

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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University of California
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February 17, 2004

TO UC FACULTY

Dear Colleague,

In recent weeks, a number of faculty have asked me about several state propositions that California voters will be considering on the March 2nd election. I am writing to encourage you to learn more about them and how they may affect your campus – in the next year and well into the future.

Propositions 57 and 58 address the state's budget problems. Because of the economic downturn of the past two years, the amount of state funding available for the University and other important programs has become much more limited. This fiscal year, UC's state funds were cut by \$410 million. For the coming year, an additional \$372 million in UC cuts are included in the governor's proposed budget. These cuts assume that voters will approve Proposition 57-58 – if they don't pass, even deeper cuts may be required.

Proposition 55 asks California voters to approve \$12.3 billion in bonds that will help public K-12 schools, colleges and universities alleviate overcrowded classrooms, make badly needed seismic and other repairs on aging buildings, and upgrade university facilities in engineering and scientific fields that will fuel California's future economic growth. UC's ten campuses would receive \$690 million in Proposition 55 funds over the next two years.

Proposition 55 is very important to UC – important enough that the UC Regents have formally endorsed it and provided individual member support.

While opponents are concerned about the fiscal impacts of bond measures, California State Treasurer Phil Angelides calls Proposition 55 an important and prudent investment in the infrastructure needed to sustain California's economic growth. Proposition 55 supporters argue these new bonds would allow the state to take advantage of historically low interest rates while at the same time creating an estimated 250,000 new jobs for Californians.

Proposition 55 has been endorsed by a broad coalition of education, business and taxpayer groups, including the California Taxpayers Association, the California Chamber of Commerce, California State PTA, California Business Roundtable and the California Teachers Association. At this time, Proposition 55 opponents include the National Tax Limitation Committee and the 60-Plus Association.

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 March bond measures. My hope is that you will pass this information on to your friends to keep as many people as possible informed about Proposition 55, keeping in mind that we can not recommend to them how to vote.

You can obtain more information about the propositions on the Secretary of State's web site, www.ss.ca.gov. More information about Proposition 55 is also available at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/prop55/>.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Pitts".

Lawrence H. Pitts, Chair
Academic Senate