To: Riverside Division of the Academic Senate  
From: Thomas Cogswell, UCR Assembly Representative to the UC Academic Senate  
Manuela Martins-Green, UCR Assembly Representative to the UC Academic Senate  

RE: Report of the Meeting of the UC Academic Senate Assembly, December 12, 2018  

Formally the Assembly meeting on 12 December 2018 was a non-event since there was nothing to discuss, much less to decide. But there was a great deal of information, and in stark contrast to the assembly meetings last year, which were chiefly notable for heavy helpings of doom and gloom, this one was decidedly upbeat.

Reflecting the new rhetoric out of Sacramento, President Napolitano spoke about the need to maintain the California dream, especially for those less privileged, and the key was higher education. UC planned to do its part by increasing the graduation rates of first year students from 68% to 78% and of the transfer students from 55% to 65%. In return, the system expected the state to fund all students, not just select STEM fields, to finance deferred maintenance and new construction across the system, and to grow the size of the faculty.

In keeping with these aspirations, the University was being much more aggressive with its specific requests from the Governor and the Legislature. Last year, we only asked for a 2.7% increase and some one-time funds. This year, we are asking for an 11% increase. [Hurrah!] Six million of this increase would go for student basic needs, and more still would go for augmented staff salary increases and for improving graduate student support. Yet much of the new money will go to eliminate the salary gap between UC salaries and those at the other public universities in our comparison group. Plainly it will take several years to close the salary gap. Nevertheless, the President hoped for a range adjustment to faculty salaries of perhaps as much as 5%. It would, however, be up to individual campus to see what, if anything, could be done for the off-scale portion of the salary. Finally, rather than the current chaotic funding pattern negotiated year by year, the University hopes to move to a multi-year funding model.

To bring home the bacon [or the tofu] on this scale will obviously require friends in Sacramento. To do so, the system will study the possibility of not using the standardized tests like the SAT in admissions. It will also examine Self-Supporting Graduate Programs, which are burgeoning across the system, and ask who benefits from the revenue and how these programs impact diversity. It will revamp the university’s procedures against sexual harassment and propose new revisions to Bylaw 336. It will revisit the Area D Science requirements for undergraduates, possibly shifting from the traditional lab science courses to ‘new science’ ones which are more available, particularly in disadvantaged school districts.

Both the President and Provost Brown stressed the University’s commitment to protecting DACA students. Indeed, it has retained the law firm of Covington and Burling to plan a legal response if the Supreme Court should take up the fundamental legality of the DACA program and/or Title IX. In short, the University is committed to protecting the rights of all involved. Meanwhile restructuring goes on apace. UC Mexus and Casa California, for example, have been merged [and based at UC Riverside]. Perhaps, Provost Brown mused, there might be similar changes to the Agricultural and Natural Reserves, the UC Press and UCDC.

Nathan Brostrom, the Chief Financial Officer, then plunged deeper into the fiscal weeds, noted that the University’s ‘ask’ included $100 million for maintenance. But this would scarcely meet the system’s infrastructural needs, which has steadily grown after the last university bond
measure passed in 2006. While it is still unclear precisely what kind of bond the system might get, the good news is that there is [finally] promising talk in Sacramento about a massive new bond measure.

What a difference a budget surplus and a new Governor can make!