



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
SUSAN AMUSSEN, CHAIR
[samussen@ucmerced.edu](mailto:samusen@ucmerced.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-7954; fax (209) 228-7955

April 2, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

Today you will receive a package of information from me about the Memorial to the Regents. So instead of my usual monthly letter, I thought I'd focus this month on the Memorial. Just for fun, I thought I'd use the format of an FAQ.

What is a Memorial?

A Memorial is the most formal way in which the UC faculty can address the Regents. While the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the systemwide Academic Senate serve on the Board of Regents, a Memorial requires a vote of all faculty on all campuses. The Memorial was drafted by a group of faculty, presented to the Academic Council, and it was then sent to the Academic Assembly, which approved it; in both those bodies, the vote was very strongly positive. Right now all UC campuses are conducting a ballot on the subject of this Memorial. The Memorial can't be presented to the Regents without a majority vote of the faculty, and the number of faculty who take the time to vote is also seen as significant.

What does this Memorial say?

The Memorial is actually quite simple. It just asks that the Regents take a stand for voter initiatives and legislative actions that would help bring revenue to the State to support public higher education in general.

Why now?

There is a sense from all the campuses that the 25% cut in state appropriations over the past four years has had a significant impact on the University and on the quality of the education it is able to offer. Tuition increases – while placing an enormous burden on our students – have not begun to compensate for the loss of state funds. On all the campuses, staff has been cut, faculty lines have gone unfilled, and there are fewer courses. The education we offer our students has been affected. Here at Merced we are aware of what we don't have; on other campuses, they are very aware of what they have lost. This affects our students' education.

Will it make any difference?

Who knows? Perhaps the Regents would decide to speak out in any case; they are meeting in Sacramento in May, and at last week's Regents meeting, President Yudof asked them to consider supporting one of the tax initiatives. If the budget is balanced by cuts, rather than

additional revenue, the University will undoubtedly lose more. Many of us will, as citizens, speak out for one or another of the tax initiatives. But the Regents alone can speak for the University.

That's all? We're just asking that they take a stand? Who cares?

One reason the Memorial does not ask for anything more specific is that this is about as much as the Regents can legally do. In addition, the text of the Memorial was finalized in February, and at the time several people argued (correctly, it turns out) that the situation would change before the May Regents Meeting. Asking the Regents, however, to serve as **public** advocates for higher education in the State is not trivial. It may not be a revolution, but it still matters.

Why should I vote?

When the Memorial is presented to the Regents, it will not just be important that whatever percent of the faculty voted for it, but that a large majority of the faculty thought it was important to vote.

Why does it matter?

The stress we have all felt at UC Merced in the past few years is largely the result of the State's disinvestment in higher education. Realistically, without more resources, the State will not have funds to begin to restore some of the cuts of the last four years, funds that would help all UC campuses better serve our students.

Any other reason?

It matters for our students. As faculty we may feel we have paid a price – in lost raises, in fewer colleagues, in fewer staff and all the resource shortages we feel at UC Merced. But for our students it's even more important. They have had to pay steep tuition increases; they have had to struggle with too few sections of classes, sections that are too large, too little space, and often a limited selection of classes. Graduate students may not pay the tuition that undergraduates do, but the shortages – of faculty, staff, space, courses – affect their education as well. Voting in this election is a small act in support of the education we want for all our students.

What was that I was supposed to do?

Vote. You can find all the information on the Memorial, and the ballot, [here](#). If you have more questions, come to the Meeting of the Division on April 12 at 2:00 PM, in KL 232.

Sincerely,



Susan Amussen
Chair