The “concerned faculty” has written the following:
“We have learned that there has been some email campaigning on behalf of particular candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair. As some of those emails have noted, this is indeed a consequential election. We see it as critical in terms of whether we will have an Academic Senate that provides INDEPENDENT oversight and robust forms of shared governance. Chase-Dunn and Graham strongly support the need for a medical school, but also draw attention to the need to proceed with caution during financially perilous times, and to rebuild the previously promised "firewall" in spending from campus funds. The other candidates have made no mention in their personal statements about how UCR should proceed on these critically important issues. As we know, the Academic Senate is a crucial institution with respect to shared governance, given its control on matters of curriculum and oversight on budget. We encourage ALL candidates to address these questions (we will be happy to post their answers on our web site). We also urge them to stick to their promises once they get into office.”

Before sharing my personal views about development of the medical school, I feel it is important to emphasize that the role of the Chair and Vice Chair is to represent the Academic Senate as a whole and not just their own views. Therefore, I can in good conscience make no promises of the kind I am urged above to “stick to” once in office.

I am also distressed to see an election appear to be linked to a single issue when it is so important that we move the campus forward on multiple fronts. We are at a crucial point in our strategic planning process, which if done well will increase the stature and visibility of UCR. We need new initiatives (including conversion of our 34 year old two-year medical program into a full four year school, and establishment of the school of public policy) and expansion of our best programs in all colleges, to achieve this end. An increase in the stature and visibility of UCR will increase our competitiveness for federal, state and philanthropic funds, all of which will benefit all faculty and students. The question is how best to move forward in these difficult times to take advantage of current federal initiatives, philanthropic interest, politically acknowledged need, and community support. Those who heard Tim White’s presentation at the most recent general Academic Senate meeting know that he described the allocation of his discretionary funds as a strategic investment in the medical school without which we would lose an important one-time opportunity for federal funding, and the momentum necessary to ensure state funding, continued community and political support, and that UC’s next school of medicine be here rather than at Merced. An investment is exactly that – an outlay of funds expected to generate significant return. Without such significant returns, it is unlikely that we will be able to sustain the campus in this era of shrinking state support for higher education. Importantly, at the same meeting, Chancellor White also described significant strategic investments that have been made in recent years in both CHASS and BCOE.

I think now my personal views about the medical school should be clear, but perhaps my reasons for supporting this initiative are not what most might have expected. I doubt, for example, that I will in any way personally benefit, except in the same sense as the rest of the campus. My research lab won’t be in any new building, and my class size will quadruple! I support the expansion to a full medical school since it is important for the campus and the community we serve. Also, after 34 years, it is time that our highly successful half a medical school (with more than 700 MD graduates to be proud of) has full school identity, and finally graduates from trailers for classrooms.