

Dear Friends of UCLA:

I'm writing to urge you to be part of a letter-writing campaign on behalf of UCLA, UC and public higher education in the remaining few weeks before the Legislature's fall recess.

The University of California is a vital engine of opportunity, possibility, and leadership for California. For 140 years, the university has worked to develop the human capital of California, energize its economy, and advance its health and wellbeing. UC education and innovation have helped power California's rise to its position of global economic and cultural leadership.

That can continue to be the case – but we need the state's support.

As you know, the state budget process for 2009-10 ended recently with a budget that leaves UC with 20 percent less state funding than it had at the beginning of last year. UCLA alone, is facing a \$170 million funding gap. Faculty and staff pay reductions, student fee increases, and program cuts at campuses and the Office of the President all are being implemented to cope with this immediate budget crunch.

But this short-term response is not sustainable. Already, our campuses are seeing signs of "brain drain" as faculty recruitment is slashed dramatically, programs are pared back or put on hold, and [competing institutions seek to lure](#) our world-class faculty and staff away.

As we look to the 2010-11 budget, we face even more challenges: Federal stimulus funds probably won't be continuing. Emergency measures we took this year – such as the employee pay reduction – can't be continued without doing major harm to UC's quality. Health benefit costs are continuing to rise. And a dramatic turnaround in the state revenue picture simply does not appear likely – already, there are warnings of a \$7-8 billion budget deficit in 2010-11.

Academic quality, student access, and student affordability are all at risk. More than that, California's innovation economy and the educated workforce that sustains it will wither if the slide in state support for public higher education is not halted and reversed.

Now is the time to let the governor and Legislature know that you care. As state lawmakers turn their attention to next year's budget, now is the time to let them know that you care about investing in California's future through higher education.

We're not just holding out a tin cup. We're making huge efforts across the UC system to save money, achieve efficiencies, re-examine our financial models, and be creative about how to operate in the new fiscal reality. But state support is still critical to the core instructional program at UC, and if it doesn't rebound, the impacts to California will be more shocking than I think most people realize today.

I encourage you to take this opportunity – before the Legislature's scheduled adjournment on Sept. 11 – to email the governor, the legislative leadership, and your local members of the State Assembly and State Senate.

- Tell them how UC has made a difference in your life and in the life of California.
- Tell them what diminished investment in opportunity and innovation will mean to you.
- And ask that public higher education be a priority in next year's state budget.

A sample letter is provided below, but please consider personalizing the message for greater effectiveness. If you have questions or concerns about particular issues at UCLA or UC, take a look at the links below. Above all, please join us in this movement – one that will continue throughout the coming year – to ensure that California's future is one of hope and promise.

Sincerely,

Mark G. Yudof
President, University of California

(Note: UC faculty and staff should communicate with members of the Legislature on their own time, and as individuals conveying their personal views – not as official spokespeople for the University. Employees also should avoid writing on official University letterhead and should keep in mind the University's policies pertaining to incidental personal use of University electronic communications services and similar guidelines.)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger
Visit www.gov.ca.gov/interact#contact

Assembly Speaker Karen Bass
Assemblymember.Bass@assembly.ca.gov

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg
Senator.Steinberg@senate.ca.gov

Assembly Minority Leader Sam Blakeslee
Assemblymember.Blakeslee@assembly.ca.gov

Senate Minority Leader Dennis Hollingsworth
Senator.Hollingsworth@senate.ca.gov

Find your local members of the Assembly and Senate:
<http://192.234.213.69/lmapsearch/framepage.asp>

QUESTIONS ABOUT...

...how the budget cuts are impacting UCLA?

Get background information: <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/campus-budget.aspx>

...how UC is funded?

Get background information: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/budgetmyths.pdf

...compensation issues at UC?

Read about progress made: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/21683

See a response to news coverage: www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/08/12/EDIP196JU1.DTL

...the impact of budget cuts at UC?

Read more about brain drain: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/youruniversity/story1.html

...other budget issues?

Read our budget blog: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/budget/

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear _____:

As a concerned supporter of UCLA and the UC system, I'm writing to urge you to begin re-investing in California's public higher education system.

The state budget passed a few weeks ago left the University of California with 20 percent less state support than it had at the beginning of last year. UCLA alone faces a \$170 million budget gap. The university came up with a series of actions – including faculty and staff pay reductions, student fee increases, and program cuts at campuses and the Office of the President – to cope with the immediate budget crunch.

But the current situation is not sustainable. UC will not be able to preserve academic quality, and will not continue to be the engine of opportunity and innovation it has been for generations of Californians, if the slide in state support is not halted and reversed.

Already, UC campuses are seeing signs of “brain drain” as faculty recruitment is slashed dramatically, programs are pared back or put on hold, and competing institutions seek to lure our world-class faculty and staff away. This year's pay cuts for faculty and staff cannot continue without doing tremendous harm to UC's quality in both teaching and research. And student enrollments and college affordability for families will continue to be threatened without a reinvestment by the state.

In the coming weeks and months, as you begin considering the 2010-11 budget and various proposals for state-level reforms, I hope you'll choose to invest in the students and professors who represent our state's economic future. Please use your power to halt the cuts to public higher education and make a priority of re-investing in opportunity and innovation for California.