

COMMENTS FROM FACULTY IN RESPONSE TO INTERIM PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LARRY PITTS'S LETTER TO THE CHANCELLOR'S DATED AUGUST 21, 2009

"Research is permitted on furlough days..."

Wow! That's so generous of him! Am I allowed to think on weekends, too?

Since it has been determined that faculty can't take furlough days when they are scheduled to teach, I would be interested in UC's perspective on exactly what a "faculty furlough" means. Less time on research? Less time on service? Or is this just a euphemism for "pay cut" with an expectation of 100% level of work expected for faculty?

I haven't seen this point directly addressed anywhere. It is not discussed in <http://budget.ucr.edu/furloughs/>. It needs to be honestly and directly addressed in plain language.

What is the university going to do if the many faculty who do not agree that we should, essentially, "teach for free," decide to explicitly put on their syllabi something like "FURLOUGH DAY: NO CLASS" three times (for example) each quarter? How do "the powers that be," who obviously are not listening to/reading our responses, plan to enforce their latest tyrannical move? This is not a rhetorical question: I can't believe everyone plans to obsequiously obey this dictate

This decision about furloughs and instructional time makes my blood boil. I was willing to accept the necessity of the paycuts and I thought Yudof did a pretty good job of taking faculty concerns into account in the final budget plan. I thought he did a pretty good job of showing leadership by keeping the different university entities more or less on the same page in the past few months, and I appreciated his response to the UCSD chairs' letter. Now, though, I'm entertaining thoughts of mutiny and "no confidence" votes. And since the EVCs and Chancellors were a part of this decision, my mutinous thoughts extend to them too. The decision shows such contempt for faculty labor. I don't think much would have changed about how I teach my classes if we'd had furlough days during instructional time, but I would have at least felt that the value of our work had been acknowledged.

I also have many questions. Among them are:

1. Does this mean all our furlough time should come out of our research and service? If so, how do we apply a furlough in these areas, and how will the personnel process be adjusted to take a reduction in research and service into account?
2. Is this really legal in terms of labor law? In effect, we are not getting a furlough at all. And isn't telling us how to run our classes potentially an infringement of academic freedom? Well, probably not, but I'd like to know what rules and regulations empower the administration to make this decision.
3. If they must institute this policy, what are they going to give faculty in return? Will we get back pay when the economy improves? Another "Capital Accumulation Plan," as in past paycut years? How about additional sabbatical time? Instead of one sabbatical credit per quarter, perhaps we could get two for every quarter the so-called furloughs remain in place.
4. How will this decision be enforced? What will happen to faculty who create their own furlough days by cutting back on office hours, giving fewer graded assignments, or cancelling a class or two here and there? Are Chairs and Deans going to be expected to monitor compliance?
5. The "bad optics" rationale for this decision strikes me as a bunch of hooley (to put it politely). The public will be complaining about getting less for more anyway (bigger classes, fewer services, etc). Shouldn't the university be trying to educate the public about the TRUTH--that both higher fees and furloughs for faculty and staff are required when the state reneges on its commitments to higher education? We were underpaid even before these cuts. The governor has betrayed his "compact" with UC, and the four-year plan to get our pay up to national standards has been suspended indefinitely. These things should also be part of UC's message to the public.
6. Or if it's so important that the public have only one thing to complain about, why didn't the administration just go ahead and raise fees high enough to actually run the place? At least then they could say the public would be getting good value for its money.
7. If the administration cares so much about "bad optics," why don't they stop increasing executive pay? That's still the number one complaint one sees in the press and in blogs. The infamous "dog run" lives on.
8. If the administration cares so much about "bad optics," why did it go along with the new admissions policy? This policy is getting not only bad reactions from the public, but also lawsuits.
9. This can only speed up the "brain drain" from the UC system. We are going to bleed assistant professors and "star" senior professors. How good is that for our "optics"? That too will mean students are paying more to get less. The value of a UC degree will go down.

Well, that's enough fuming for now. I hope that both the divisional and the systemwide Senate develops a very strong response to this misguided administrative decision.

When the deeper cuts to funding of higher education were announced in late May/early June (just a few weeks after the initial round of cuts was announced in a town meeting at

UCR around May 21 following the defeat of the ballot measures and with no significant change in the State's financial picture in that two or three week period), Cal State raised fees an additional 20% above the 10% announced in May. The UC decided to go for furloughs instead. The target saving that was used to justify the furloughs was around \$187 million. If the UC had raised fees an additional \$800 per student, which would be less than 10%, that would have raised, I believe, over \$200 million, more than enough to make furloughs unnecessary. If the Regents had followed Cal State's lead and raised fees an additional 20%, they would have raised substantially more than enough money to provide scholarships for needy students.

Since the Regents made this decision I would endorse a vote of no confidence in the Regents. I assume that they have fiduciary responsibilities to keep the UC from turning into a second rate institution. If the State is unwilling to provide adequate funding - and we have a decade's long trend in that direction - it is the Regents responsibility to provide funding from other sources. They have chosen not to do that. If scholarship funds are provided for genuinely needy students, most parents of UC students could readily absorb \$1500 to \$2000 in fees this year. Surely the majority of UC students come from wealthy or upper middle class families.

I would also support of vote of no confidence in President Yudof. First, he himself is providing a horrible example of excessive executive compensation. Second, the UCOP clearly failed this year to ascertain well in advance what the real consequences would be of the failure of the ballot measures in May (otherwise the original announcement of the cuts on May 21 following the defeat of the ballot measures would have been accurate instead of wildly short). This has resulted in rushed and poorly planned decisions over the summer. Yudof is, in the end, responsible for this colossal failure. Third, the recent decision by Yudof against the recommendation of the systemwide Academic Senate not to schedule furlough days on instructional days is a slap in the face of the faculty.

I hope it is true that all members of UC are sharing the pain. Students have had to endure fee increases for years. Now staff and faculty are going on furloughs. Am I correct in assuming that the administrators all the way up to President Yudof are also taking similar furloughs?

I think my question is best directed to Helen Henry and those who met with UCOP to make this decision.

I understand the desire not to impact our students' experience - and that is a "pro" for not taking furlough on days of instruction. But what were the "pros" considered for faculty taking furloughs on non-instruction days? I find it hard to believe there are any pros to us not being paid and yet still expected to be full time scholars....I'm curious how

the Provost explains this point.

For my part, I think further debate about furloughs and instructional days is very counterproductive. The Senate needs to be focused on ensuring that this is a one year step to meet an immediate crisis. I would like a senate analysis of the triple threat we face of pay reduction, the need to make retirement contributions, and probable increases in health insurance premiums. Energy is better spent on the larger picture than on the political issue of instructional days. I feel that responsibility to our students, who are also paying a higher cost for fewer classes, trumps other considerations.

That said, I think service might be effectively addressed in relation to the furloughs. I propose the University set a number of days (equal to the average faculty furlough less campus closure days) on which no committee meetings could be scheduled. It's not actually a furlough--many of the days would be instructional, but it is time that we can count on not being taken up by committees. Inevitably some meetings would not take place and some parts of service duties reasonably curtailed.
