



## Web Chat with President Dynes

In his first weeks in office, UC President Robert C. Dynes held an hour-long web chat with students from around the UC system. The following is a transcript of questions and answers from this October 15th chat. The chat series also included two conversations with UC alumni, faculty and staff.

For more information about President Dynes and future events, please visit the president's web page at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/president/welcome.html>.

Moderator Welcome! President Robert C. Dynes will be answering questions from students today. He will be joining us at 4 p.m., and he will answer as many questions as possible during the scheduled hour. You can post questions now if you like, and President Dynes will respond when he joins us at 4 p.m.

President Dynes has just joined us - thank you for spending an hour with us today.

BOB DYNES It's a pleasure -- always a pleasure to spend some time talking with students. Thank you all for joining us today.

<Q> How do you intend to deal with the exploding growth in the population of college age students? Will UC be able to accommodate all those who are eligible, especially given the California budget situation?

We will continue as best we can to maintain access to all eligible students in California. I am putting together a study group to look at the breadth of eligibility and admissions issues before us to optimize that goal.

BOB DYNES I have had conversations with Charlie Reed, chancellor at CSU, and Tom Nussbaum, chancellor at the community colleges, and it is my goal to work together more closely with all segments of higher education so that we can collectively and collaboratively assure that every high school graduate has the appropriate opportunities. But thank you for the question – this is one of the most important issues facing us.

<Q> Are there any new plans in effect to help ease the budget cuts?

BOB DYNES Thanks for the question. Right now we're scrutinizing all of our administrative procedures to find more efficiencies. After all, does it make sense do to things 11 times? The state budget of course is up to the new governor and the Legislature. We are going to be working closely with them to convey the value of investing in the young people attending the University of California.

<Q> President Dynes, thank you so much for this opportunity to talk with you. I have several questions. Should a course in ethics in science be mandatory in the

curriculum of science majors (both graduates and undergraduates)? What topics should be included in such course? Who do you think are qualified to teach such course?

BOB DYNES I don't know about all the campuses, but I do know such classes are available at UCSD, and I do think it is important for all science and engineering majors.

<Q> My cousin, who had a very high GPA and SAT score, was turned way from UC. She later found out that one of her friends, who had much lower scores, etc., was admitted to the UC school of her choice. Her friend is of the same socioeconomic status, but is a person of color. My cousin is white. What is your response to this controversial issue? Please don't say it doesn't happen.... because it does A LOT.

BOB DYNES Thank you for the question, and I want you to know that I take these issues very seriously. Of course I don't know the specifics of this situation, but speaking generally, all UC eligible students are admitted to a campus of the University of California. In the comprehensive review process that each campus uses to select from the pool of UC eligible students, race is not made available to those reviewing the files. However, we do take into account a broad array of both academic and other criteria that reflect individual's achievements. Let me re-emphasize, though, that ALL UC eligible students are accepted to a campus.

<Q> Students with disabilities form a vibrant part of the UC community. What objectives do you have for meeting their needs, especially regarding access to libraries, online courses and other electronic information?

BOB DYNES I think we need to continue the good work that has been done in this area and ensure that students with disabilities have full access to what the University has to offer. I'm interested in your ideas, and if there are specific issues on your campus, I know there is a disabled students' coordinator available to assist you.

<Q> President Dynes, First of all I wanted to congratulate you on you appointment I think it is so great that you are taking time out of your schedule to speak with students. I am with CALPIRG at UCLA. Right now we are currently working on a campaign to try to lower textbook prices by limiting the number of new editions publishers produce. We would love to work with faculty and admin on this issue. Do you have any suggestions on who to work with?

BOB DYNES Thank you for participating today. It's an interesting issue, and I'm told that some conversations on this topic are underway already. There needs to be further conversation and involvement of the Educational Policy committees of each campus' Academic Senate, and perhaps together we can bring the power of the University of California to bear on this issue. Kate Jeffery in the Office of the President would be a good contact for you, if you have not talked with her already.

<Q> President Dynes, what will be your primary focus for the University in the next three months? Thank you.

BOB DYNES Thanks for the question. Almost needless to say, my primary focus has to be associated with the new governor, the budget, and access to the University. That is literally what I have spent my entire day on today. We clearly have some challenges ahead of us – the state economy is still very weak. I hope and anticipate that the University of California will be very much involved in

charting a course for the state's recovery. I have offered the intellectual resources of the University to the governor-elect to help him in that task.

<Q> Are there any plans afoot to improve the quality of buildings on UC campuses? Some of the buildings at UCD are in a terrible state.

BOB DYNES I'm very much worried about deferred maintenance. In the past couple of years, the budget from the state on deferred maintenance has gone to zero, and you're seeing the result. We really must find a way to put the maintenance schedule back on track, or the state will pay the price further down the line.

BOB DYNES That having been said, the state has certainly supported, through bond measures, the construction of new buildings.

<Q> Will there be new allocations or funds available for financial aid to help with the rise in fees?

BOB DYNES The answer is yes. With the most recent fee increase, those students from families with incomes of less than \$60,000 generally will have the increase completely covered through grant funds. And for those needy students between \$60,000 and \$90,000, half of the increase was covered. I know that affordability is an important issue for students, and we're doing everything we can to preserve it. I personally wouldn't have gotten through college without scholarships.

<Q> A lot of people feel that post 209 and the Regent's decision to end affirmative action at UC, that the diversity of the student body has declined. How do you feel about that - and do you have plans to deal with it?

BOB DYNES We have made a lot of progress, but I still don't feel good about where we are. Until I am convinced that we have found the best and brightest and most motivated students, from throughout California and from all backgrounds, I will not be satisfied. We have a variety of what I regard as innovative outreach programs in the K-12 schools; we need to identify and nourish those that work best. This could and should involve collaborations with the other segments of higher education.

<Q> With the upcoming changes in California government, how will the UC be affected?

BOB DYNES I hope the next governor appreciates what we all understand – that an investment in the University of California is an investment in the future of California. We have been the engine that creates the leaders, the innovators, the economy, and the culture of California. I really am optimistic that the governor-elect DOES recognize this and views education as a terrific investment.

<Q> As an undergrad putting myself through school, the rising cost of fees has been very difficult. One of the toughest aspects of it – is not knowing when the fee increase will come and how big it will be. I know UC's hands are somewhat tied given the state budget, but are you working to address this?

BOB DYNES That's a very thoughtful question. It gives me pain to have to implement some of the worst fee increases during some of the toughest financial times. A better plan with the state to even out the large fluctuations in state support for the University would be very helpful. For the shorter term, you correctly assess the situation we're in – our budget is so closely tied to the state budget that we're

not able to give as much advance notice as we'd like to. We will do our best, and thank you for the question.

<Q> Will we have to cap enrollment this year and give up on the Master Plan's 12.5% guarantee?

BOB DYNES Matt [Student Regent Matthew Murray], thank you for your question, and thank you for your thoughtful leadership on the Board of Regents. In answer to your question, I genuinely hope not. Not investing in the University of California and the young people who come here is penny-wise and pound-foolish for the state. I hope the Legislature agrees!

<Q> I am a first year student at UC Davis. I am aware that Davis and all other UC campuses house world-renowned research facilities. Do you think it should be the priority of the UC to make these facilities more accessible to undergraduate students?

BOB DYNES The strength of an education in a research university comes from the exposure not only to knowledge but to those people who are generating the knowledge. As much as possible, I would like students to avail themselves of the research opportunities that are there on the UC campuses. I do know that at UC San Diego every undergraduate student has the opportunity for a research experience. In my own laboratory in San Diego, there are undergraduates learning from me, my postdocs, and graduate students.

<Q> Hello, President Dynes. Thank you for the opportunity to 'chat' with you. Where did you go to college...and what are some of your favorite memories from your college days?

BOB DYNES Thanks for the question. I was an undergraduate in Canada at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. This may sound nerdish, but some of my fondest memories were working late in laboratories and getting excited by physics. Really! I was a graduate student at McMaster University, and the collaborations with other students in other disciplines was incredibly stimulating.

<Q> Are there going to be any more student fee increases in the next year?

BOB DYNES I think, unfortunately, there is a good possibility of that. The state economy and the state budget still look quite bad. As you know, there have been budget impacts across every area of the University, and the access and quality of your education must be sustained. It's our highest priority. But remember that our financial aid program mitigates a fee increase for lower-income students.

<Q> What can we do as students to begin to unite the University of California as a single institution and not separate independent entities?

BOB DYNES It's an interesting question, though I'm not sure I follow it entirely. The strength of the University of California system comes from its campuses. At the same time, when we face a budget crisis like we do now, it's important to demonstrate the impact of the entire system on the state of California. For students who wish to get engaged in dealing with issues across all of the campuses, I strongly encourage you to get involved with the UC Student Association (UCSA).

<Q> What types of general changes can we expect as students in the next 2-3 years?

BOB DYNES

First of all, we're going to do our best to preserve the quality of your educational experience. So that is NOT a change. I think one of the very interesting and more recent enhancements has been the addition of Freshman Seminars on all the campuses, where students, in small groups, are exposed to our distinguished faculty talking about the issues they find most interesting. (The faculty really enjoy these as well.) If you're a freshman, I encourage you to sign up for one of these – I know that on some campuses, students other than freshmen can attend. But back to changes in the next 2-3 years, I do think we can expect to continue seeing more use of technology to enhance student services and reduce our costs.

<Q>

This chat idea is a very innovative process and puts a human touch to the OP. Thank You.

BOB DYNES

Thank YOU. And let me say there will be more of this – I intend to visit all of the campuses over this academic year, and I hope to meet and listen to the perspectives of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the surrounding community. I hope to see you all as I travel around. Thanks again for participating today. Bob.