’ newsletter; and more contract education.

Finally, I want to acknowledge all the bargaining teams through the 22 years that UC clericals have had a union contract. It has been a long, continuous struggle, but we continue to improve our rights, working conditions and wages. UC has been described as the “worse public employer in the State”. I really think that is true. It is certainly the most arrogant.

So, Onward to greater glory, higher wages and stronger contract language!

In solidarity,

Mary