

Academic Senate Chair Shane White
Remarks to the University of California Board of Regents
January 2018

We are One University, with one mission, one set of standards, one board, one student body, one administration, one faculty, and one Academic Senate, our singularity being the first great gift entailed in our founding 150 years ago. Our rich history has many lessons for our present dilemmas and provides a guide to our future; let us learn from it. The Organic Act of 1868 mandated that *“All the Faculties and instructors of the University shall be combined into a body which shall be known as the Academic Senate... and which is created for the purpose of conducting the general administration of the University and memorializing the Board of Regents; regulating, in the first instance, the general and special courses of instruction...”* A decade later, the California Constitution of 1878 granted institutional autonomy to the Board of Regents, the second great gift to the University: *“The University shall be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom in the administration of its affairs.”*

Following the Berkeley Revolution of 1919, the Board of Regents issued new standing orders authorizing the Senate to *“determine the conditions for admission, for certificate, and for degrees”*; to *“authorize and supervise all courses of instruction in the academic and professional colleges and schools”*; to *“recommend to the board of regents all candidates for degrees”*; and *“to select a committee to advise the president concerning the budget”* – the third great gift to the University.

The 3 branches of University government come together at this board, a public trust, which has *“full powers of organization and governance”*, and fiduciary responsibility. Unequaled progress has been made in the last 150 years, a 2nd Division of the University was founded in 1919 at Los Angeles and a 10th Division was founded at Merced in 2005. Without these 3 great gifts, the University of California could not have so quickly become the World’s preeminent public research university, its practices widely seen as the model for others. New Divisions have aspired to reach the heights of the first; some have so done. Each new Division must make its own path to the common standard of excellence, but the rapid pace each has followed owes everything to the One University, this Board, and to the center, the Office of the President. Yes, we have the power of 10 distinctive Divisions, but the power of the One University is much greater.

Our students must succeed, advance themselves and our society; they must be given that opportunity. Our faculty must succeed, to advance our missions of teaching, research and service. Consequently, our leaders must succeed. As the executive head of the University, the President must succeed in facilitating in administrating *“the development by the Board of the University’s direction, goals and strategy”*; she *“serves as the academic leader of the University”*. Our Board must succeed in its responsibility as stewards *“acting to govern the University as a public trust in fulfillment of its educational, research, and public service missions in the best interests of the people of California”*. Likewise, the State Government must succeed in providing the University with the resources necessary to complete its mission. A base budget adjustment equivalent to 2.7% flies in the face of a compact that promised 4%, a disappointment, a loss of faith, and a harm to young Californian students and their families.

The University has long suffered from steady disinvestment by the State, inevitably resulting in crumbling infrastructure, capital liability, and increased reliance on tuition. Fingers may be pointed, fault may be found; there is plenty to be shared, but the focus must be on supporting the University’s

mission. The State, the Board and the President have the responsibility to put the teaching, research and service above any differences or agendas. Let be done.

The State must fund enrolment and infrastructure; if it fails in this, it abdicates its responsibility and its moral authority; if it uses the power of the purse to interfere in operations, it cedes its legitimacy in the governance structure that it most wisely created. The Board must be responsible for providing the necessary resources, not merely distant oversight. The President must speak for the whole University and provide leadership, academic leadership, and be accountable for the totality of its endeavors through her administration. President Peltason's words from 25 years ago, speak to us today: *"The administration – and this is true of the Academic Senate – is not just one of many constituencies, but is the Board of Regents' chosen and publicly designated agent in whom it has vested confidence and to whom it has delegated responsibility to manage the University"* – the President has the responsibility to lead the academy's mission.

We are One University, we have one center. The center must provide cohesion and resilience, supporting a framework that allows our federated campuses to develop their distinctive strengths, their individualism, through their distributed power, but maintaining their alignment with the One University. A decade ago, that center was, like now, under intense political pressure to be smaller, it was downsized and some functions 'off-shored'; in addition, many talented knowledgeable and experienced people jumped ship. Nothing was gained and much was lost; lessons should have been learned. Even at that time, our external consultants, the Monitor Group, noted that the costs of operating the center were relatively modest. I believe the same to be true today and that the Huron group will make the same finding. Any changes to be made must be done so as to tangibly improve the common good, not for any thought of empty political appeasement; the Board must ensure that they be made with care, deliberation and transparency.

The center gives us many things, an organizational framework with a nuanced balance of distributed powers, responsibilities, and self-determinations. It shields the Divisions from political storms. It has the critical mass and expertise to more efficiently and effectively serve the Divisions through labor relations, collective bargaining, the retirement system, admissions, investments, endowments, capital management, and credit ratings, being an honest broker among the Divisions' expressions of their individual and separate aims, etc. Other functions are best, and have been, decentralized to the divisions. Natural tensions exist; these should result in gradual evolution of relationships among the Divisions, and with their center, not in knee-jerk reactions or extinctions. This must be a continuation of a process that started when the Southern Branch was founded 99 years ago. Just as UCLA followed the eldest sibling in a rise to preeminence, all the younger Divisions must maintain that same aspiration and be placed on that same rapid trajectory to endemic excellence. The Senate has its responsibilities to determine academic policy, set conditions for admission and the granting of degrees, authorize and supervise courses and curricula; and to advise the administration on faculty appointments, promotions and budgets. You, the Board, can be assured that the Academic Senate will work with you, and all officers of the University, to strengthen our One University for its next 150 years and beyond.

Chair Kieffer, Thank you; that concludes my remarks.