

**August 30, 2002**

**A Letter to the UC Faculty from Chand Viswanathan,  
Chair of the University-wide Senate, University of California**

**The Year in Review**

Dear Colleagues:

I last wrote to you in October 2001, noting then that it is something of a tradition for the chair of the university-wide Senate to begin the academic year with a message to all Senate faculty. I write to you now to follow up on a companion tradition, that calls for the Senate chair to end the academic year with a message to all Senate faculty. My purpose here is to review for you a number of issues the Senate dealt with this year. Closure has now been reached on some of these issues, while others will continue to be dealt with in 2002-2003.

**The Bond Act on the November Ballot**

Before getting to my review, however, I wanted to apprise you of an upcoming state ballot measure that is of great importance to the University. In November, California voters will be asked to approve The Facilities Bond Act of 2002 -- Proposition 47 on the November 5, 2002 ballot -- which would authorize the sale of more than \$13 billion in bonds for K-12 capital projects with \$1.65 billion for higher education projects. In putting the measure on the ballot, the Legislature and Governor also authorized a companion Facilities Bond Act that will be voted on in March 2004. If approved, it would provide an additional \$2.3 billion in capital funding for state higher education. When funding from the two measures is combined with \$279 million in so-called lease revenue bond funding that the Legislature approved this year, UC's potential funding from the three measures would total \$344 million per year for the next four years.

The November bond measure is very important to UC -- important enough that the UC Regents took the unusual step of endorsing it in May. UC faculty are few in numbers, but they can have an importance beyond their numbers in helping shape public opinion. I therefore encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the details of the November bond measure. My hope is that you will pass this information on to your friends to keep as many people as possible informed about Proposition 47, keeping in mind that we can not recommend to them how to vote.

### **The Budget Crisis**

Last October, my message to you was headlined "The Coming Budget Crisis," and in the months that followed, it was clear that the prediction was accurate. That said, given the enormity of the state's fiscal problem -- by one estimate, a \$24-billion shortfall in an \$80 billion budget -- the University seems to have avoided the kind of catastrophic fate that might have been predicted for it in the budget proposal. Indeed, the proposed 2002-2003 cuts to the University's core programs are relatively small when compared to those that were imposed upon UC in the early 1990s. (However the budget has not been passed yet and it is possible additional cuts, not talked about now, may be made.)

This is not to say that the University has escaped from this year's budget crisis unscathed. This year, UC faculty salaries lagged those of our "comparison-eight" institutions by about 7.7 percent, while staff salaries lagged market rates by about 5.5 percent. UC's state-funded budget for 2002-2003 allows for average merit increases of 1.5 percent, but nothing more. Thus, it is likely that faculty salaries will fall further behind those offered by our comparator institutions. This is bad in itself, but is especially troubling given the precedents we have in this area: the last time we fell seriously behind the comparison-eight group (in the early 1990s), it took years for us to climb back to parity.

UC's salary woes will affect all faculty, but a substantial portion of faculty -- those whose research is funded even in part by the state -- stand to face other serious problems in the coming year. Next year's budget imposes a 10-percent reduction in state-funded research at UC with this level of reduction mandated for each state-funded program.

Very large budget reductions have been imposed on UC's outreach efforts and on the professional development programs that UC has run for educators for several years. Indeed, several programs have not just had their funding reduced; they have had it eliminated. The reductions in outreach funding ought to be a matter of particular concern to faculty, as these efforts stand to be critical in making the University's student population reflective of state's population. To cite but one example of the outreach cuts, UC's School-University Partnerships program, which forged links between UC campuses and low-performing public schools, will have its funding cut from \$12 million this year to about \$3 million next year, meaning the program will only be able to keep its infrastructure in place while seeking alternative funding.

### **Admissions Issues**

Curiously, one of the programs that the state will fund in the coming bad budget year is one that it declined to fund in the year that just ended: the "dual

admissions" program approved by the Senate and the Regents in 2000-2001. Under it, students who graduate in the top 12% of their high school class will be admitted to a given UC campus but can enroll at it only after having satisfactorily completed a course of study at a California Community College. Dual Admissions implies a costly increase in the amount of counseling that goes on at UC and the Community Colleges. This year, the Legislature saw fit to provide the money for this additional counseling, whereas last year it did not.

Admissions in general was, of course, a very big issue for the Senate in 2001-2002, with the biggest single issue being a proposal, sent to the Senate by President Atkinson, to eliminate UC's use of the SAT I examination in favor of expanded use of a test such as the SAT II. The Senate's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) worked with admirable energy on this issue all year. In January it concluded that what UC needed was neither the SAT I nor the expanded use of the SAT II, but instead a new test array based on a set of principles that BOARS developed. BOARS would develop the array of tests in tandem with the two large national testing agencies, the College Board and ACT, Inc. The need for the design of such a UC specified test was obviated later in the year as the College Board announced that it intended to revise its SAT I exam along the very lines called for by BOARS. The exam will become a "curriculum-based" test, meant to gauge what students have actually learned in the classroom, rather than an aptitude test. The ACT test has always been curriculum-based, but it too will be modified to include a writing component along lines consistent with the BOARS proposal.

Prior to the announcements by the College Board and ACT, the Senate's review of the standardized testing issue was extensive. Senate Divisions on every general campus held "town hall" meetings that in most cases included presentations regarding what BOARS was proposing. Senate committees and individual faculty reviewed not only the BOARS proposal, but the empirical data used in connection with it. All in all, it was a large-scale exercise. Given the announcements by the College Board and ACT, the ultimate importance of this work lay in the degree to which it pushed the testing agencies toward change, and in the degree to which it engaged UC faculty in thinking about UC admissions testing.

As if all this admissions activity weren't enough, Senate divisions across the system were busy this year devising means to implement the system of "comprehensive review" approved last October and November by the Senate and Regents. This is a large and ongoing task on most campuses. BOARS is currently in the process of preparing a report to the Academic Council, the Assembly of the Senate and the Regents on the evaluation of the comprehensive review process in the campuses.

### **Other Senate Issues**

The Senate also undertook a major review this year of the University's venerable **Subject A Requirement**, which is intended to ensure a minimal level of writing proficiency among UC's undergraduates. It continued to deal with the issue of instituting year-round, state-funded instruction, meaning the issue of making **summer-term** a regular academic term. As an initial step UCLA, UCB, and UCSB received funding from the state resources for the summer courses last summer and UCD summer program is also being funded this summer, and the rest of the general campuses will be funded in the future years as state funding allows.

Elsewhere, the University arrived at a modus operandi with the California State University system regarding the awarding of the **Ed.D. degree**. Under an agreement reached in October, UC retains sole authority, among public higher education institutions, to independently award doctorates in the state, but management of the Ed.D. degree in California is now the province of a joint CSU-UC Board. As the year progressed, UC faculty were responding well to the new arrangement by developing, with CSU colleagues, proposals for joint Ed.D. programs.

Since 1994, the Senate has consistently taken the position that UC ought to offer the same **benefits to domestic partners** as it offers to legal spouses. In 1997, the UC Regents voted to extend health-insurance benefits to same-sex partners. In May of this year, the Regents concluded that full equity in retirement benefits should be extended to both same- and opposite-sex domestic partners of UC employees. With this action, only one item on the Senate's domestic-partner agenda remains to be implemented: health benefits for opposite-sex partners, a change that seems likely to be implemented by the Regents at such time as when the budget situation improves.

Through its Task Force on **UC Merced**, chaired this year by Peter Berck of UC Berkeley, the Senate continues to be involved in the development of UC's tenth campus. The Task Force was active this year in everything from hiring deans to planning for endowed chairs.

Three politically initiated measures appeared during the year that will continue to require consultation between Senate and administration next year. The proposed **Racial Privacy Initiative**, which would forbid state-funded agencies from classifying individuals by race or ethnicity, has now been put off until the March 2004 ballot. For much of the year, however, it appeared that the measure might qualify for the November 2002 ballot. The Senate was therefore actively involved in trying to understand the effects the measure might have on UC

faculty, and was preparing to provide a public response to it. The Senate is continuing the study on the effect of this Initiative to be able to present its views to the Regents this coming year.

The Senate has likewise been formulating a response to **Assembly Concurrent Resolution 178**, which asks the Regents to institute comprehensive review in graduate and professional school admissions. The Senate's Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA), has recommended that (a) comprehensive review is desirable in graduate and professional admissions and that (b) a sub-committee of CCGA be appointed to formulate and review the policies regarding admission to graduate and professional schools and report to the 2002-03 Academic Council.

Along similar lines, a joint committee of the California Legislature is drafting a **Master Plan for Education** that will supplant the state's longstanding Master Plan for Higher Education. Recently, the Academic Council evaluated the changes in educational policy proposed under a draft of the new plan. In June, the Council settled upon a set of formal responses to those changes. These Senate responses were transmitted to the administration, which in turn passed them on to the Legislature's joint committee.

Finally this year, the Senate took up an issue that may lack the *gravitas* of admissions or curriculum questions, but that is of considerable importance to UC faculty. This is the issue of **parking**, which is to say high and ever-increasing parking fees on most UC campuses, lack of parking spaces irrespective of costs, and the lack of a faculty voice in setting parking policy. In response to faculty complaints from around the system, the Senate's University Committee on Faculty Welfare worked to produce a set parking principles that the entire Senate could agree to. In June, the Academic Council approved these principles. Next year's Senate will enter into a dialogue with the administration that is intended to turn these principles into a blueprint for parking policy on all of UC campuses.

In closing let me say that it has been my great pleasure to serve as your Senate Chair this year. The Senate dealt with a number of contentious issues during the year, but did so with an admirable sense of purpose and collegiality. Senate and administration worked well together, which is another way of saying that shared governance was working well at the University. On September 1, Professor Gayle Binion of UC Santa Barbara will take over as Senate chair and Professor Lawrence Pitts will become the Vice-Chair.

Sincerely,

**Chand Viswanathan**  
**2001-02 Chair, Academic Council**

**cc 2002-03 Chair Gayle Binion**  
**2002-03 Vice-Chair Lawrence Pitts**  
**Executive Director Maria Bertero-Barcelo**