

August 27, 2009

Chancellor George Blumenthal
Kerr Hall

Re: Senate Executive Committee on Interim Provost Pitts' Furlough Plan

Dear George:

The Senate Executive Committee objects to the decision by Interim Provost Pitts not to allow any furlough days on instruction/office hour days. As the campus brings forward its own plan, we strongly recommend that you advocate an approach for UCSC more consonant with the UC faculty's historical missions and the Regents' stated intention for campus authority on furlough matters. Here we detail our concerns and questions about the Pitts plan itself.

1) Incoherence of UCOP's view of our Systemwide mission:

The policy inaccurately characterizes UC's mission. Specifically, Provost Pitts' statement, "Asking the faculty to carry a full teaching load during furloughs is a large request, but in my mind is justified by the University's paramount teaching mission," contrasts directly with UC's overarching mission statement (from <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/mission.html>): "The University's fundamental missions are teaching, research and public service." Provost Pitts' message elevates teaching above all other missions, and hence conflates the mission of the University of California with that of every other state-funded educational enterprise. Our roles in encouraging invention, innovation, and service to the state through, for example, our agricultural or high-tech enterprises are thus effectively downgraded by the chief academic officer of the university. Moreover, this revision of UC's mission encompasses only half of the view promoted by UCOP: that the state should "make a priority of re-investing in opportunity and innovation for California" (from OP's sample letter for UC advocates to the legislature). In thus recasting UC's mission, Provost Pitts and the Office of the President appear to have devalued research and limited its full operation in ways that should be profoundly demoralizing to all faculty.

Indeed, for Provost Pitts to say that research is "permitted" on furlough days is poorly worded at best. At worst, it is deeply offensive to faculty, who are hired and evaluated with the understanding that research is one of their fundamental duties as faculty of the University of California—a duty that will be disproportionately impacted by his furlough decree.

2) *UCOP's Inability to Follow Guidelines:*

At their July meeting, the UC Regents approved Regents Item J1, an Amendment to the Standing Orders of the Regents dealing with Presidential Emergency Power, with attachments that dealt with a "Declaration of Extreme Financial Emergency" and a "Furlough/Salary Reduction Plan." Section VI ("Plan Features") of the latter attachment ("Furlough/Salary Reduction Plan") of this item states, "Included employees will have their work time reduced by a specified number of furlough days to be taken throughout the Plan term as discretionary days off and/or during closure days, if any, *as determined by their campus or location*" (italics ours).

Hence, it appears that the Regentally-approved Plan dictates that discretionary days and closure days are determined by the campus or location, not by OP. In this context, Pitts/OP's imposition on how campuses can institute furloughs appears to be out of accord with Regental action. It is possible that, under Section X ("Delegated Authority to Modify the Plan as Appropriate") of the "Furlough/Salary Reduction Plan," UCOP has altered the conditions under which furloughs are instituted. But, if such a change has occurred, it has been effected in secret; if such a change has not occurred, then OP appears to have over-reached the authority granted by the Regents item. Regardless of which is the case, such a sequence of actions is remarkably reminiscent of OP's prior Executive Compensation actions that have so damaged the University of California.

3) *Institution of Tiering of Salary and Effort by Discipline:*

Provost Pitts's furlough plan will disproportionately affect faculty with limited access to grants and consulting income—faculty largely situated in humanistic and social science disciplines. This consequence undermines the concept that these furloughs are "built on a central principle of shared sacrifice," as described in President Yudof's July 16, 2009 announcement of the furloughs. While exceptions to the furlough have been made for non-state supported research, the final decision disallowing furloughs on instructional days has disproportionately intensified the divisive consequences of the policy—now, faculty within disciplines with little external funding will see their research time either reduced or uncompensated. Faculty will then be faced with a Catch-22: doing uncompensated research, or reducing their research time. The former is intrinsically unfair; the latter will have visible, lasting consequences for career advancement, a process that is based on research, teaching and service. We find these outcomes to be unacceptable.

4) *UCOP's Messaging, or Lack Thereof:*

Faculty are, of course, aware of the many difficulties faced by our students. Because of declining state support, our student fees have seen marked annual increases, and these increases promise to continue throughout the foreseeable future. These dramatic

increases—OP-initiated and Regentally-approved—have been accompanied by at best muted and ineffective protests from OP, so it is difficult now to attribute much sincerity to OP's position that that "we must do everything we can to ensure that the students continue to receive all of their instruction." Now, faculty are seeing decreased paychecks and "furlough" days that we apparently cannot take on any of our days of scheduled student contact. In short, OP's history is that it is highly amenable to changes in the educational product/cost ratio when the changes are confined to the denominator. However, when changes are proposed to the numerator in response to budgetary cuts, it appears that OP feels compelled to adopt what might seem to be a principled stance, were it not for their prior history of raising student fees to resolve systemic problems. The public is, we believe, fluent with the adverse effect of increased student fees, but the intent of OP here seems to be to hide the effect of decreased faculty and staff salaries behind a veneer of normality, and at the expense of research and service—and we find this to be unacceptable.

We hope that you will convey these concerns to the Office of the President. In our view, Provost Pitts' letter exemplifies UCOP's lack of connection to the campuses, and its disengagement from the faculty who actually conduct the instructional, research and service missions of the University. As we all understand, these budget cuts will have dire consequences on the quality of education and on the research environment. Provost Pitts' edict masks those consequences in ways that will continue the public's illusion about the actual mission and work of university faculty.

We look forward to working with you to produce a furlough plan that honors, within these difficult circumstances, UC's commitment not only to its mission, but also to faculty, staff and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Quentin Williams".

Quentin Williams
Chair, Academic Senate

Cc: EVC Klinger
Interim VCPB Delaney
AVC Peterson