

A short history of CSUEU

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CSEA Is Founded

The California State Employees Association (CSEA) was created in 1931 as an outgrowth of a huge effort by employee groups throughout the state to win public support at the ballot box for establishing a State Employees Retirement System. The astonishing success of this effort, undertaken at the bottom of the Great Depression, is a testament to the extraordinary skill and devotion of CSEA's founders.

From its start, CSEA has represented a diverse constituency of state workers, including civil service employees and supervisors, state retirees, and state university employees.

In 1931, CSEA held its first General Council, a meeting of delegates representing its diverse membership. Three years later, CSEA successfully ushered in a constitutional amendment to establish the nation's strongest and best merit civil service system.

The 1930s saw the development of group health insurance plans and the organization of a State Employee Credit Union. CSEA was successful in opposing a ballot initiative that would have prohibited the employment of married women, and it arranged for all University of California employees to be included in the state retirement system.

The CSU System Is Formed

The formation of what we now know as the California State University (CSU) system evolved over several years, but a pivotal moment came with the passage of the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960, which brought the system of campuses together. It called for all state residents to have access to a tuition-free, public higher education. Further, it outlined the mission of the three levels of colleges, including not only the CSU but also the UC and community college systems. Many of the CSU campuses already were up and running; in fact the earliest campus, now known as San Jose State University, was founded in 1857 as the California State Normal School.

CSEA fought successfully to retain employee rights in this new master plan for higher education, which, among other things, separated the state colleges from the Department of Education and placed them under an independent board of trustees, similar to the university regents.

In 1960, CSEA negotiated a 7.5 percent salary increase for CSU employees and a six percent general pay increase for civil service employees.

CSEA's CSU Division Is Created

With the introduction of collective bargaining for civil service and CSU employees in 1980, CSEA established separate, independent divisions for each constituent group in CSEA — CSU, UC, civil service rank-and-file, supervisors and retired employees.

In 1982, CSEA's first year of collective bargaining, CSEA's CSU division was elected as the exclusive representative for Bargaining Units (BUs) 2, 5, 7 and 9. It secured three-year contracts for CSU units 5 and 7, covering 9,000 employees.

In 1983, the CSU division negotiated first-time contracts for BUs 2 and 9. This was the same year that the CSEA General Council voted to affiliate with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of the fastest-growing unions in the nation, bringing CSEA into the mainstream of the American labor movement after having been unaffiliated for nearly 60 years.

In 1984, CSEA's Board of Directors voted unanimously to ratify an affiliation agreement to become Local 1000 of the SEIU. Prior to this affiliation, CSEA had been the largest independent organization representing public employees.

In 1985, CSEA began coalition bargaining, where all four units (2, 5, 7 and 9) bargained at one table. That practice has continued until the present time.

In 1987, reopener negotiations for CSU employee salary and benefits went to impasse, but finally produced solid improvements, including a four percent general salary increase.

In 1989, a year of bargaining delivered a three-year package of improvements for the four BUs, including general salary increases for 1989 through 1991, salary inequity adjustments for 53 classifications covering 7500 workers, and a freeze on parking rates.

In 1992, the CSU unilaterally suspended Merit Salary Adjustments (MSAs) from CSEA-represented employees. CSEA filed an Unfair Labor Practice Charge, arguing that it was illegal for CSU to take this unilateral action without giving CSEA an opportunity to bargain.

In 1993, members ratified a new contract that preserved pay and benefit levels.

In 1995 bargaining, CSU proposed that MSAs be eliminated and replaced with discretionary performance pay. CSEA refused to dismantle the fifty-year old step program and the parties declared impasse. After exhausting the statutory impasse procedures of mediation and fact-finding, for the first time in the history of CSU collective bargaining, the CSU imposed terms and conditions on employees. Effective April 1, 1996, the CSU unilaterally took away steps and created open salary ranges. In addition, management was given the sole discretion to give or not to give performance pay to CSEA-represented employees.

In June 1997, after many years of litigation, the Public Employment Relations Board ordered CSU to issue more than \$20 million in back pay and interest to approximately 4,000 CSEA-Represented employees whose merit salary adjustments had been improperly withheld when CSU suspended payment in 1992. This was to become the largest-ever back pay case in CSU history.

Because of the CSU Division's fight against performance-based pay, along with such victories as the merit salary adjustment case, the division experienced steady gains in recruitment. Between 1996 and 1998, the net gain in membership exceeded 30 percent.

In 1998, pressure from CSEA and several other organizations forced the CSU to drop its proposal for a 10-year partnership with four corporations (GET, Microsoft, Fujitsu, and Hughes). Known as CETI, this program would have threatened thousands of CSU jobs.

Fair Share Fees Are Established

In 1999, Gov. Gray Davis signed a bill which provided that non-members represented by CSU staff and faculty unions had to pay either union dues or fair share fees, which helped improve services to the membership. Fair share fees are calculated as the percentage of union dues that pay for such things as negotiating a contract and representing employees in grievances and arbitrations.

In 1999, CSEA also signed a new contract with CSU that included:

- the ability of most temporary employees with more than four years of service to become permanent
- protections against contracting out
- a general salary increase of 2.6 percent
- a one percent service-based salary increase for all eligible employees

The Struggle for Returning to an Equitable CSU Compensation System Continues

In FY 2000, after years of protests against arbitrary and capricious performance pay, the discretionary pay-for-performance system was replaced with a merit-based pay provision. The Merit Salary Increase (MSI) program tied merit pay to an employee's overall rating on an annual performance evaluation. However, the MSI system was unable to function well because it lacked independent funding from the base budget.

Since FY 2000, the union has also negotiated the Service Salary Increase (SSI) program and the In-Range Progression (IRP) program. Unfortunately, there has never been enough money to fund all of these programs. As a result, CSU employees rarely progress within the open pay ranges associated with their job classification and most remain in the first two quartiles of the ranges, even after a decade of service.

The union strongly believes that employee compensation should not only be competitive to enable the employer to recruit and retain good employees, but it should be perceived by employees as being fair and reasonable. CSU employees no longer believe that the current system is fair and reasonable. As a result, many employees leave the system after discovering they have no way to reach the upper end of the salary scale in their classification.

CSUEU Incorporates

The CSU Division voted to incorporate and filed incorporation papers in 2004. CSUEU became an incorporated affiliate of CSEA on January 1, 2005, when CSEA gave the union a charter.

Today, CSUEU is an independent affiliate of CSEA representing over 15,000 employees on 23 CSU campuses and in the office of the chancellor. Its bargaining units comprise the majority of non-academic employees in the state university system:

Bargaining Unit 2 consists of approximately 500 employees who work in Student Health Centers on CSU campuses. BU2 includes such classifications as registered nurse, nurse practitioner, licensed vocational nurse, medical assistant, pharmacist, health educator, radiologic technician, physical therapist, athletic trainer, speech pathologist, physician's assistant and clinical lab scientist.

Bargaining Unit 5 consists of approximately 2,000 CSU employees. It includes such classifications as custodian, groundswoker, irrigation specialist, gardener, laborer, cook, food service worker and warehouse worker.

Bargaining Unit 7 consists of approximately 6,500 CSU employees. It includes such classifications as administrative support coordinator, library assistant, payroll technician, stock clerk, parking officer, police dispatcher, buyer, collections representative, account clerk and graphic specialist.

Bargaining Unit 9 consists of approximately 7,000 CSU employees. It includes such classifications as administrative analyst/specialist, information technology consultant, equipment technician, accountant, instructional support technician, interpreter, real-time captioner, network analyst, research technician, laboratory assistant, performing arts technician, public affairs/communications specialist and livestock technician.

New Bargaining Units

In 2010, CSUEU began representation of a new bargaining unit:

Bargaining Unit 13 consists of approximately 20 CSUEU-represented English Language Program instructors at CSU Los Angeles. CSUEU representation began with member ratification of the tentative agreement in late 2010, after nearly four years of deliberations. The working conditions of these instructors are different enough from those of faculty to warrant CSUEU's representation.

In addition, CSUEU completed negotiations in 2009 on behalf of nearly 20 food service workers employed by University Enterprises, Inc. (UEI), at Sacramento State University. Even though these workers had rights to comparable pay under the Education Code, they'd fallen far behind pay scales for CSU workers in food service classifications, so the negotiations involved moving them back up to the scale. The three-year agreement featured across-the-board general salary increases, and it restored step increases retroactively to 2007.

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