

UC ACADEMIC BUSINESS OFFICERS GROUP

President Robert C. Dynes

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Century City

Thank you for inviting me to join you today. One of the great pleasures of my job is getting out of the office and meeting the people throughout the state who really make the University of California work. I put you all in that category, so I'm very happy to have the opportunity to meet you all and hear what's on your minds.

Let me also thank Leslie Webster and the rest of the Steering Committee for putting together this 36th annual conference of the Academic Business Officers Group. You are a valuable group of people to the University, and I think this is a perfect opportunity for you to exchange ideas, to learn from each other, and to ask tough questions of people like me!

I thought I would make a few remarks about what I'm up to and where I see the University heading, then we'll open it up to your questions and comments.

As you may know, I have spent a good part of my first few months in office visiting the campuses and their surrounding communities, and getting to know the UC community better. I've visited almost all the campuses at this point, plus two visits to the San Joaquin Valley and visits to our three national labs. I still have a visit planned to Davis, a follow-up visit to UCLA, and a return visit to my home campus, UC San Diego.

This tour has been a great opportunity to meet people and to hear people's ideas for the future of the University. It also has impressed upon me, more strongly than ever before, how varied the campuses are. Every campus truly has its own distinctive feel and character, its different strengths and emphases.

That diversity within the UC system is one of the biggest strengths *of* the UC system – that we have achieved such excellence across the board, and that it manifests itself in such different and interesting ways.

The tour has also given me a new appreciation for the extraordinary *impact* of the University of California on the state of California itself.

We provide an excellent educational experience for our students, to be sure. That is well known. We educate students who go on to become our society's industrial, cultural, governmental, and intellectual leaders.

But the impact goes far deeper than that. We literally have an impact on the lives of all Californians. Just consider:

- Our research leads to an average of three new inventions every day, and the UC system leads the American higher education community in the generation of new patents. Those

innovations lead to new products; the products lead to the creation of new companies and even new industries; and those companies and industries generate good, new jobs for Californians.

Take the biotechnology industry as an example. One in four biotech companies in California was founded by a UC faculty member or alum, and 85% of the state's biotech firms employ people with UC degrees. You would see similar scenarios for many of the other industries now driving the state's economy – information technology, telecommunications, digital media, and many others.

- In addition to our research, the health care provided by the University of California touches the lives of thousands of people who otherwise might never set foot on our campuses. We have the state's second-largest physicians' practice, we educate two-thirds of the state's medical students, we care for many of the state's working poor, and we handle 239,000 emergency room visits each year.
- Our outreach programs in the public schools, our Extension classes for working adults, our agricultural programs serving farmers and ranchers, and our online California Digital Library all reach out to thousands upon thousands of additional people who gain the benefit of UC's teaching, research, and public service.

I firmly believe that California today needs the University of California more than ever before. For economic growth, for educational opportunity, for human health, and for the preservation of California's special quality of life, I don't know where else this state turns but to public higher education.

So, what do we do to make sure the University of California continues playing that role – continues having that impact? I think there are several things we need to do.

First, we need to continue building the understanding among the public and among decision makers that the University is absolutely critical to the state's future. We're not an expenditure, we're an investment!

I have been spending a good deal of time in Sacramento, talking with legislators, members of the Administration, and the governor himself. And I think there is growing recognition that the University of California is not part of the state's problem, we're part of the solution. I'm confident the governor himself recognizes that.

Now, we do face some very significant budget challenges in the short term. Over a four-year period including next year, under the governor's budget, our enrollment will have increased 16% while our state funding will have declined 16%. In 1970, UC received 7 cents out of every state dollar. Today it's 4 cents and proposed to drop to 3½ cents.

The results are clear: Programs are being cut. Student fees are going up. Some UC-eligible students are now being directed to community colleges for their first two years. And our salaries are falling woefully behind the competition, for both faculty and staff.

I am doing my best in Sacramento to make the case for UC's impact and for UC's needs, and I certainly hope we can minimize the cuts for next year.

I should also add that I think there is hope for the longer term, after we get out from under this year's crisis. The governor has expressed interest in a multi-year funding plan for the University of California that would give us some stability for the future. We're in discussions about that right now, so I do believe there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

In addition to helping decision-makers understand the importance of the University, though, we need to do a better job of understanding it *ourselves*.

I was at UCSF a couple of weeks ago, and I had a meeting with a group of students. One of them asked me what I was going to do to increase UC's national reputation academically. This was a student at UCSF, one of the world's leading centers in the health sciences!

So, I took him through it: The 45 Nobel Prizes. The 48 National Medals of Science. The 335 members of the National Academy of Sciences. The six campuses that are members of the Association of American Universities – far more than any other state. The fact that we are the nation's leader in Ph.D awards, in patented inventions, and in federal R&D expenditures.

I also told him about the results of a recent international study of academic quality. This study came out of Shanghai, China, and it reported that of the top 15 universities worldwide, 13 are in the United States. Of those 13 universities, six are in California. And four of those California campuses are UC campuses. Berkeley was ranked 4th in the world, UCSF 13th, UCSD 14th, and UCLA 15th.

I think the student was convinced – I hope he was – but we really do need to take time now and then to remind ourselves what an incredible institution this is.

In addition to creating better understanding about what the University of California is and what it means to the society around us, we need to make sure we do the right things internally to preserve quality programs and to preserve – and not only preserve but expand – our positive impact for California.

- That means we need to have the very best faculty and staff, and we need to have policies in place that support them to the best of this institution's ability.
- We need to make sure that all of *you* have the tools you need to do your work effectively. I mentioned those Nobel Prizes a moment ago. Whenever anyone does win a Nobel Prize, it partly reflects on the infrastructure that made it possible. All of you are an important part of that infrastructure.
- We need to have competitive salaries and benefits, for both faculty and staff.

- We need to find ways to continue cultivating diversity. I believe a high-quality institution is, by definition, a diverse institution. We can't truly be high-quality if we're not taking advantage of everyone's talents and serving the broad diversity of the society that supports us in the first place.
- And finally, in everything we do – in every initiative we undertake – we need to ask ourselves, “Does this enhance the quality of the University of California? If we do this, can we be the very best in the world at it?” Because that truly is the University of California's standard.

I believe, over the long term, we are going to *continue expanding the University's impact* on the society around us, becoming ever more integrated with the life of California and the nation.

I believe, despite the current downturn, that we are going to *preserve access* over the long term for California's highest achieving students, ensuring they can get the best possible college education and can get it from a *public* institution.

And, I believe we are going to continue being *the nation's very best public university* – and frankly, I would say the best university, period.

I have great respect for the Harvards and Stanfords and MITs of this country. They are extremely distinguished institutions that have made major contributions to human knowledge and scientific advancement.

But I believe the University of California takes second place to no one. We have the same brainpower – and we are so much larger than these other institutions. The intellectual resources that this university can focus on a problem – pulling from across 10 campuses and three national laboratories – is something that is simply unmatched in higher education today, anywhere.

I'm going to stop talking in just a minute, but I do want to address one of the interesting questions that the organizers of this conference had asked me to address today – and that is, what are my pet peeves?

I've thought a good bit about that. I would have to say, upon reflection, that at least *one* of my pet peeves is when we do things, even if they're stupid things, simply because that's the way they've always been done.

Of *course* we have our share of bureaucratic processes at the University of California, and there are good reasons for many of them. We are a public institution, we are subject to many regulations, and we must ensure full compliance with those regulations and full accountability to the public at all times. That is very important to me, and I don't want anyone to leave here thinking otherwise.

But occasionally, I think we need to remind ourselves that we are part of an institution that is based on creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This is a place that is *always* pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

So when you have good ideas, I hope you'll share them. I hope you'll always think of yourselves as part of the solution to whatever challenge you face in your daily work. I believe that all of us who are "citizens" of the University of California are problem-solvers at heart, and that is exactly the mindset we need to cultivate, particularly in these fiscally challenging times.

Let me close where I began – and that is by thanking you. I fear that many of you are thanked far too rarely for the important work you do for the University, and for the critical support you provide for the academic enterprise.

I want you to be in touch, and I want to hear your ideas – both today and in the future.

You may know that I send out two periodic communications to the UC community – a video letter and an electronic newsletter – and I also have a feature on my web page called Dynes' Desk. Dynes' Desk is an opportunity for anyone to email me directly a question or comment. I can't respond to all or even most of them, but I do read them all, and many of them get passed on to others in the Office of the President for their consideration. So I hope you'll take advantage of this feature and keep in touch with me.

You all are part of an incredible institution – and not only that, but your work helps to *make* it incredible. I hope you take as much pride in your service for the people of California as I do.

With that, I'd be happy to hear your questions and comments.