

June 9, 2009

Members of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate

I write today as the Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate and therefore this message is written directly to Academic Senate members. I recognize the matters discussed below impact the entire community. However, in this letter I wish to speak exclusively to the Academic Senate membership to outline the measures that are being taken by the Davis Division and the Universitywide Academic Senate to help us navigate through the largely uncharted waters surrounding the University of California budget. The situation is grim. We, the faculty, must assert our continued commitments to scholarship and to fulfill our delegated responsibilities for educating future generations of Californians. As faculty in the University of California, you are at the core of the institution. Our continued success and progress, even in the face of these challenges, will set the stage for the increased recognition and stature that we seek for UC Davis.

UC is directly confronted by the budget crisis facing California. In 2007-08 state support for UC was \$3.25 billion. For 2009-2010 the current proposal before the legislature calls for state support to be \$2.63 billion. This is just the start. The cost increases for the operations of UC (such as, increased health care costs, pay increases mandated by union contracts and faculty merits) add more than \$100 million to the shortfall. In addition the state has refused to own up to its responsibility to co-fund contributions to the University of California Retirement System (UCRS). Ours is the only retirement system, for public employees, to which the state does not contribute and has not contributed for nearly two decades. At the modest level of contributions approved by the Regents, an additional \$20 million needs to be taken from our operating budget in 2009-10 which increases to over \$150 million in 2010-2011. Based on recent analyses of the future viability of the retirement system by Academic Senate committees, this increase is about half of what is needed to maintain the health of UCRS.

Less recognized, but equally damaging, are other steps that the state has now proposed; for instance, the Cal-Grant program that serves our neediest students is on the chopping block. This program, which provides \$41 million in aid to UC Davis undergraduates, will no longer be available for students entering in fall 2009, and; for existing students, fee increases will not be covered. By eliminating this support, the state erases the hope that many poor families harbor for their children and ultimately changes the nature of the UC student body. There are other programs that the state proposes to eliminate that will affect the operations of UC and UC Davis. For example, terminating health coverage for nearly 1 million children, cutting Medi-Cal coverage for those over age 65 and ending non-emergency health care for undocumented immigrants are likely to drive more people to the emergency rooms of the hospitals we manage. This will essentially create an unfunded mandate for UC medical centers including the UC Davis Medical Center. Last but not least, \$640 million of our "state" budget is coming from Federal stimulus money. Two years from now, when this source dries up, before the state can even begin to rebuild our budget, it must find this money within its own coffers.

Prior to the Governor's revised budget in May, the campus was working to save roughly half of what was thought to be required in 2009-10 through a combination of cuts recommended by the UC Davis Budget Advisory Committee (appointed by the Provost with close Academic Senate collaboration), cuts to schools and colleges, cuts to be taken centrally and additional revenues (primarily from student fee increases). At the UC level, the discussions in the last week have focused on furloughs or pay cuts. One proposal would target 16 days of furloughs in 2009-10 with 13 of these coming by converting paid holidays to unpaid holidays. At UC Davis, such a furlough would cover a substantial portion of the new budget cuts that resulted from the continued deterioration of the state budget, approximately \$26 million. Furloughs must be temporary measures. This means that over the next year, the campus must cut an additional \$26 million from its base budget in order to eliminate the need for additional or continuing furloughs.

University of California faculty members bear sole responsibility for the delivery of courses and curricula. At the same time, the responsibility of the administration is first and foremost to provide the framework within which outstanding scholarship can flourish. There is no question that the budget cuts will seriously hamper our capacity to meet our responsibilities. However, any temporary measures that may compromise our standards must be accompanied by evidence that substantial efforts have been made by the campus to provide us with the means to educate our students. Significant, visible inroads must be made in cutting or eliminating items that are not absolutely central to fulfilling our teaching and research missions. I am sure that that the UC Davis Budget Advisory Committee will bring forward some cost saving proposals. I am also certain that these will be controversial. It is

impossible to cut the amounts of money involved without causing programmatic cuts, changing the way that we do business and, frankly, eliminating or reducing programs that may have stood us well in good times but now must be weighed against other demands. Extra burdens will fall to all segments of the campus – faculty, staff and students. Simply put, we will not be able to do what we are doing the way we are doing it.

Over the past two years, Divisional Senate leadership has taken several steps to broaden its engagement with the faculty. We have held regular meetings with Department Chairs and College and School Faculty Executive Committees. In the upcoming year, we will expand these efforts to include direct engagement of departments and programs. With the campus change in leadership, the Academic Senate must play a vital role in fostering communication. From the Academic Senate perspective, our advice is best given by being well-informed by and connected with our membership.

I also ask that you consider contacting members of the California legislature on behalf of the University. Senate leaders on other campuses have initiated letter-writing campaigns to the California legislature. Although it is not clear that such efforts will be effective, if these occur across all ten campuses and involve the broadest cross-section of the campus, they may be. Our proximity to Sacramento may particularly help if letters can provide some specific and visible changes that will occur as a result of the budget cuts. When writing such a letter, you must do so as a citizen of California rather than a representative of the campus or University. Letters may be short, but specific. You can find the contact information for your representatives by going to the California Legislative Information website at: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov> clicking the "Your Legislature" tab on the bottom, right hand side of the page, entering your Zip Code and clicking "Search". The names of your State Senator and Assembly representative, along with all of their contact information including a direct link to their website, will appear on this page.

The University of California has faced significant financial challenges in the past. Those experiences, especially the budget cuts of the early 1990s, clearly show that we, the faculty, must assure our future. With all of the challenges that we face we must maintain UC Davis as a wonderful place for all of us to be. Our sense of community will be challenged – at any scale one wants to consider. Programs will certainly have diminished capacity and indeed may disappear altogether. Less support for temporary instruction would add to the overall instructional workload of most faculty. The cuts will directly affect staff as positions are either eliminated or go unfilled. Students will likely find it more difficult to get all of the classes they want. Each of you will be at the center of these decisions. I believe that it is clear to our administration, and to our next Chancellor, that the way past our current crisis and towards a bright future for UC Davis will only come through strong shared governance. I seek your counsel, your patience and your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Powell, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Chair & Professor: Chemical Engineering and Materials Science
Professor: Food Science & Technology