Governor's budget plan is good news for UC

Gov. Gray Davis has proposed a 2001-02 state budget that would fund the enrollment of 5,700 more students at UC, maintain affordable student fees, boost employee salaries, and invest in UC initiatives benefiting the state and its economy. UC's state-funded operating budget would rise 6.3 percent in 2001-02 to $3.4 billion. Mandatory systemwide student fees - $3,429 for resident undergraduates - would remain the same.

The budget expands support for graduate programs, provides new state support for summer instruction and funds an expansion of student retention services. Also, it provides a $203 million bond-funded capital budget for facilities projects and $160 million in general funds for construction at UC Merced. The Legislature will review the budget, which will be revised by the governor in May when new revenue forecasts are available.

New science institutes on UC campuses selected

In the last part of the 20th century, California created the high-tech and biotech innovations that formed the backbone of today's "New Economy." With Gov. Davis' recent selection of three California Institutes for Science and Innovation on UC campuses - and a pledge to fund a fourth center in next year's budget - UC joins in an unprecedented partnership to lay the foundation for the future.

This billion-dollar, multidisciplinary effort will focus resources and expertise from the public and private sectors on research critical to sustaining California's economic growth and its competitiveness in the global marketplace. The new ideas and technologies developed by researchers will help expand the economy into new industries and markets - and bring the benefits of innovation more quickly into people's lives. (Please see article in left-hand column for more information and visit: www.ucop.edu/california-institutes.

UC alumni, friends invited to UC Day March 5-6

The Alumni Associations of the University of California invites you to join more than 400 alumni and friends to its annual UC Day March 5 and 6 in Sacramento. Delegates will meet with legislators to discuss the university's priorities in the coming year, inform them about UC's contributions to the state and encourage their continued support of California higher education. The event, which this year has the theme "On the Threshold of Opportunity," has been held for more than 25 years. The alumni associations will hold a reception on March 5 at the Golden State Museum to be attended by UC's medal winners from the Summer Olympics. On March 6, the morning breakfast will honor UC's three newest Nobel laureates, who were awarded their prizes last October. To learn more about UC Day, please visit www.ucday.org.

UC campuses to help coastal oaks

More than three million acres of California's oak woodlands and grasslands are at risk due to biological threats and encroaching residential and agriculture development. To combat these dangers, UC's Natural Reserve System has received a $263,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to develop the framework to restore and manage these endangered coastal-oak ecosystems. The grant will support an effort by UC environmental field scientists and staffs at the Berkeley, Davis, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz campuses.

DID YOU KNOW? Mandatory systemwide student fees at UC have not risen in six years, and between 1998-99 and 1999-2000 they fell 10 percent for resident undergraduates.
UC expanding graduate education

UC has plans to help meet California’s future workforce needs by adding 11,000 graduate and professional students over the next decade. UC’s graduate enrollment has stayed level for decades, unlike its undergraduate ranks which have doubled during the past 30 years.

To attract and retain additional graduate students, UC will seek more funding dedicated to research and teaching assistantships, press for increased fee waivers for RAs and TAs and identify other opportunities to augment support from other university funds, such as private gifts. A commission has been formed to develop strategies to accomplish these goals. Its report is expected by July.

UC, unions reach contract agreements

The university’s 18,000 clerical employees have a new contract. UC and the Coalition of University Employees (CUE), which represents the clerical and allied services bargaining unit, reached their first contract agreement that provides wage hikes for the 1999-2000, 2000-01 and 2001-02 budget years. Expiring Sept. 30, 2001, the agreement includes four salary range adjustments totaling 7.8 percent, in addition to regular merit increases for eligible employees.

UC also reached tentative agreement with the University Professional and Technical Employees on wages for health care professionals. Additionally, UC has settled contracts in recent months with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, representing service employees and patient care technical employees; Federated University Police Officer Association, which represents UC’s police officers; and American Federation of Teachers, representing university librarians.

New home sought for UCSF-Fresno program

The UCSF-Fresno Medical Education Program, a major branch of the UCSF School of Medicine, will have a new home in 2003 if the Legislature approves Gov. Davis’ 2001 budget including $30 million for a medical education and research center.

For 25 years, UCSF-Fresno has served as a model for community and university partnerships, providing Fresno-area residents with quality health care and hands-on training for doctors in diverse settings such as rural clinics, a regional trauma center and most recently, at the nation’s newest pediatric hospital. Additionally, continuing education programs form a rich part of the offerings of UCSF-Fresno to area physicians and health care professionals. Forty to fifty percent of doctors trained at UCSF-Fresno stay in the area to practice – offering health care services to an unevenly served portion of the state.

Preparing middle-school students for college

Sacramento’s middle-school students will be better equipped for college thanks to a landmark $1.45 million federal grant to UC Davis and three educational partners. The grant is part of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, which aims to increase the proportion of students from low-income areas who are prepared for college. Only 54 percent of freshman at Sacramento High School, for example, will graduate – more than 10 percent below the statewide average. A key project component is having a counselor assist seventh-grade students and then stay with them through their first year at Sacramento High – the period when the greatest rate of attrition occurs. Program partners include the Sacramento City Unified School District, College Horizons program of the Sacramento County Office of Education and National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

Seven endowed chairs lead faculty search

UC Merced, which will open its doors to the first 1,000 students in fall 2004, has already received commitments for seven endowed professorships. Each of the chairs was created by donors from the San Joaquin Valley, which underscores the strong support in the region for the campus’s mission to build the first American research university of the 21st century. The endowed chairs will be instrumental in assembling a first-rate faculty for UC’s 10th campus.

UC Merced will hire 100 faculty members in the next three years for the initial three divisions of the campus: engineering, natural sciences and social sciences, humanities, and the arts.

The first chairs at UC Merced are in the areas of: biotechnology/biological sciences, arts, economics, earth sciences/geology, early literature, and engineering. An additional chair supports the Sierra Nevada Research Institute, which is a program of UC Merced in collaboration with Yosemite and Sequoia Kings Canyon national parks. UC Merced plans to add additional professorships, with a target total of 14 endowed chairs by opening of the campus.

Sociologist awarded humanities medal

Acclaimed sociologist and educator Robert N. Bellah, UC Berkeley’s Elliot Professor of Sociology Emeritus, received the prestigious National Humanities Medal during a recent dinner with the president. One of 12 scholars and artists to receive the annual award, Bellah was honored for his efforts to illuminate the importance of community in American society. Bellah, a frequent commentator on the spiritual health of the American mind and American institutions, was the senior author of the influential “Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life” (1985) and its sequel, “The Good Society” (1992). He is the fourth UC faculty awarded the medal, inaugurated in 1997. Maxine Hong Kingston of UC Berkeley and Luis Leal of UC Santa Barbara were awarded the medal in 1997 and Ramon Eduardo Ruiz of UC San Diego in 1998.