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RE: An Open Letter to UC Faculty From the AAUP

Dear Colleagues:

We strongly disagree with your assertion that the recent decision by University of California administrators to not allow faculty furlough days on days of instruction is dismissive of the historic role of the UC faculty in governance. Indeed, your statement demonstrates an unfortunate lack of understanding of the unique nature of faculty governance in the University of California.

The recent decision rejecting the advice of the UC Academic Council was, in our opinion, wrong-headed and has led to unfortunate consequences and disillusionment among faculty. We also recognize, however, that President Yudof has important and sound policy reasons to support the decision he made. He has indicated that the decision was necessary as part of his effort to insure that the faculty furloughs will not be continued into a second year. In addition, and, contrary to your description of the faculty's voice as being unanimous, while there was a unanimous vote of the Academic Council, that position was derived after lengthy debate, including discussion with the Administration, in which numerous faculty members expressed strong opposition to taking furloughs on instructional days. That having been said, it is important to understand that the fact that Administration and the Senate in the University of California disagree on an important policy question does not mean that faculty governance is not strong. Indeed, the process that led to this decision is demonstrates the continuing vitality of shared governance within the University.

Under the Standing Orders of the Regents of the University of California, the President, and through the President the administration of the University, is delegated specific authorities, including recently an authority to declare an extreme financial emergency and to waive otherwise applicable policies as necessary. Likewise the Standing Orders delegate specific authorities to the Academic Senate. Shared governance in the University of California is more than the shared governance at any

other institution of higher education in the United States; it is a system of shared management authority within designated policy realms. In some instances, these authorities are exercised by the Senate or the administration in disagreement with the other partner. This disagreement has gone both ways. In addition, the Standing Orders of the Regents provide for a number of areas in which authority is delegated to the administration with requirements for consultation and advice from the Academic Senate. The President's authority to implement salary reductions and furloughs is one such area.

Over the past several months the UC Academic Council on behalf of the UC systemwide Academic Senate, and Senate councils on each of the ten campuses, have been heavily engaged in conversations with the systemwide administration and the campus administrations regarding the development of and the detailed implementation plans for the unfortunately necessary salary reductions within the University. The salary reduction and furlough plans have been shaped by consultations with the Academic Senate at every step of their development. The Senate leadership at the system level and on each campus have been active participants in this evolution. Faculty members on every campus were heavily engaged in the discussions. Indeed, it was the presence of this extensive consultation that has created widespread unhappiness with the ultimate decision.

As representatives of the UC Academic Senate who are beholden to the policy judgment of our colleagues on the UC Academic Council, we are not in a position to comment on your endorsement of a faculty walkout. We can assert, however, that while faculty at the University of California have every right to disagree with the administration to overrule the judgment of the faculty, and we have communicated our views on this issue to President Yudof, there is no basis to fault President Yudof's and Provost Pitts's extensive efforts to consult with the faculty on every aspect of the decisions leading up to and required by the financial emergency faced by the University of California. Shared governance at the University of California operates through robust consultation and debate. Sometimes we agree, sometimes we disagree. At the end of the day, we must respect each other's exercise of judgment and decision making authority and move on to the next issue based on our collective judgment of what is good for the institution, and for the good of our students.

The faculty of the University of California have a system of shared governance that is precious and that has served us well for many decades. It is more than a system of collective bargaining. It is shared management. Our shared management is one of the principal reasons that the University of California is recognized around the world for its model of faculty governance. Our robust shared governance is one of the principal reasons for the uniformly high quality of our ten campus research university. We as faculty can do as much damage to this precious institution by throwing sticks and stones at our administrators, as they may do to us by ignoring the unique principles of our shared governance. We believe that President Yudof is as committed to shared governance in the University of California as we are, and we have seen multiple instances where he has conveyed that attitude to his subordinate administrators by action.

We sincerely hope that you will post our views along with your open letter.

Sincerely,



Henry C. Powell, Chair



Daniel L. Simmons, Vice Chair

Cc: Academic Council

American Association of University Professors

THE AAUP ONLINE

News for the Higher Education Community

An Open Letter to UC Faculty From the AAUP

We support the faculty's collective assertion of their central role in shaping the future of the University of California, and we support the calls for collective action (most recently of a walkout) by UC faculty members to publicly voice their concerns. The UC system's historic strength was embedded in substantial public financial support and a strong faculty voice in governance. Both have deteriorated to unacceptable levels. The rejection of the faculty's unanimous voice about implementing furloughs, through a vote of the Academic Council on July 29, 2009, is at best unwise and at worst dismissive of a cornerstone of the UC system's strength, its faculty.

The principles of the American Association of University Professors hold that the managerial assertion of financial emergency powers does not justify failing to incorporate the full and meaningful participation of faculty in shared governance. Moreover, despite the current challenges higher education faces and as a recent resolution of the AAUP's Collective Bargaining Congress Executive Committee asserts, it is time to turn around decades-long patterns of decreased funding to and within the academy:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/newsroom/2009PRS/prnogivebacks.htm>

The real challenge is to reverse long standing trends of:

- defunding public universities;
- shifting shares of institutional expenditures from education to administration;
- raising tuition and fees; and
- decreasing the proportion of tenure-track faculty.

For too many years university presidents have accepted and preached the pattern of public disinvestment as inevitable, advanced the privatization of public universities, and suggested that we can do more and more with less and less. By their actions, university presidents have advanced a model of academic capitalism that has compromised educational quality, and now that model is collapsing financially.

It is well worth faculty considering taking some furlough time on instructional days. That sends a clear message that disinvestment in colleges and universities reduces the quality of education and does harm to students, faculty, and the public interest.

It is time to acknowledge the obvious: this emperor has no clothes.

Less public support does not translate into more educational opportunity. Escalating tuition does not increase educational access and success for qualified students. Increasing class size does not increase faculty-student engagement. Increasing virtual education does not increase actual educational quality.

We support the lead taken by University of California faculty, the faculty associations, and faculty groups mobilizing independently in their fight to change the long term course of the UC system. Their collective votes and actions serve the best long-term interests of students, faculty, the universities and society. The faculty's voice is central to the quality and future of our educational institutions.

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The AAUP Online is an electronic newsletter of the American Association of University Professors. Learn [more](#) about the AAUP.

The logo for the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), consisting of the letters "AAUP" in a white, serif font on a teal background.

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