

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION FACULTY
STATEMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

As dedicated educators, researchers and Californians, we are proud to support the original core mission of the University of California to keep our educational programs “available to all eligible California high school graduates and college transfer students who wish to attend.”¹ The UC San Diego Department of Communication faculty protests and opposes the steady dismantling of this public commitment.

- Fifteen years ago, California spent today’s equivalent of \$327 per state resident on public higher education; by last year, that number was down to \$263. Over the same period, state spending on the criminal justice system jumped up 220% per state resident. Before the most recent budget cuts, California spent as much as \$29,000 per prison inmate and only \$14,000 per UC student.²
- Higher education is the only major part of California’s budget that grew more slowly than its population.³ From 1984 to 2004, California’s population increased 35%. Yet state funding for higher education decreased by 12%. Once a national leader in education, California now ranks 11th in terms of its per capita spending and 20th in appropriations per \$1,000 in personal income.⁴

We do not believe that education is a private good that sets students against faculty in competition for economic gain. Our interests are aligned – excellent and affordable education for the people of California across the *full* socio-economic spectrum. We support elite not elitist institutions.

- Undergraduate fees have already doubled since 2001.⁵ By 2010, those fees are expected to increase by as much as 44%. UC faculty who were already paid 20% below faculty in comparable national universities, now face an additional 8% cut. Salary cuts for university staff and professors and fee increases for students are effectively tax increases targeting particular sectors of California’s population, and hurt us all.

We are disturbed that students are paying more money for less opportunity. The trend in fees and salaries, if it continues, will lead to a substantial and accelerating decline in the quality of California students’ educational experience — growing class sizes, fewer courses, greater difficulty enrolling in courses, fewer teaching assistants, and less undergraduate student services. There will also be fewer places for California residents in the University of California.

- We are being told that to “save” the University of California, we need to follow the Michigan model, bringing in out-of-state students who pay higher tuition to replace a third of California residents. We are told this will preserve the “quality” of the university in tough economic times. But a large percentage of students who go to the University of Michigan leave the state upon graduation, and incoming classes are less socio-economically diverse. This model does not serve the people, culture or economy of the state. We oppose this short-sighted view of public higher education.

Over the past 40 years, the University of California has played a leading role in fostering a diverse, educated public, with all of the enormous social, economic and cultural benefits that an open and accessible education affords. Higher education is a public good that benefits California as a whole. We urge our colleagues, students, the State legislature, the Board of Regents, the University of California administration, and most importantly the public at large to demand a renewal of the State’s commitment to public higher education. The very value of UC degrees—economic and intellectual—is at stake, and with it the future of California as a national and international leader in cutting edge research that drives economic growth.

Write to your Legislator: [Sample Letter](#)

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www.savingucsd.ning.com
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¹ See The Master Plan for Higher Education: <http://www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/mp.htm>

² <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/story/2201840.html>

³ <http://www.ucthewayforward.org/budgetfactsheet.pdf>.

⁴ http://www.grapevine.ilstu.edu/tables/FY09/Table3_09.pdf.

⁵ Keep the Promise Alive:

<http://www.uca.org/toolkit/repfact/UCSA%20Affordability%20Report%202009.pdf>