September 21, 2009

UCLA Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

As you may know, a small group of faculty from across the University of California system is organizing a faculty walkout on September 24, the first day of classes at UCLA. The stated purpose of the walkout is to express disapproval for actions taken by the UC Office of the President, including cuts in student enrollment, increased class sizes, layoffs, and furloughs. The organizers also feel that the process by which budgetary decisions were reached was inconsistent with the UC system of shared governance. Aspects of this consultation process were summarized in an email that was sent to UCLA faculty by EVC Waugh and Senate Chair Garrell on September 11, 2009. Additional information is available on the Academic Senate furlough web page.

The UCLA faculty have expressed a wide range of views about the proposed walkout. Some believe it will send a message to the public that the budget cuts are having a negative impact on our faculty and educational programs. Others, while unhappy with the budgetary crisis and its impact, feel that supporting the walkout would place an additional and unfair burden on our students, many of whom will be attending their first college classes on September 24. Passions appear to be strong on both sides.

The UCLA Academic Senate leadership has elected not to take a position on the proposed walkout. We regard participation in a walkout as a matter of individual conscience, recognizing that our faculty are professionals who will meet their pedagogical obligations to their students.

There is no question that the enormous budget cuts are having terrible effects at UCLA. They threaten our ability to sustain excellence in teaching, research and service, and are creating personal hardships for everyone in our community: students, faculty and staff. The Senate is committed to engaging each of you in efforts over the coming year to mitigate the impact of the budget cuts, to maintain quality educational and research programs, and to ensure that the collective voice of the faculty is heard. We urge faculty to be informed about budgetary issues and their implications for our future. The Senate will continue to hold meetings this fall, as we have during the summer, to discuss the fiscal crisis and UCLA’s ongoing response. We encourage you to be present to share your ideas and concerns, and to participate in workgroups that are formed to address specific challenges. In these extraordinary times, it is critical that the talents of our most gifted scholars be harnessed to find solutions. Together we can continue to accomplish great things for UCLA.

Sincerely yours, for a successful academic year and future,

Robin L. Garrell, Chair of the Senate
Michael S. Goldstein, Past-Chair
Ann R. Karagozian, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect