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BOB SAMUELS, UC-AFT PRESIDENT

Another year, another budget crisis

It seems like, every issue, I am faced with writing the exact same article dealing with the problems in the state budget and how they relate to the University of California budget.

In the past, I have discussed how UC uses the state budget as a set of excuses and how every budget is really a list of priorities. I have also written about how UC is loaded with cash, and it just chooses not to spend money on undergraduate education and libraries.

Well, once again, we are engaged in librarian bargaining, and the university is telling us it has no money and that it is unable to raise the salaries of the librarians, even though it recognizes that librarian salaries are 15% below comparable CSU salaries.

Responding to the crisis

UC has also decided to raise fees, cut enrollments, and increase class sizes; in other words, it is promising lower quality at higher prices. Moreover, there are dark rumors about layoffs of non-tenured faculty represented by UC-AFT. As I write in late January, everyone is threatening everyone, and the different departments are jockeying for position and funding.

In order to protect the interests of our members, UC-AFT plans to set up meetings on each campus with the administration to make sure that our contracts are followed, and to motivate the university to think beyond the short term and engage in a long-term strategy to stabilize the core instructional func-

tions of the system.

Currently, UC gets only 15% of its total funding from the state, but it uses the budget for 100% of its excuses.

I hope in the future that I do not have to write another column about the UC budget, but for now, we need to keep reminding the university that it actually has a responsibility to teach its students and treat its employees fairly.

Union-sponsored scholarships for you and your dependents

Raoul Teilhet Scholarships

The California Federation of Teachers (with which UC-AFT is affiliated) offers \$3,000 and \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and continuing college students who are dependents of members. Deadlines: January 1 and July 1. For more information, call (818) 843-8226, or visit www.cft.org/index.php/scholarships.html.

Robert G. Porter Scholarships

UC-AFT members may also apply for American Federation of Teachers' scholarships. AFT awards four \$8,000 scholarships to high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members, and 20 continuing education grants of \$1,000 each to AFT members. Deadline: March 31. For more information, call (800) 238-1133 x 4457, or visit www.aft.org/aftplus/scholarships.

Union Plus Scholarships

The AFL-CIO offers scholarships from \$500 to \$3,000 to union members, their spouses, and their dependents who are enrolled at an accredited institution of higher education. New this year, scholarships are available to graduate students. More information is available at www.unionplus.org/scholarships.

On the cover: Member Sally Willson Weimer collecting student and staff signatures at UCSB's Davidson Library in support of librarians' bargaining (Gary Colmenar, photo).



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The University Council-AFT represents faculty and librarians at the University of California.

President	Bob Samuels, UCLA
VP for Legislation	Ben Harder, UCR
VP for Organizing	Mike Rotkin, UCSC
VP for Grievances	Alan Karras, UCB
Secretary-Treasurer	Miki Goral, UCLA

For contract administration issues contact:

UCB	Michelle Squitieri 510/384-6727
UCD	Jeff Narten 530/361-6130
UCSF	Michelle Squitieri 510/384-6727
UCI	Mary Coomes 559/433-7095
UCLA	Maria Elena Cortez 310/330-6906
UCM	Jeff Narten 209/382-6295
UCR	Sandra Baringer 951/827-1966
UCSD	Maria Tillmanns 858/449-8429
UCSB	Bill Quirk 805/689-0645
UCSC	Robert Weil 831/684-1310
Exec. Director	Karen Sawislak 510/740-0145

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Editor Vanessa Tait

UC-AFT/California Federation of Teachers

1201 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 115
Alameda, CA 94501

- phone: 510/523-5238
- email: ksawislak@cft.org
- website: www.cft.org/uc-aft

Librarians' bargaining approaches impasse

by Mike Rotkin, Chief Negotiator for Unit 17

The UC-AFT and UC administration negotiating teams last met in Oakland at the UC Office of the President on January 9, 2009, and bargaining now appears to be moving rapidly toward impasse.

Although we have wrapped up all remaining language issues in our Memorandum of Understanding, the two teams are still far apart on the two remaining compensation issues: salary and professional development funding levels.

On the much larger issue of compensation, the university administration has responded to the union's request for a modest increase in professional development funding (PDF) with only a token 1% increase. Further, the university has responded to our proposal for a new salary scale, which would bring UC librarians' pay comparable to that of California State University (CSU) librarians, with an offer of a zero (\$0) increase. Needless to say, we are more than a little shocked. We realize that UC is facing some budget problems, particularly in terms of the roughly 17% of its annual budget that comes from the state of California. However, as we have demonstrated at the table with hard evidence:

1) UC has literally billions of dollars in unrestricted funds that could be used to fund the rather modest requests of UC librarians.

2) Other groups of UC employees, including police, nurses and other hospital workers, various groups of top executives, and now service workers, continue to receive pay increases. AFSCME service workers recently received a pay package worth over \$64 million. This settlement plainly demonstrates that when the university has the will, it can find the money for fair compensation.

3) The university has said that it plans to fund Senate faculty increases in the near future which will cost easily ten times more than what the librarians are requesting.

4) The cost of unreasonably low pay and professional development support

falls not only on our members and their families, but also on the UC libraries as an institution and on the libraries' various patrons – the faculty, students, staff, and citizens of California. There are now serious problems with retention and recruitment of librarians at UC, and the resulting workload pressures on the remaining librarians only reinforces the recruitment and retention problems created by inadequate salaries.

The university administration's bargaining team has not even attempted to deny any of these facts. At the table, they have made it clear that librarians are not a priority for UC.

librarian level to begin to address the severe compression problems created by the increases won for assistant librarians last spring. But it now seems that even this small step towards salary improvements has been blocked by the university librarians – *apparently* (although we don't know for sure) out of concern for other priorities in their library budgets. Members of the UC-AFT team, and I assume other librarians reading this information, were dismayed to discover that it is not simply general university budget concerns, but a set of skewed priorities on the part of the people running UC libraries, that is responsible for



David Seubert, Yolanda Blue, Chizu Morihara In front of UCSB's Davidson Library collecting signatures on the petition.

We were particularly shocked at the university's offer of no compensation increases. We expected that the administration would not be offering us a large package, but, frankly, an offer of *nothing* was unanticipated.

We had received informal indications that the university would offer at least some increases at the associate

the insulting "zero" offer from UC at the table.

Despite the general belief that it is unwise for a bargaining team to "bargain against itself" by reducing the cost of a previous proposal unless there is movement on the other side, at the last

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Librarians' bargaining

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bargaining session, the UC-AFT negotiating team offered new proposals to the administration on both wages and professional development funding.

We reduced our demand for a wage increase to a flat \$10,000-a-year increase for librarians at the top end of the scale. Further, we scaled back our demand for annual professional development funding from \$3,000 to \$2,500 per capita (and reduced the demand for an increase in the university research fund from \$50,000 to \$42,000). We did this because we want to signal the administration that we are prepared to bargain in good faith and that we have not yet offered our last and final proposal to them.

Our new proposals reduced the estimated total cost of our economic proposals from roughly \$5.85 million a year to \$5.15 million a year. (Remember that this cost is in the context of a university budget with billions of dollars in unrestricted funds! As we prepare for impasse, we are currently preparing material that will offer the public information on some of the many, many lower priority activities on which the university currently spends over \$5 million annually.

Beyond our reduced demand for wages and professional development support, we have also now dropped our proposals for childcare support and tuition waivers that were part of our initial demands. We also explained that we were open to counterproposals on both articles and that such counterproposals could include various ways to reduce the immediate costs to UC for implementing our contract; for example, through "trigger mechanisms" that would fulfill our minimum goal of at least reaching parity with CSU compensation over time. (It should be noted that even our initial bargaining proposals would, now, only bring us to parity with CSU compensation as it stood last spring, since CSU librarians have received pay increases since we developed our initial proposals!)

The UC administration has responded that it does not have the authority

to respond to our demands with anything more than a zero percent increase in salaries. Consequently, both parties are now preparing a joint request for a declaration of impasse to the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). Since the administration has essentially given us their last and final offer and we are not going to bargain against ourselves *again* while the other side makes no movement, it is clear that face-to-face bargaining at the table is over.

Mediation could make the difference

The next stage of the impasse process is for the two sides to meet with the help of a mediator appointed by the state. Perhaps it will help if UC administrators can see how a neutral third party understands the relative merits of the two positions.

Frankly, as is often the case in bargaining with UC, it is not what happens at the table, but how the principals behind the scenes see the situation, that determines what happens in contract bargaining. Perhaps a mediator can bring the clear and compelling logic in support of librarian demands to the UC administration in a way that the formal bargaining process could not.

However, if we are unsuccessful in getting an agreement through the mediation process, the next step is non-binding fact-finding, in which a neutral fact-finder will hear the arguments from both sides and render an opinion on the merits of the arguments. We are confident that any neutral fact-finder should see the merit in our arguments; however, the determination of the fact-finder is only advisory to the parties and not binding. If past experience is any guide, the university will do its best to ignore the fact-finding report. We intend to bring the findings to the public, our legislative and other allies, and the administration in a forceful way.

In the end, as librarians will certainly learn from the successful experience of our sisters and brothers in AFSCME, the outcome of our struggle for fair compensation will depend less on compelling logical and factual arguments

than on the pressure the librarians and our many allies can bring to bear on the administrators at the Office of the President, at the campuses, and particularly the administrators at the campus libraries.

Time to get active

The administration should not mislead itself that UC librarians will respond to UC's insulting final offer with apathy or passivity. Librarians at UC are upset and beginning to get mobilized. UC should not be surprised to see librarians showing their displeasure in campus demonstrations, nor be shocked by legislative pressure on UC or by articles in newspapers and professional journals that highlight the abuse being heaped on UC librarians. (See the article on page 5 of this *Perspective*.)

In the end, as in all bargaining, what we can get in the way of just compensation depends less on the logic of our proposals or the persuasiveness with which we deliver them, than on the level of organization, mobilization, and militancy of our members on the various campuses. One would wish that this were not the case at a major university (which most of us at one time or another might have believed was ruled by reason), but by now we should know better. If nothing else, the recent victory by AFSCME service workers demonstrates that the university does respond to well-organized and persistent pressure.

When the administration tells us at the bargaining table that they have no response to our rational and persuasive arguments, and that librarian compensation is not a UC priority, we have two possibilities: suck it up and accept that response, or organize ways to demonstrate to them that librarians and other constituencies whom they do care about will not accept such a view passively. That is a choice that chief negotiators don't get to make. In the end, the fate of the UC librarians with respect to compensation is in the hands of the librarians themselves. The UC-AFT will provide every resource at its disposal to support the struggle of the librarians for just compensation.

Librarians MOBILIZE for just compensation

by Mike Rotkin

Now that librarian bargaining is moving to impasse, it will become clearer to all that the university responds much better to political pressure than it does to facts and logic.

The union has no reason to hide the kinds of pressure that we intend to bring against the administration both during the impasse process and, if necessary, after its conclusion. We are already well underway in developing each of these areas and we intend to pursue them all simultaneously.

Each of UC-AFT's campus locals has begun the process of mobilizing librarians in their own defense. There has been

unprecedented attendance at union meetings to discuss strategy and tactics, and most campuses have begun to implement a cascade of increasing mobilization.

Each of the actions is intended to build solidarity and confidence among our members while turning up the heat on the administration. At first, not every local will engage in every one of these activities, but over time our actions will become stronger and more closely coordinated.

Campus pressure

- ❖ Gathering petitions in support of fair compensation for librarians from students, faculty, staff and other campus supporters.

- ❖ Librarians wearing buttons and t-shirts in support of the union and our demands to work on selected days.

- ❖ Bringing education and resolutions to Senate library committees and to the

floors of the Academic Senates in support of the libraries and librarians.

- ❖ Staffing tables and distributing brochures and leaflets on librarians' concerns to students, faculty, and other staff.

- ❖ Showing up at library dedications and ceremonial events, book fairs, alumni weekends, preview days, and other events that bring donors, parents and other off-



Zachery Watkins, photo

Lecturers and librarians join other UC employees for a demonstration at a recent Board of Regents meeting.

campus constituencies to the campuses, to demonstrate or distribute leaflets and materials on the abuse of librarians.

- ❖ Doing mailings to alumni, parents, and donor groups about the shabby treatment of librarians at UC.

- ❖ Working with student governments, other student groups, and other unions, especially those with open contracts, to multiply the effect of our demonstrations.

- ❖ Working with lecturers and other sympathetic Senate faculty members, where appropriate to the subject matter of their courses, to bring librarians and their supporters into the classroom to make an educational issue out of the current struggle of the librarians.

- ❖ Engaging campus student newspapers and other student publications to get stories exposing the plight of the librarians.

Professional pressure

- ❖ Expanding our information efforts with the wider professional librarian community.

We intend to bring information about the treatment of UC librarians to the American Library Association and other professional library groups through our active distribution of material at events; through publications such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *LJ Hotline*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *Truth Out*, ALA newsletters, etc.; and through resolutions and public statements by the leaders of a variety of professional library organizations.

- ❖ Taking out ads in professional publications exposing the decline of the UC libraries in professional standing and the mistreatment of the librarians as professional employees.

- ❖ Raising our concerns with the students in the professional library schools, which have traditionally formed the basis of library employee recruitment at UC. UC libraries are already facing far too many failed recruitments, largely due to the combination of California housing prices and low compensation for UC librarians. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away, and perhaps a more direct expression of concern by potential recruits will send a necessary message to university librarians who are in denial over this critical issue.

Legislative pressure

- ❖ We are already working directly with the California legislature and through our powerful affiliates, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the California Federation of Labor, to bring pressure on top UC administrators to reconsider their dismissal of librarians' concerns over the past decade. We intend to step up this effort considerably, and have already been assured of strong support from the CFT and its legislative lobbyists.

- ❖ As was the case with the historic bargaining for lecturers from 1999-2003, we will use legislative hearings and intro-

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Librarians mobilize

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duce bills to make the UC administration focus its attention on the just demands of librarians, by challenging the lack of transparency in UC budgets and the misuse of funds granted to UC by the legislature.

Had UC delivered the funds the legislature granted to them in the past for employee salaries rather than other, less legit-

imate purposes, UC librarians would not now be so far behind CSU and community colleges in comparable compensation. We expect that our work in this arena will subject the university to another round of public embarrassment over UC's lack of accountability to the citizens of California for the public funds it receives.

❖ We will develop librarian team visits to potentially sympathetic state legisla-

tors who represent campus communities, in conjunction with a statewide lobbying effort through our CFT affiliate.

Media and public pressure

❖ We are working with CFT's Communications Department to help major state media understand the crisis in UC libraries. We expect to generate coverage and editorials, and we will be taking out full-page ads in papers such as the *Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Jose Mercury*, as well as in local community papers in every town with a UC campus. We believe that the general public understands the centrality of libraries to institutions of higher learning, even if the UC administration does not.

❖ We will be working with central labor councils to inform them about the mistreatment of librarians and to garner their support for demonstrations, public education, and potential job actions.

❖ We will produce spots for television, radio, YouTube, blogs, etc., with the help of CFT experts.

UC-AFT fights anti-gay Proposition 8

by Karen Sawislak, UC-AFT Executive Director

The California Supreme Court recently announced that it will hear arguments to overturn Proposition 8, which outlawed same-sex marriage, on March 5, 2009. A decision will follow within 90 days as to whether the initiative, approved by 52% of voters in November 2008, was properly on the ballot.

UC-AFT supported the "No on 8" campaign before the election and now is supporting the legal effort to overturn the initiative. The union is one of 52 labor groups representing over 2 million California union members that have filed an amicus brief urging the California Supreme Court to rule that a simple majority vote cannot take away a fundamental constitutional right.

The amicus brief argues that Proposition 8, if upheld, would strip one class of citizens – gays and lesbians – of the freedom to marry the person of one's choice. And if a simple majority vote can deprive one class of citizens of their constitutional rights, a simple majority can deprive another class as well. As the brief states, "Today it is gays and lesbians who are singled out. Tomorrow it could be trade unionists.

For example, the California constitution guarantees rights to unions that are not protected by the federal constitution, such as the ability to picket a store that is within a privately-owned shopping mall. If Proposition 8 is allowed to stand, it is conceivable that a simple majority could approve a ballot initiative that seeks to amend the California constitution in order to deprive unions and their members of this fundamental right to organize and assemble.

California unions support equal rights for all

The brief makes a strong stand for simple equality. Some of the two million constituents represented by the unions that signed the brief are gay and lesbian. Some gay and lesbian unionists have married and now have had that status stripped away by the passage of Proposition 8. Other union members are married to persons of the opposite sex. Some have no wish to marry anyone, of any sex. Regardless, all of these union members are persons deserving equal respect, dignity, and rights to exercise their choices, whatever they are, in regard to marriage.

Because Proposition 8 singles out gay and lesbian Californians by imposing state-sanctioned discrimination over the right to marry, it deprives a minority group of a fundamental right. As the brief concludes, this deprivation of fundamental rights for one class of citizens is a full-fledged constitutional revision that cannot be imposed via a simple majority vote.

UC-AFT is proud to stand with other California labor organizations in this effort to overturn a dangerous precedent and uphold equal treatment and equal rights for all Californians.

To read the labor union brief, go to <www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/highprofile/documents/s1680xx-amcur-laborunions-support.pdf>.

No more complacency

In general, our plan is to challenge the assumption apparently held by the UC administration, including the campus library directors ("university librarians"), that librarians are basically complacent, if not happy, about compensation and working conditions.

UC-AFT will throw its resources – staff, volunteers, connections, and money – into this battle. Of course, the struggle will go nowhere without the support of the librarians themselves. But I have been heartened to see the growing awareness and activism of librarians on virtually every campus as they realize that only political mobilization will make our employer sit up and pay attention to our just concerns.

There is no question that, as the librarians themselves step up involvement in the activities described above, we can successfully persuade UC to meet the modest compensation demands that we have placed before it. Perhaps it is not wrong to say one more time: "Yes we can."

A brief history of the UC-AFT

by Robert Weil and Mike Rotkin

University Council-American Federation of Teachers (UC-AFT) is the union – the democratically elected, exclusive legal representative – of more than 3,000 non-Senate faculty and professional librarians who are employed at all ten UC campuses.

We join together to work for and to defend better salaries and benefits, greater security of employment, professional respect, workplace rights, academic freedom, legislative solutions to educational policy issues, and full access to quality public higher education for our students. We encourage every lecturer and librarian to be an active member. Most fundamentally, the union is our members, especially our active members, and the leaders elected from among them. Union member activism is the key to our individual and collective power as educators and professionals.

Our union has been helping its members to fight for better treatment by UC for almost a quarter of a century. UC-AFT was founded following the passage in 1978 of the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act, which for the first time allowed the formation of unions in the UC system. We won elections to represent the non-Senate faculty, or lecturers (Unit 17), in 1982, and librarians (Unit 18) the next year.

UC-AFT went on to negotiate collective bargaining contracts for both units. The original contract in 1986 made a major improvement for non-Senate faculty by replacing the former “8-years-and-out rule” with a system of renewable 3-year appointments (after a sixth-year review process) that has allowed hundreds of excellent lecturers and other non-Senate faculty to have life-long UC teaching careers, to the great benefit of students. It provided for a grievance process and layoff and termination protections, as well as strengthening benefits and other rights. The librarians’ contract provided for recognition and support of professional activities.

The University Council is made up of nine locals, one from each campus, with San Francisco members belonging to the Berkeley local. Our newest local was chartered at UC Merced in 2006.

In this struggle, UC-AFT has been working in coalition with other UC unions that

together now represent more than 60,000 UC employees systemwide, including 10,000 graduate student instructors (UAW); 15,000 clericals (CUE); 12,000 researchers, technical employees, and health care workers (UPTE-CWA); and 13,000 service workers and hospital technicians (AFSCME).

While legislative lobbying and internal political actions remain important for effective collective bargaining, membership numbers are equally vital, as they are read by the employer as the degree of consensus and support for the union’s bargaining proposals. In the past five years, membership levels in UC-AFT have been steadily growing on nearly all UC campuses. Our goal is to have a solid majority of union members among both librarians and lecturers on every campus.



Gains won through action

In July 2003, UC-AFT lecturers signed a new contract with UC after a three-year struggle – including job actions on six of the campuses in 2002 – for better job security, salaries and benefits, professional development, and arbitration of grievances. This included conversion of post-sixth three-year contracts into “continuing appointments.”

Bargaining in 2005 focused on winning significant new reappointment procedures for pre-sixth lecturers. In 2007, Unit 18 achieved guaranteed cost-of-living increases and substantial equity adjustments based on length of service. Workloads were significantly decreased for many writing and foreign language lecturers and new avenues were put in place for workload appeals.

Librarians ratified a new, significantly enhanced contract in April 2008. The contract preserved key principles of peer review, beating back university proposals that aimed to introduce arbitrary management decisions into this process. Librarians also won important new language on workload and further strengthened language on unit recognition, leave rights, and grievance procedures. In the

current bargaining over salary, as explained in detail elsewhere in this issue, librarians are fighting hard to win parity with their counterparts at the CSUs and improve funding for professional development.

University Council is affiliated with both the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the national American Federation of

Teachers (AFT), as well as the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and local central labor councils in each region. Nationally, AFT has more than one million members and has grown by more than 300,000 in the last decade. While these affiliations may seem distant from our campuses, each represents a crucial level of support for the defense of our rights. All UC-AFT locals across California can call upon

affiliates for political or legislative action, research during negotiations, adding their members’ voices to ours in demonstrations, media and legal back-up, and training of local union leaders and staff.

But in the last analysis, our union is only as strong as its own members make it. We hope that every lecturer and librarian will not only join UC-AFT, but also become an active member. The university constantly tries to roll back the many gains we have already made. Together, we can not only keep them from succeeding, but go on to win even better salaries, benefits and job securities in the future.

Though all librarians and lecturers in Units 17 and 18 are covered by UC-AFT contracts, you can only become a member of the union by completing an application form (see page 11). For more information, contact your local representative or talk to a colleague who already belongs to UC-AFT.

Mike Rotkin lectures in Community Studies at UC Santa Cruz, and serves as UC-AFT’s VP for Organizing. UCSC lecturer and long-time UC-AFT Field Representative Robert Weil is embarking on a well-deserved retirement this spring.

Important clarification for lecturers' contract

by Alan Karras, VP for Grievances

Victor Chen, photo

This past fall, UC-AFT clarified contract language that protects non-Senate faculty from being replaced by graduate students. The clarification came as part of a settlement between UC-AFT and the university, and was reached on the eve of a scheduled arbitration hearing. As such, it was eleventh hour; nevertheless, the settlement agreement contains very plain language about what the union had bargained in our last contract.

The case, simply put, involved a UCI Biological Sciences lecturer who was not given a timely needs assessment for her continuing appointment, but who was informally told that there would be no need for her services in the future because Senate faculty and graduate students would be assigned to her course. Because the contract requires a formal needs assessment, UC-AFT grieved the situation. The university then simply formally told her that it would no longer require her services. But there was no plan in place for the replacement of her teaching with graduate students.

Moreover, the graduate students whom the university ultimately *did* appoint in its effort to replace her did not come from her department – or even school. Instead, they came from different departments and schools across the campus. Their “qualifications,” the campus claimed, were that they had taken her

course as undergraduates. This, the union argued, was impermissible under the contract. Campus officials remained unmoved; the union brought the case forward to arbitration.

The settlement document, in addition to providing some remuneration to the grievant, contains a letter of understanding between UC-AFT and the union. That letter clearly states that it is *impermissible* to replace a lecturer with a graduate student employee without a clear pedagogical plan in place.

Moreover, that plan must have gone through regular consultative processes – meaning that a single chair or dean, such as the Dean and Associate Dean of BioSci at Irvine, cannot simply make such a determination

alone. In addition, it is now explicitly stated that a record of such consultative processes should be made.

We believed that the contract afforded non-Senate faculty these protections all along; this letter now contains language that makes it plain for all deans and chairs to see. It took far too long to get the campus to resolve this case. We hope that the resolution will prevent other cases like this from again arising, whether at UCI or any of the other campuses.

A recent UC-AFT council meeting in San Diego.

(There was none in the UCI case.)

This letter also clearly, and unequivocally states that if there is a plan to replace lecturers with graduate students, the graduate students must come from the same department or a related one (which would not include, as it did in this case, English).

As important, there must be a pedagogical plan in place that *requires* these graduate students to teach such courses, and it too must have passed through consultative processes. It is not, therefore, left to the chair’s whim or dean’s discretion.

We believed that the contract afforded non-Senate faculty these protections all along; this letter now contains language that makes it plain for all deans and chairs to see. It took far too long to get the campus to resolve this case. We hope that the resolution will prevent other cases like this from again arising, whether at UCI or any of the other campuses.

Alan Karras is a lecturer in UC Berkeley’s International & Area Studies Department.



From left to right, at a statewide council meeting, Alan Karras (UCB lecturer), Mitchell Brown (UCI librarian) and Kimloan Hill (UCSD lecturer).



America, and its faltering economy, need unions to restore prosperity to the middle class

by Robert B. Reich

Why is this recession so deep, and what can be done to reverse it?

Hint: Go back about 50 years, when America's middle class was expanding and the economy was soaring. Paychecks were big enough to allow us to buy all the goods and services we produced. It was a virtuous circle. Good pay meant more purchases, and more purchases meant more jobs.

At the center of this virtuous circle were unions. In 1955, more than a third of working Americans belonged to one. Unions gave them the bargaining leverage they needed to get the paychecks that kept the economy going. So many Americans were unionized that wage agreements spilled over to nonunionized workplaces as well. Employers knew they had to match union wages to compete for workers and to recruit the best ones.

Fast forward to a new century. Now, fewer than 8% of private-sector workers are unionized. Corporate opponents argue that Americans no longer want unions. But public opinion surveys, such as a comprehensive poll that Peter D. Hart Research Associates conducted in 2006, suggest that a majority of workers would like to have a union to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

So there must be some other reason for this dramatic decline.

But put that question aside for a moment. One point is clear: smaller numbers of unionized workers mean less bargaining power, and less bargaining power results in lower wages.

It's no wonder middle-class incomes were dropping even before the recession. As our economy grew between 2001 and the start of 2007, most Americans didn't share in the prosperity. By the time the recession began last year, according to an Economic Policy Institute study, the median income of households headed by those under age 65 was below what it was in 2000.

Typical families kept buying only by going into debt. This was possible as long as the housing bubble expanded. Home equity loans and refinancing made up

for declining paychecks. But that's over. American families no longer have the purchasing power to keep the economy going. Lower paychecks, or no paychecks at all, mean fewer purchases, and fewer purchases mean fewer jobs.

Build unions, help the economy

The way to get the economy back on track is to boost the purchasing power of the middle class. One major way to do this is to expand the percentage of working Americans in unions.

Tax rebates won't work because they don't permanently raise wages. Most families used the rebate last year to pay off debt – not a bad thing, but it doesn't keep the virtuous circle running.

Bank bailouts won't work either. Businesses won't borrow to expand without consumers to buy their goods and services. And Americans themselves can't borrow when they're losing their jobs and their incomes are dropping.

Tax cuts for working families, as President Obama intends, can do more to help because they extend over time. But only higher wages and benefits for the middle class will have a lasting effect.

Unions matter in this equation. According to the Department of Labor, workers in unions earn 30% higher wages – taking home \$863 a week, compared with \$663 for the typical nonunion worker – and are 59% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance than their nonunion counterparts.

Examples abound. In 2007, nearly 12,000 janitors in Providence, New Hampshire and Boston, represented by the Service Employees International Union, won a contract that raised their wages to \$16 an hour, guaranteed more work hours and provided family health insurance. In an industry typically staffed by part-time workers with a high turnover rate, a union contract provided janitors with full-time, sustainable jobs that they could count on to raise their families' – and their communities' – standard of living.

In August, 65,000 Verizon workers, represented by the Communications Workers of America, won wage increases

totaling nearly 11% and converted temporary jobs to full-time status. Not only did the settlement preserve fully paid health care premiums for all active and retired unionized employees, but Verizon also agreed to provide \$2 million a year to fund a collaborative campaign with its unions to achieve meaningful national health care reform.

Although America and its economy need unions, it's become nearly impossible for employees to form one. The Hart poll I cited tells us that 57 million workers would want to be in a union if they could have one. But those who try to form a union, according to researchers at MIT, have only about a 1 in 5 chance of successfully doing so.

The reason? Most of the time, employees who want to form a union are threatened and intimidated by their employers. And all too often, if they don't heed the warnings, they're fired, even though that's illegal. I saw this when I was secretary of labor over a decade ago. We tried to penalize employers that broke the law, but the fines are minuscule. Too many employers consider them a cost of doing business.

This isn't right. The most important feature of the Employee Free Choice Act, which will be considered by the just-seated 111th Congress, toughens penalties against companies that violate their workers' rights. The sooner it's enacted, the better – for workers and for the economy.

The American middle class isn't looking for a bailout or a handout. Most people just want a chance to share in the success of the companies they help to prosper. Making it easier for all Americans to form unions would give the middle class the bargaining power it needs for better wages and benefits. And a strong and prosperous middle class is necessary if our economy is to succeed.

Robert Reich is a professor of public policy at UCB and served as Secretary of Labor under Clinton. This article originally appeared in the Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2009, and is reprinted with permission.

Schwartz interview

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partmental Research” as separate from “Sponsored Research,” which is paid for by external sources, such as federal grants and contracts.)

The challenge, then, is to disaggregate the portion of that whole bundle of costs and isolate the actual expenditure for undergraduate education. I have encountered a variety of excuses, from university officials and from so-called experts on university finances, as to why such a separation of costs need not be done or should not be done or cannot be done.

How did you calculate this amount?

Some time ago, the UC administration conducted an extensive “faculty time-use study” and that data gives authoritative numbers for the fraction of professors’ work time devoted, on the average, to research, to teaching, to professional and university service; and it also includes a breakdown between undergraduate and graduate teaching. This is a logical and objective way to separate out the cost component I am interested in. This methodology is called “activity-based costing” and it is standard in the world of economics and business management.

I have repeatedly suggested that UC officials should sit down and go over the details of my calculation with me (and any other interested parties). There are a number of small points that can be clarified, argued over, or improved by better data collection. They show no interest in doing that.

Why is the UC budget so hard to understand?

Let me offer a theory about the origin of this habit of hiding the cost of faculty research. It is a sort of cultural thing, a system of beliefs (insecurities) among research faculty that, while we know that our research work is of great value to all of society, we believe that most people outside of the universities, and their elected representatives in government, do not have much understanding of or appreciation for this research endeavor. They are mostly interested in the high quality undergraduate education we provide (for

their kids). So, here’s the deal: we will provide the undergraduate education if they will fund our research work. Wrap it all up in one big bundle of money (the I&R budget) and let us take care of the details. So we have faculty research and teaching throughout the academic year paid for by the overall salaries in that budget; and we just record that all as an expenditure for “instruction.”

When the state paid for all of that, one could say that there was nothing wrong with this little white lie; both teaching and research are “public goods” paid for by public money.

What do you think should be done to make the UC finances more transparent?

The recent rapid rise of student fees (tuition) at our public universities changes that old story in a basic way. We now need to tell clearly how much we spend on undergraduate education (which undergrads and their families are paying for) and how much we spend on research and related graduate programs (which must be paid for by public funds and not by students). Transparency and accountability are popular buzzwords; the requirement just stated is quite specific about what UC, and other research universities, must do to clean up their act.

What do you see for the future of the UC system?

There are several potential futures for UC and several groups seeking to implement their particular vision.

Some would like to restore the generous funding levels of previous decades, where the state of California gave the University of California almost everything it asked for. That was a good

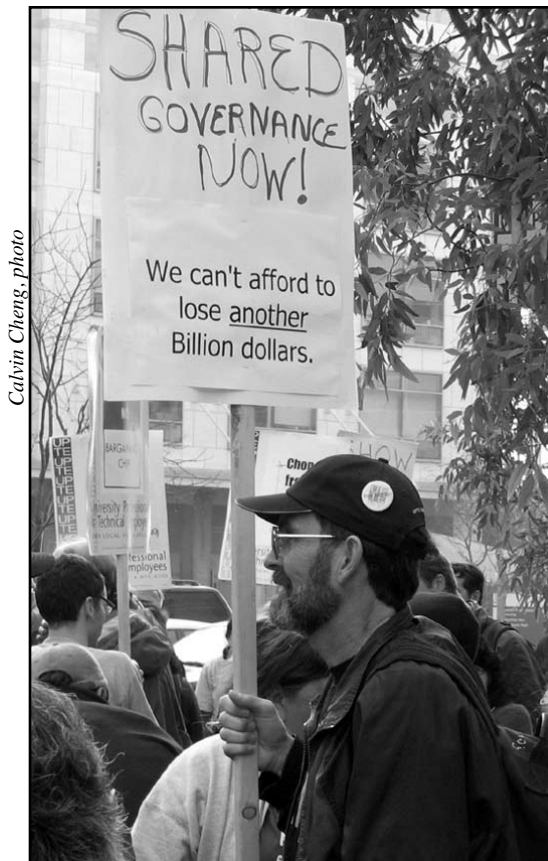
time; UC flourished and provided many rich benefits for California. Advocates of that program cite how UC’s quality will deteriorate if not adequately funded. What do they mean by “quality”? They mean the ranking of UC, compared to other universities, in terms of faculty research accomplishments and reputation.

In recent years the university, acting through

the Board of Regents, has articulated a three-fold formula for maintenance of UC’s mission: quality, access and affordability. When you look more closely at their debates, it becomes clear that quality rules: they are willing to sacrifice student access and affordability in order to maintain the research preeminence.

What do you think the average citizen should know about recent changes in higher education?

I believe that higher education is a great and valuable set of institutions, which has benefited the country greatly; and it ought to be able to continue that heritage. But it needs to clean up its financial house – that means, first of all, being open and honest about which incoming money streams pay for which outputs.



Calvin Cheng, photo

UC employees demonstrating outside a regents' meeting in San Francisco.

Watchdogging the budget: an interview with Professor Charles Schwartz

For more than 15 years, UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus of Physics Charles Schwartz has been peeling back the opaque and convoluted layers of the UC budget. He publishes regular reports on his findings, and on the sometimes Kafkaesque efforts simply to get answers, at <socrates.berkeley.edu/~schwartz>. UC-AFT President Bob Samuels, a lecturer at UCLA, recently sat down with Prof. Schwartz to ask him about the UC budget.

How and why did you get interested in researching the UC budget?

I joined the Berkeley faculty in 1960 and, over a period of years, developed interests and attitudes infected with the critical style of the student movements of that decade. When I took early retirement, in 1993, I decided to turn myself into an amateur accountant focused on the financial system of the university. The motivation for this was the economic downturn, which led to the rapid rise in student fees. I felt that there would be major changes coming to the university, in its internal relations and

in its socioeconomic orientation within the larger society; and these changes would be mandated from above, by the Board of Regents and their handpicked administrators, claiming that they had no choice – the financial situation forced them. My hope was to develop an independent understanding of the financial maze and be able to offer alternative analyses and proposals.

In other words, I like the philosophy of challenging authority; and I thought it best to be armed with factual details about where the money comes from and where it goes in this big institution.

How much do you think it costs UC to educate an undergraduate?

My latest calculation, for the year 2007-08 (details can be found at <socrates.berkeley.edu/~schwartz/recost.html>), gives the figure of \$7,430 (with an uncertainty of about +/- \$320) for UC's average annual expenditure per student for undergraduate education. That is just 100% (with an uncertainty of +/- 5%) of the amount charged in mandatory fees for resident undergraduate students.

How much does UC claim it costs, and where do you think the extra money goes?

UC claims that their "Average Expenditure for Education" is \$17,390 per student in 2007-08; and they say that student fees cover only 30% of that cost. This is very different from my result and we should ask how to understand that conflict.

The main issue is the research work that faculty are engaged in throughout the academic year. How is that accounted for? Who pays for that? How much of professors' activity does that encompass?

A long-standing accounting habit of all our universities uses the expenditure category of "Instruction" to include the full academic year salaries of faculty members and their support staff in the academic departments. This means that this whole bundle (sometimes called the I&R budget) covers the costs of undergraduate education plus graduate education plus faculty members' research activity throughout the academic year. (That last activity is called "De-

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