

**PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO THE REGENTS  
INCREASED STATE SUPPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY**

**DESCRIPTION**

Senate Bylaw 90.B. authorizes the Assembly to initiate “Memorials to the Regents on matters of Universitywide concern to be submitted to The Regents through the President . . .” The Memorial would request the Regents to endorse specific ballot measures or legislation that would increase revenue to the state and/or prioritize state allocation of funds to the University.

A vote in favor is a vote to send the “Memorial to the Regents” to the President and ask him to transmit the Memorial to the Regents. A vote against is a vote to not send the “Memorial to the Regents” to the President.

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

At a meeting on February 1, 2012, the Academic Council approved (14 in favor, 1 against) a motion to ask the Assembly to initiate a Memorial to the Regents that would request the Regents to endorse ballot measures or legislation that would increase revenue to the state and/or prioritize state investment in the University.

The proposal was placed on the agenda for the Assembly’s February 15 meeting as Item VII.B.2 and included in the Call to Meeting, together with the proposed text and arguments for and against, as required by Bylaw 90.B. Substitute language, which was circulated to the members of the Assembly prior to the meeting and posted on the Senate website as an accompaniment to the Call to Meeting, was proposed and adopted as an amendment. After debate and further amendments, the Assembly voted (47 in favor, 12 against) to distribute a ballot to all Senate faculty members in accordance with the procedures stipulated in Senate Bylaws 90 and 95.

## **MEMORIAL TO THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS the series of budget cuts that began at the onset of the Great Recession has reduced total state funding to the University of California by 25% since 2008-09, continuing the two decade long trend of defunding higher education by the State;

WHEREAS diminishing support for the University is directly related to falling State revenues and the decreasing fraction of the State's budget allocated to higher education;

WHEREAS during this period California undergraduate resident students have suffered an 80% increase in tuition and are for the first time paying a higher proportion of the cost of their education than that supported by the State;

WHEREAS the university system provides intrinsic critical public benefit to all Californians by offering education to all qualified California residents;

WHEREAS increasingly damaging budgets have produced a downward spiral that threatens the survival of the University as the leading public university in the world as it experiences higher student-faculty ratios, larger class sizes, reduced depth and breadth in course offerings, staff layoffs, and lack of investment in infrastructure;

WHEREAS the faculty are prepared to advocate publicly, consistently, and forcefully for the future of the University,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

That the faculty of the Academic Senate call on The Regents of the University to support specific ballot measures and legislation that will increase state revenues and/or specific ballot measures and legislation that will prioritize funding for public higher education.

## ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEMORIAL TO THE REGENTS

The University's current fiscal situation is dire as a result of drastic declines in state investment. Despite an increase of over 50% in student enrollment since 1990-91, state support has increased by only \$140 million, just over 5%, in non-inflation adjusted dollars. In adjusted dollars, state support per student has dropped from \$16,720 per student in 1990-91 to \$6,770 per student in 2011-12. UC's total expenditure per student has declined 19% over that same period from \$21,370 in 1990-91 to \$17,390 in 2011-12; fee increases have only partially offset the loss in state funding. At the same time, the student share of the cost has nearly quadrupled: in 1990-91, students paid 13% of the cost of their education; in 2011-12, students paid 49% of the cost of their education.

To preserve access for low-income students in the face of rapidly rising fees, UC has dedicated a third of the tuition it receives to financial aid. In other words, one-third of tuition revenue supports accessibility rather than providing instruction. Without a reliable revenue stream from the state, the University will necessarily come to rely increasingly on payments by those who can afford them, thereby reducing its ability to serve all academically qualified California students regardless of their financial resources.

The state's two-decade withdrawal of support from the University has been the result, above all, of a series of sharp declines in state revenue, accompanied by increased spending in other areas, notably prisons. Unless the state is able to project sustainable and consistent increases in revenues, and prioritize higher education in its funding decisions, it will not be able to provide the funding needed to maintain UC as the greatest public university system in the world. The political deadlock in the legislature makes it impossible to enact revenue enhancing measures through the normal legislative process and forces advocates for such measures to resort to ballot propositions.

Most Assembly members who argued against submitting the proposed Memorial expressed concern that it might not garner enough votes to be a strong statement. These individuals did not advocate that Senate members vote against the Memorial.

By asking the Regents to support ballot measures or legislation to increase state revenue and prioritize investment in the University, the Senate will signal that it does not accept the view that loss of state support is inevitable.

By law and University policy, only the Regents may take a position on behalf of the University in support of a specific ballot measure. (*See* <http://www.ucop.edu/state/advocacy/ballotguidelines.html>.) When faculty and members of the public campaign as individual citizens in support of revenue enhancing ballot measures, their message that such a measure is essential for the University will gain credibility and force if they are able to point to a statement by the Regents that a specified ballot measure would benefit the University.

Moreover, calling on the Regents to endorse measures to enhance state revenues and to prioritize higher education will place the Senate on record in solidarity with current and

future students in seeking solutions to California's and the University's budget crisis.

### **ARGUMENT AGAINST MEMORIAL TO THE REGENTS**

The priority of the faculty is the teaching, research and service missions of the University of California, not political advocacy.

Although faculty do not give up their rights as private citizens to campaign for political causes, they should not attempt to involve the University in their private efforts. The political environment is in rapid flux, and it would be a mistake for the Regents to bind themselves to support any one among several potentially competing revenue enhancement measures.

There is no guarantee that any measure placed on the ballot will be constructed in a way that benefits the University. Proposals reportedly under consideration do not appear to provide adequate guarantees of long-term funding for the University.

The constraints on University advocacy in support of a ballot measure (<http://www.ucop.edu/state/advocacy/ballotguidelines.html>) are so severe that there is little to gain from Regental support of a ballot measure.