

BFA TALKING POINTS IN DEFENSE OF UC AND PUBLIC EDUCATION
For all concerned faculty at the University of California

- Public education for all is one of the great contributions of America to modern life, and was fought for by brilliant educators from John Dewey to Clark Kerr. It has always had doubters and enemies; it is at risk and will not survive unless we defend it once again.
- All of us must be able to defend public education to our colleagues, our students and the public. To do so, we must be able to articulate its basic purposes and priorities, as well as criticize the misunderstandings and mistakes of our administration, the Regents, and the dominant ideology.
- Public education is an investment in the young by the general public and older generations. It rests on the belief that our collective future, the future of this State and country, depends on their talents and wisdom. That is why it should be virtually free. It is not a personal investment by those with ample means, like private universities.
- Educating the young to the highest level has three essential purposes: improving their contribution to economic prosperity, making them into the most capable citizens and leaders, and fulfilling their potential for personal growth and satisfaction
- The 3-tier college system of California is a brilliant solution to reconciling two fundamental goals of higher education: open opportunity and the promotion of excellence among our students.
- In the University of California, research and teaching must always go together. Research informs the best teaching and teaching introduces students to the best minds. Yet this partnership is being eroded by those who think that research is the sole purpose of elite universities and that teaching is a lower activity that should be relegated to lecturers and graduate students.
- Research is a basic function of the university. Research advances the frontiers of human knowledge and has unexpected benefits for society and economy. Sometimes these benefits emerge years or decades later, which is why it is important to support basic research and not only marketable applications. Research is done by faculty across all the disciplines and its value is not to be measured simply by potential economic payoff.
- The natural sciences have much larger financial needs for running laboratories, and require greater outside finance resources (from government, foundations and industry), as well as greater needs for support from the university. This puts special demands on science faculty and the university. But it does not obviate the need for teaching nor does it put research funding above things such as good classrooms and libraries.
- Funding for public education is being eroded all across the country and around the world, as part of the larger shift to neoliberalism, i.e., away from government and toward

private enterprise in all social provision. This is not a California problem alone nor a short-term dip due to the Great Recession.

- The university leadership is obsessed with money, putting aside all considerations of UC's larger values. All they think of is raising tuition, attracting private donations, and garnering more research grants, along with cost-cutting. In so doing, they endanger the future of the public university and make UC more and more like a private institution.
- UC and Berkeley are not "brands" like Coca-Cola to be marketed for revenues. We do not put billboards on campus and we should not be in the business of selling on-line courses and external degrees. We can make use of the internet and other technologies to reach a broader audience, but with great care not to degrade our educational mission.
- The current crisis is being used by the university leadership to make hasty decisions without adequate faculty control and to make end-runs around the university community. Faculty governance was central to making this the greatest public university in the world, and it has been badly eroded. Faculty cannot remain quiet, but need to speak out through the Senates and Faculty Associations on all 10 campuses.
- Extreme salary inequality has demoralized many younger faculty and many of those most dedicated to the university. Their ire is directed at both overpaid administrators and extreme 'star salaries' for some faculty. This university became great by hiring well, promoting well and nurturing the best minds. Yet today it is under-paying its younger faculty while spending large amounts playing the free-agent game at the top.
- University leaders, and all of us, need to speak to the people of California. All indications are that they support the higher education system and are willing to pay for it. But the political system is incapable of overcoming ideological opposition to taxes and rational budgeting and our leaders are unwilling and unable to provide political leadership in what is a profoundly political debate over the future of the state.
- Quite modest taxes would restore full funding to the university and state colleges. We calculate that a mere \$40 per year by the median tax-payer would return the system to sufficient revenues without the fee increases of the last 10 years. Why can't this be done? (for further information go to <http://keepcaliforniapromise.org/>)
- We believe that faculty, students, staff, parents and alumni could be mobilized to put unprecedented pressure on the legislature to *re-fund* public education in the State of California, if the President and Chancellors across the system would mobilize the greater UC community and provide the leadership we all sorely need.

The Berkeley Faculty Association
Wendy Brown and Chris Rosen, Co-Chairs
Richard Walker, Vice-Chair
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