

# THE STUDENT WORKER ACTIVIST *Newsletter*

First Issue- July 9th 2009

## The UC Regents Say "Cut Back"! Workers & Students Say "Unite & Fight Back"!

The UC Regents Are Planning To Force Through Massive Cuts To Education, Staffing, and Pay While Raising Student Fees Between 9.3% and 34.3% To Compensate For a "Supposed" "Financial Emergency".

We Workers and Students Refuse To Let Them Make Us Pay The Cost of Their Crisis. To counter their proposal, we demand:

- **No To "Emergency Powers"** for UC President Yudof!
- **No Student Fee Increases, Pay-Cuts, Furloughs, or Lay Offs Without A Full Disclosure of The Budget!**
- **Not Only A Moratorium On Bonuses, Stipends, Hiring, & Raises But Also Pay Cuts For The Top UC Executives!**

*COME WITH US ON JULY 15<sup>th</sup> to protest the Regents!*

What's Next:

**Monday July 13<sup>th</sup>:** S.W.A.T. Meeting

6pm @ 2251 College Ave. Archeology Bldg.

**Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup>:** AFSCME Picket @ 12pm

& Banner and Sign-Making Party For Regents' Meeting

**Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup>:** UC Regents' Meeting In San Francisco @ The UCSF Mission Bay Campus

Please, contact us at [UCB.SWAT@GMAIL.COM](mailto:UCB.SWAT@GMAIL.COM)

# ***It's not a Financial Crisis, but a Crisis of Leadership***

## **The UC "Financial Emergency":**

UC Regent President Yudof has made several pronouncements in the last weeks on the situation of the UC budget shortfall. Despite the refusal of the Regents to disclose the details of the budget or to provide evidence of a real, as opposed to manufactured, "financial emergency", they have repeatedly emphasized the need to "sacrifice considerably" and have warned that the measures they take will be necessarily "painful" and "difficult" for students and workers. This comes in the wake of numerous revelations of **irresponsible spending, including \$230 million in travel expenses spent by UC Riverside in 2008 alone** (information obtained by AFSCME through the Freedom of Information Act).

## **At The Expense of Students and Workers:**

The measures they are seriously considering or have already implemented include fee increases, education cuts, furloughs, freezes on hiring of new faculty and staff, increased health care premiums, pay cuts, and layoffs and workforce reduction. In other words, students and workers will be expected to shoulder the burden of this budget crisis!

## **Regents Force Through New Round of Student Fee Increases:**

At their meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>, the Regents voted in a 9.3% fee increase beginning Fall of 2009. This will bring the total annual UC fees for resident undergraduate students to \$7,788<sup>1</sup>. This move comes as just the latest in a series of fee increases the Regents have forced through in recent years. **In fact, since 2001, the tuition costs for resident undergraduates have increased by over 200%<sup>2</sup>.**

## **Students Cannot Afford To Let The Regents Raise Our Fees Again:**

In addition, Governor Schwarzenegger has already decided to cut or eliminate funding for the critical Cal Grant program, which helps 46,000 UC students afford a UC education. Reduction of the Cal Grant program would directly impact the ability 50% of UCB undergraduates to pay for college<sup>3</sup>. The fee increases have already effectively made the University of California out-of-reach for many working class students with many more being forced to assume enormous levels of debt. But the Regents have not stopped there. In a May 29<sup>th</sup> letter to the California state legislature, Yudof announced that the Regents are now thinking about **increasing student fees 20% to 25%** starting this upcoming semester. He has declined to clarify whether this would come in place of or on top of the 9.3% increase they have already implemented but it will mean **an increase of up to \$3,000 per semester<sup>4</sup>.**

## **To defend our rights we need to organize now!**

In light of this, all the proposals for fee increases and cuts to wages or education or employment proposed by the Regents are not only unacceptable but are, furthermore, completely out-of-line with the role of a public university. For these reasons, we students must unite with workers to organize and fight the cuts and fee hikes to come. **We must speak up and raise our voice at the Regents Meeting this July 15th!**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uwire.com/Article.aspx?id=4133230>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dailycal.org/article/105850>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dailycal.org/article/105869/despite\\_recent\\_vote\\_cal\\_grants\\_still\\_at\\_risk](http://www.dailycal.org/article/105869/despite_recent_vote_cal_grants_still_at_risk)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dailycal.org/article/105845>

# Demand UC use it's existing resources to fill the budget gap!

## Don't balance UC's budget on the backs of workers and students!

Proposals from the UC Regents and President Yudof to fill UC's \$500 Million budget gap are unacceptable and unnecessary. These cuts will further erode quality, affordable, and accessible higher education in California, with devastating consequences for our communities, UC students, faculty and staff. We've seen how the University funds the executives' obscenely extravagant salaries, benefits, bonuses and perks, even in violation of its own policies. Now, UC claims tuition needs to be increased *again*—though fee hikes have already risen 277% since 2001! Staff and faculty face 4-8% pay cuts, speed up and forced furlough days—including for workers at the bottom of the pay scale. But what is the **TRUTH**?

- **There is not a financial emergency within the UC system.** California's fiscal meltdown has little real impact on UC since state appropriations are only **19%** of the university's total revenue. **The \$500 million decrease in state funds represents only 2.5% of the \$20 billion UC budget.**
- Salary cuts, fee hikes, and layoffs are **NOT** necessary! UC has the funds **already** to fill any budget gaps! For instance:
  - UC has **\$5.3 billion** in **unrestricted reserve funds**, not tied to the pension or endowments – a very small fraction of this alone could easily fill the budget deficit!
  - UC received **\$268 million** in **federal stimulus** relief funds and expects even more!
  - UC can redirect money from the Medical Centers and hospitals to the campuses, instead of paying bonuses to execs and faculty. **The clinical medical centers generated \$1.4 billion in 2008 alone.**
  - The number of UC executives and administrators **earning over \$200,000** has **tripled** in recent years—while most UC employees are paid 25% **below** market rate
  - **\$390 million** in **bonuses** was paid to UC top executives last fall.
  - UC Berkeley alone has raised **\$1.5 billion** in gifts and donations in the last 4 years
  - **\$80 million** (2/3rds of Berkeley's deficit) was spent in 2009 on two properties purchased at values 13% and 64% above market (one brokered by a company affiliated with Regent Richard Blum).

Yet Mark Yudof claims that he needs to invoke “superpowers” in order to increase tuition up to 25% *more*, and be able to fire, furlough and take millions from our paychecks. Awarding these emergency powers runs counter to the mission of a public university and to the spirit of democracy supposedly cherished by our campuses. It is outrageous for the UC administration to pretend deficits can only be covered by taking from the pockets of students and employees!

**They say cut back—we say fight back!**

**Prioritize education for all students and save jobs, libraries and programs instead of high executive salaries!**

## These are our **Provisional demands** for a Public Budget that protects UC staff, faculty and our students:

1. **Full disclosure of UC's funds** and possible cost-saving measures—open the books!
2. An immediate **freeze on tuition** and fee hikes!
3. **No curtailed enrollment!**
4. **Guarantee to fund CalGrants** if the governor axes the program
5. **15% cost of living increase** in **financial aid** and full funding for low-income students
6. **Bring underpaid** UC staff, lecturers and graduate students up to **"market rates"**—not UC bureaucrats!
7. Guaranteed freeze on lay-offs and **no furloughs or pay cuts!**
8. **Salary cap for UC executives** of \$150,000 and freeze on "bonuses"
9. **No cuts to department budgets** and an end to the staff hiring freeze
10. **Stop UC's construction and real estate expansion** and re-budget resources to existing staff and student services.
11. Hold the **UC Regents** and administration **accountable to students, workers and the taxpayers of California**—support legislative amendments SCA 21 and ACA 24!
12. UCOP and the Regents must demand **more funding from state and federal tax dollars** that are now squandered on wars abroad and profit-driven banks and businesses. Campaign for CA Assembly Bill 656, which taxes oil companies to raise \$900 million annually for higher education; SB 810, The California Universal Healthcare Act; and support legislation to tax California's corporations and wealthiest individuals in order to fully fund public education and social services.

### **STUDENT WORKER ACTIVIST TEAM DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT**

**Who are we?** We are a group of UCB student and worker activists that have come together to organize to fight for our rights. Workers and students have a common interest: a quality public university, to erase the entrance fees to our school, to pay good wages to the workers, and to fight for our union and civil rights. We would like to emphasize the dedication to service of the community of workers at UCB.

Through our struggles, although all the attempts to divide us, we also realized that we have a common enemy: the administrators of the UC system that run our universities as factories and that have very close links with corporations and war profiteers, investors and with Gov. Schwarzenegger.

**What are we proposing?** In this gigantic economic crisis, the most important public services (universities, schools, hospitals, etc.) are impacted the most. UC is in process of becoming another private school for only privileged students and where workers are underpaid and overworked.

We would like this university to be affordable to the community, to be democratic in its functioning, and to contribute actively to the fight for social, economic and civil rights.

- In this moment where public education is under attack, we must unite and fight back or we might lose another conquest of the working and middle classes in the 30s and the 60s: the equal right to education.
- We also stand on the side of the oppressed communities that fight for real equality of treatment and opportunities which means a defense of affirmative action as a transitional step for real equality.
- We defend the right to receive an education that relates to our life experiences and to our different ethnic and social backgrounds, because the UCs serve the people that live and work in the State of California.
- We will fight for the rights of the undocumented workers and students as we believe that nobody should be excluded from the right to work and the right to receive an education.

We defend public education as a public service that should be a priority of the State and the Federal governments.

This is why we are proposing all students and workers, of all gender identities and all colors, to UNITE in a common struggle.

**How will we win?** We believe in **grassroots organizing**, in the necessity to strengthen our unions through **democratic functioning**, and in **mobilizing** the rank-and-file for action and discussion.

We need to pressure both the California and the Federal Governments to increase the funding for public education.

In order to win our demands, closed negotiations, lobbying at Sacramento, phone calls or petitions will not be enough. We need to build a democratic mass movement on our campuses with students and workers united to **Take Back UC** from the control of private interest and put it at the service of the needs of the students and working people in our university and communities.

### **One Struggle, One Fight! Students and workers unite!**

**Students, workers and members of the community, come build this coalition with us!!!**

**Do you want to help us organize?** Contact us at: [UCB.SWAT@gmail.com](mailto:UCB.SWAT@gmail.com);  
come to the next SWAT meeting: July 13, 6pm @ 2251 College Ave. Archeology Bldg.