

**Academic Senate Chair Jim Chalfant**  
**Remarks to the University of California Board of Regents**  
**July 2017**

Thank you, Chair Kieffer.

I'd like to begin by offering congratulations and best wishes for your term as chair. The Academic Senate is committed to working closely with you. In this time of transition, I also want to acknowledge Provost Aimée Dorr. Our close collaboration has been a true highlight of my time in Oakland.

A Regent's term consists of 72 regular meetings; each of us who chairs the Senate makes remarks like these at only 6 meetings. There's a lot I will wish I had said. Our role in shared governance requires that we think about the good of the university. The Academic Senate is not a faculty bargaining unit. I have tried to bring everything back to preserving UC's quality for our students, and I believe that has been helpful.

My two years attending these meetings have shown me the importance of a close relationship between the Regents and the faculty. Our partnership is productive and strong, but it could be much stronger. I urge each of you visit the campuses and try to learn the experiences of the typical faculty member.

If you do so, two messages from Regent Kieffer's remarks will ring especially true. The first concerns reassessment and the second concerns getting over the audit. A defining characteristic for UC's faculty, staff, and students is the constant questioning of received wisdom and conventional thinking. Reassessment is what we do. That healthy skepticism does not stop at the borders of our respective academic disciplines. It is how faculty approach our research and the work of colleagues, our majors and grad programs, and the courses we teach; it is also how we think about the University. It is commonly believed that faculty are liberal politically but very conservative when it comes to the University. I think that one good reason for the second stereotype is that the constant churn that represents

ongoing refinement of everything we do is also gradual. It is hard to see from the clichéd 30,000-foot level. But waiting impatiently for disruptive innovations----- which are usually neither---misses the real story of steady improvements.

I'd like to mention just a couple of examples. We now have 21 Transfer Pathways and a great website pairing any pathway with any community college, to show students which local courses fulfill the pathway expectations. The faculty in the 21 majors get the credit for the pathways, but the successful implementation is because of staff in Admissions at UCOP, their campus admissions colleagues, articulation officers, and staff academic advisors on the campuses. We are not stopping there. We are working with our community college colleagues to develop Associate of Science degrees based on our pathways. These are the transfer initiatives we should be talking about.

Shane and I have had the opportunity with Regent Kieffer to discuss another topic related to reassessment--Academic Senate faculty known as "teaching professors" on some campuses, or under existing policy called "lecturers with security of employment". We've been working with the administration on new policies governing appointment and review for these faculty. We do not just fold our arms and say no other model works for faculty. The comments from the Senate that will appear innovative and flexible are those that most clearly recognize the value of innovative teaching and research emphasizing pedagogy. The comments that will appear overly conservative are those that emphasize academic freedom---a teaching professor should be able to pursue research ideas without a constraint that they must be about how to teach; those that seek to protect our identity as a research institution; and those that want fair treatment of individuals already employed in these titles. Most of us hold a combination of these views. We are taking a long time to get this right, and the end product is not yet entirely clear, because we know the harm that is done from getting policy wrong.

On your campus visits, Regent Kieffer's advice to "get over it" will seem like it has already been heard by everyone you meet. Just about everyone Shane and I

represent wonders when both UC and the state will be able to focus only on the serious business at hand. When people from Sacramento characterize this year's budget legislation as "sending UC a signal" or "a wake-up call", we wonder if they realize they are talking about real people whose lives are affected by their actions. The rash decision to fund UCOP and systemwide programs and initiatives using only state funds, and then to expect UC to fund enrollment growth from cuts to programs, has direct consequences for every state-funded unit on every campus. By preventing campus assessments, the budget bill does not leave more money on the campuses. It is a grand reshuffling that creates unnecessary work to protect state-funded programs critical to our mission.

The belief that a signal needs to be sent is mistaken. Shane and I speak on a daily basis to the dedicated staff at UCOP who work diligently and take incredible, justifiable pride in their work. Their work is not duplicative, it is essential. These staff are very worried. Many of them went through a round of restructuring a decade ago modeled on slash-and-burn warfare, not strategy. They see the same thing coming this year. If we constrain the tools at their disposal, malign their motives, denigrate their commitment to students, and fail to support competitive compensation and benefits, then we will destroy their morale and severely compromise their ability to achieve our mission. This indirectly but unequivocally harms the University; as is generally true, students will suffer the most. We cannot absorb another blow like the audit. The accounting recommendations were constructive and welcome; the myth of \$175 million in "hidden reserves" was not. That type of distortion and hyperbole does significant, lasting harm.

Shane and I are very pleased to be part of the effort to respond to the audit by examining the UCOP budget. That effort needs to be broad, encompassing both off-the-top and assessment-funded items. A program should not be protected just because it's on a campus, nor considered unnecessary just because it's categorized as central at UCOP. We expect the Senate to advocate for more investment in the best programs, cutting only where appropriate. We will seek to protect the programs that contribute to our mission and that enhance UC quality. I have been told by past chairs that there are legislators who feel California can't

afford quality. California can't afford eroding quality. As the saying goes, if you think education is expensive, try the alternative.

It is time to change the narrative that UCOP is the problem. Our problem is the steady decline in state funds per student since 1990 that Dan Hare displayed last year, and that I described again this year; it is not because of UCOP. It cannot be reversed by budget blackmail. Returning to my point about twelve-year terms, and speaking especially to our four new Regents; the final phase converting UC from the world's pre-eminent public university system to just another state-university system will happen on your watch, unless we all work together to prevent it. If the state won't listen to UCOP, they need to listen to this Board and to the faculty, staff, and students who experience the slow erosion of what it means to be the University of California. No one person alone can reverse the course UC is on, but all of us working together will do so.

Chair Kieffer, this concludes my remarks.