



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT --
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

September 10, 2009

Open Letter to the Faculty

I have received numerous communications from across the system about the furlough plan and how it is being implemented with UC's faculty; so many, that I felt it was appropriate to respond with this open letter.

Let me begin by acknowledging what we all feel--that any reduction in salary for our faculty and staff, whether implemented as a pay cut or a furlough, is damaging to this institution. President Yudof and all of us at UCOP are working as hard as we can to end the furloughs in one year. The furlough/salary reduction plan was forced by unprecedented cuts in state support--a reduction of \$813 million in 2008-09 and 2009-10 compared with the 2007-08 general fund support. In addition there are more than \$300 million in unfunded expenses, including negotiated salary increases for some of our represented employees, employer contributions to UCRS when we restart them in April, and increases in employee health care costs. The furlough plan addresses less than a quarter of this funding shortfall, and student fee increases already enacted address not quite a quarter more. Thus, about half of the \$813 million and the unfunded increased expenses still have to be addressed by cost reduction and program restructuring/reduction/elimination at UCOP and the campuses. Unfortunately, further student fee increases will be needed to avoid unacceptable harm to the University. These actions, necessitated by the reduced budget, profoundly threaten the historic mission of UC and, in the longer term, the general health, welfare, and economic well being of the State of California.

The decision to implement furloughs was not taken lightly or without considerable consultation. The plan that the President took to the Board of Regents was substantively different and much improved from the three options that were initially proposed. These improvements were the result of the hard work of the Academic Council and the outpouring of suggestions that emerged from faculty and staff during a necessarily rapid consultation process. Still, we realize that it was the least bad of a range of miserable, but nonetheless necessary, options.

The same applies to the decision announced in my letter of August 21, that faculty not take furloughs on days of face-to-face instruction. Once more we were forced in short order to review and then choose among unpalatable options.

Let me begin with the decision-making process before turning to the decision itself. Beginning in July, I invited input from campus administrators and the Academic Senate about how to implement furloughs for faculty, and I had received input from the Executive Vice Chancellors, the Academic Council, and colleagues at the Office of the President.

To review and collate this input, I assembled a small task force including UCOP staff and representatives appointed by the Academic Council. The team, in which I participated closely, fully reported its work to me on August 9.

The group considered the three principal issues that emerged from the consultation process:

1. use by faculty of furlough days on days of instruction;
2. use by faculty of furlough days to engage in Outside Professional Activities; and
3. compensation of faculty from contracts and grants, and restricted gifts and endowments for research performed on furlough days.

It identified broad consensus among all parties on the last two of these issues, notably that faculty could use furlough days to engage in Outside Professional Activities and be compensated from appropriate contract and grant funds for research performed on furlough days. Our business and payroll colleagues at UCOP and on the campuses have worked extremely hard and shouldered an enormous administrative burden to allow faculty compensation for the new research effort on furlough days when appropriate funds can be applied to this purpose.

No such consensus existed with regard to faculty taking furlough days on days of instruction. Rather than making a recommendation, the task force summarized the arguments in favor of each of the approaches that emerged.

- One advised that days of face-to-face instruction be reduced by at least six days and that faculty not make use of remaining instructional days for furloughs.
- The other advised against reducing the number of face-to-face instruction days.

It was left to me to advise the President about which course to choose, knowing full well that any decision was going to be unpopular across the university community. In the end, and after numerous additional discussions with the President, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Academic Council, the Executive Vice Chancellors and the Chancellors, I advised the President that faculty not use furlough days on days of face-to-face instruction because of the additional hardship it potentially would cause for our students. I also expressed concern that such an action would be perceived as further burdening our students in order to make a political point with Sacramento.

Of course, the University must find ways to send a strong and compelling message to Sacramento about the dire consequences of dramatically reduced state support for higher education. California's governance structure is in severe disarray with a completely inadequate method of balancing needed government services with sufficient State revenues. I encourage each of you to explain to your legislators and the Governor the danger in which they are placing the State by dramatic erosion of support for UC, and for education more generally. But I am convinced that we must use the means we have at our disposal to not further erode instruction, particularly since we are asking the students to pay increasingly higher fees for their education.

This is not an easy time for the University community. The challenges we face are enormous. How we respond will determine the future of this institution. We are at a watershed moment. These critical issues will be addressed by the Regents' UC Commission on the Future which started its deliberations on September 8, and will continue with extensive discussions involving faculty, students and administrators.

How and along what fronts we proceed will be a matter for vigorous debate and discussion in the year ahead. So long as I am Provost, I can assure you that whatever decisions I take--even the most unpopular ones--will be shaped by robust, informed, and inclusive consultation. Our shared governance is a hallmark of this great institution and it is a key to our progress through these difficult times towards a brighter future.

Finally, I want to thank all of the many people who have taken the time to express their opinion and to offer their advice and guidance about faculty furloughs and the many other issues with which we find ourselves grappling. I encourage you to continue to send me your views and assure you that I will consider them carefully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lawrence H. Pitts".A second handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lawrence H. Pitts".

Lawrence H. Pitts
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
Academic Affairs