

September 16, 2009

Dear Members of the Academic Senate,

I hope you had a productive summer. I personally found the level of activity and significance of issues that came my way, over the summer, to be a bit exhausting. It seems that at least from a service perspective, we have certainly gone to “year-round operation”. I have heard from many of you in the last few weeks. It is clear that each member of the UC Davis community is being profoundly affected by the new realities we face in the wake of unprecedented budget cuts. The amount of information and the rate at which it is being generated makes it difficult to keep up, especially over the summer when we all expect to be more focused on family and research. Below I have attempted to summarize the main issues and included links to relevant communications from across UC and in some cases beyond:

Future of California Higher Education

The Sacramento Bee’s Peter Shrag wrote an excellent article on September 2nd titled “Yudof’s Message”.
http://www.californiaprogessreport.com/2009/09/yudofs_message.html

Shrag’s article is clear in its assessment that the state no longer seems to be able to recognize the tremendous asset that UC is. I have no idea if this can be changed, but by regularly writing to legislators we can try. Think about ways you would describe the value of UC and visit the URL below to communicate that. <http://www.ucforcalifornia.org/uc4ca/issues/alert/?alertid=13940331>

The Council of UC Faculty Associations has established the Keep California’s Promise web site. There are several postings there that may interest you including: the three choices for California’s higher education. <http://keepcaliforniaspromise.org/>

And, a two page summary titled “Understanding the Crisis at UC”.

<http://keepcaliforniaspromise.org/?p=230>

Faculty Furloughs

The following URL provides the results of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate’s deliberations on the President’s furlough options (July 6, 2009), followed by the University-wide Academic Senate’s advice to President Yudof following consultation amongst the members of the Academic Council.

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/dd_furlough_salary_cut_plan_options_070609.pdf

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/MC_Yudof_furlough_salary%20cut_options%20FINAL.pdf

The UC Davis ballot results concerning how the furlough policy should be implemented:

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Furlough-Implementation-Options-Results_072909.pdf

After extensive discussion during a UC Academic Council meeting with senior administrators from Office of the President on August 26th, 2009, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost, Lawrence Pitts issued the final decision on furloughs as made by President Yudof. Most of our faculty have communicated that the details of the decision were most disappointing. My response to Provost Pitts’ memo follows.

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Chancellors_8-21-09.pdf

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Open-Ltr-to-Faculty_9-10-09.pdf

Further campus clarification was provided by Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Lavernia:

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Furlough-Program-to-Faculty_9-1-09.pdf

On Thursday September 10th Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Lawrence Pitts issued a follow-up “Open Letter to the faculty” regarding the decision not to allow faculty furlough days to be taken on days of face-to-face instruction...”

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Open-Ltr-to-Faculty_9-10-09.pdf

Further campus clarification was provided by Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Lavernia:

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/Furlough-Program-to-Faculty_9-1-09.pdf

The following Sacramento Bee editorial titled “Ticked-off Profs punish students” was published just last Saturday September 5th 2009, followed by Professor Scalettar’s response:

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/story/2161639.html>

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/opinion_scalettar_091.pdf

September 24, 2009: Faculty Walkout

A grass roots action is currently happening on all 10 UC campuses calling for UC faculty to participate in a ‘walk-out’ on Thursday September 24th (the first day of classes). <http://www.ucfacultywalkout.com/>

Presently, there are over 80 UC Davis faculty indicating they intend to participate; 760 U.C. faculty had signed the letter by Sept. 15.

The University of California Student Association (UCSA)--a membership organization of over 200,000 U.C. undergraduate, graduate and professional students—has passed a "Resolution in Support of the September 24th UC-Wide Walkout." The text of the UCSA resolution is available at:

<http://ucfacultywalkout.com/blog/>

A similar call for a graduate student walkout, expressing support for the faculty action, has been signed by 788 graduate students across the 10 campuses (as of Sept. 15):

<http://www.gradstudentstoppage.com/>

American Association of University Professors and UC Senate

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) on September 3rd issued an ‘open letter’ to all UC faculty, worrying about the significance of the apparent ineffectiveness of our UC Senates’ shared governance efforts following the UC Administration’s decision to disallow use of furlough credit on face-to-face teaching days.

This was followed on Sept. 9th by a rebuttal letter to the AAUP statement that was written by the Incoming Systemwide Academic Council Chair, Professor Henry Powell and the Vice Chair, Professor Daniel Simmons. Both the AAUP Open Letter and the rebuttal letter are accessible in the URL below.

http://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/documents/AAUP-open-ltr-faculty-and-AC-rebuttal_090909.pdf

What’s Next:

On August 28, 2009, Chancellor Katehi and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Lavernia announced the Davis Campus strategy for managing additional budget reductions as across-the-board reductions:

http://www.dateline.ucdavis.edu/dl_detail.lasso?id=11805

From all of the comments I have received over the last few months as well as those made during our Town Hall meeting, it is clear that Academic Senate members are deeply committed to the University of California and our teaching, research and public service missions. Across the campus many of us are engaged in planning for the mandated budget reductions. The structural changes that will result from the decisions being made over the next year will profoundly affect UC Davis for any foreseeable future. In 2010-2011 we must not just eliminate furloughs, the most visible and painful manifestations of the UC budget crisis, UC must take the first steps to restore our competitiveness for recruiting and retaining an outstanding faculty – both on terms of salaries and benefits. I personally intend to work toward that goal

throughout the academic year with campus leaders and with the University-wide Academic Senate. No one, not President Yudof , not Chancellor Katehi and not the Senate leadership can achieve these goals alone. It will require determined, collaborative leadership with strong support from you. Specifically, the faculty, through the Academic Senate, has been delegated full authority to develop and oversee admissions, curriculum development and oversight and degree requirements and is to be consulted on budgetary matters. Despite our frustration with the current situation, I hope that UC Davis faculty will not only fulfill our delegated responsibilities but will also use this moment to participate in discussions that will guide the future of the campus. Indeed, in my 25 years at UC Davis, I do not believe that there has ever been a more crucial time for faculty to exercise the prerogatives of shared governance and to provide the intellectual leadership that is needed to ensure that a decade from now UC Davis is a better place.

I hope you find this summary of key discussions valuable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "W".

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science