

July 6, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

What follows is a very brief summary of the joint SS/HFA chairs' meeting last Thursday afternoon.

It was noted that the size of UCSB's share of the UC budget deficit quite possibly grew overnight by \$5 million (or one-eighth) last week with the legislature's failure to agree on a state budget, to circa \$45 million.

All the chairs agreed that the salary reduction plan must be deferred or postponed until it can be given full consideration. None were in favor of granting President Yudof the extraordinary emergency powers that he seeks. Everyone wished to know more about the rationale for the 8% salary reduction, since UCOP has given none, and there was concern about the possibility that this percentage could increase in size by early next year. There was also great concern that there is no mention in Yudof's plan of a restoration of salary levels after June 30, 2010.

Everyone agreed that the salary reduction would mean that faculty with options on the marketplace would likely leave, initiating a devastating cycle of decline for the University.

If there must be a salary reduction, there was also unanimous support for the proposal that it be implemented as a furlough. Two proposals were discussed: either self-administered furloughs during the quarter (presumably tenth week) or a longer furlough in June 2010, during which there would be a shutdown of the university. This latter plan could take the shape of an unpaid research period for faculty, and might even be useful to retain some faculty. Staff concerns about furloughs were discussed, inasmuch as many staff prefer that furloughs instead be spread very widely over the year.

There was also unanimous support for a sliding scale of cuts, if these must take place. This would help assistant professors, staff and others who are paid less well than the senior faculty, yet must deal with the high cost of living in this area. The chairs wondered why the UCSB administration could not acquire the necessary software, or use clerical labor, to implement such a scheme in a timely fashion.

The legal issues involved in promised salaries in contracts with incoming professors were raised, and it was agreed that the salary reduction would seriously hurt our chances of recruiting (assuming that there will be FTE again) top-quality faculty for years to come.

The chairs then examined the question of faculty workload and faculty

evaluation. The administration is probably going to ask the faculty to teach more for less pay, while it is in our interest to insist that workload and pay must be downsized together. Paid holidays need to be kept as such; otherwise we have set a dangerous precedent for the future. Moreover, not only will the entire system of evaluation have to be reconsidered if faculty teaching is increased, but this could be a step toward downgrading UC from a research to a teaching institution. This downgrade, we all agreed, must be resisted.

Talk then turned to the fall. Assuming that there is a pay reduction with all of its negative fallout for the faculty, we should consider the possibility of a work action at some point in the middle of the fall quarter. This would preferably be in the framework of a general UC-wide mobilization. At the local level, the faculty should pursue teach-ins with students (starting with Convocation) and with the community concerning the eroding system of public education and the value of a great research university. The public and businesspeople need to understand the consequences of UC becoming uncompetitive as it loses its status as a world-class university that educates California's children. The chairs agreed that we need to show solidarity with the students, as well as with the rest of the California system of higher education, in the coming months.

Finally, it was agreed that each Division would send some representative chairs to the meeting with the EVC on Friday, July 10, at 1 PM in Cheadle Hall. HFA will be represented by John Majewski (History), Alan Liu (English) and Jon Snyder (FRIT); HSS by Eileen Boris (Feminist Studies), Charles Kolstad (Economics) and either Lisa Hajjar or Howard Winant (Law and Society).

We will meet again in the near future to discuss the consequences of the Regents' mid-July meeting. In the meantime, everyone is urged to get their faculty to write to Yudof and Yang to stop the proposed salary reduction plan.

Jon Snyder
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