Funds for classrooms, labs crucial for UC

UC receives about one-quarter of its budget from the state, including funds to build, renovate and seismically retrofit classrooms and laboratories. A significant portion comes from voter-approved bonds. Proposition 47, a $13 billion measure on the Nov. 5 ballot, would support public K-12 schools, California Community Colleges, California State University and UC. UC would receive $408.2 million to help upgrade classrooms and labs, make necessary seismic improvements, and give students more access to the technology and computers they need to succeed in school and compete in today’s workforce.

Prop 47 opponents say that California can’t afford to take on additional debt. Supporters counter that the state remains well within its debt limits, and further argue that if future bond measures fail and state capital funding is reduced, UC’s instruction and research space will drop to 78 percent of the standard necessary to support increased enrollment. UC campuses will then lack the new classrooms and teaching labs needed to support more students; and UC won’t be able to attract and retain the best faculty if it cannot provide them with necessary office and research space.

On track for the future: Maintaining UC’s excellence

At the UC Board of Regents’ September meeting, senior officials presented an overview of the university’s long-range planning for the next decade. This issue of “InTouch” provides a summary of the key elements involved in ensuring that UC maintains its traditions of academic and research excellence.

Overview: UC’s growth and contributions

During the next decade, the University of California will experience a period of exceptional enrollment growth. This is a great opportunity, and yet UC must at the same time ensure that it maintains standards that have made UC the best public university in the world.

This challenge is further magnified by California’s short-term economic downturn and affects more than just its students. UC conducts the research that gives us better food and medicines, cleaner air and water, and amazing technologies that connect the world and enrich our experiences. UC architects and engineers design the buildings we live and work in, and the roads we travel. UC medical discoveries help us live better and longer.

The regents will be monitoring a series of benchmarks, including faculty hiring, academic support programs and the construction of University housing, classrooms and research facilities over the coming decade to help ensure that UC fulfills its public mission while maintaining its tradition of excellence.

More students are coming

One of the key challenges facing UC’s 10 campuses is accommodating an additional 60,000 students by 2010. That’s more than 40 percent of UC’s current enrollment – equal to the size of the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses combined.

The current state budget provides funding to enroll 7,700 more students – maintaining access for all UC-eligible students – and supports expanded UC summer class offerings to meet this demand for a quality UC education.

UC needs to hire more faculty

UC must hire an additional 7,000 faculty so that it can continue to provide an outstanding

More on UC’s long-range planning challenges >

DID YOU KNOW? One-third of all biotech companies in the U.S. are located within 35 miles of a UC campus. Learn more about UC’s economic impacts at universityofcalifornia.edu/economy and biotech research at universityofcalifornia.edu/research/biotech.html.
State budget cuts hit UC programs

Gov. Davis has signed this year’s state budget, but significant cuts — totaling as much as $750 million — may still be made before the budget is implemented. As of now, UC would receive $3.2 billion in state funds for fiscal year 2002-03, a 3 percent drop from last year. This year’s cuts include a 10 percent across-the-board reduction in state-funded research programs, a $7.6 million cut to student outreach, the elimination of $57 million for UC’s K-12 teachers institutes, a one-time reduction of $29 million for deferred maintenance, libraries, equipment and instructional technology, and a $10 million reduction for UC’s initiative to expand Internet2 connections to California public schools. More state-budget cuts could be implemented during the fiscal year, however. The state has also asked its agencies, including UC, to contemplate a possible 20 percent cut in the FY 2003-04 budget. For budget updates: www.ucop.edu/news/budget

UC in forefront of post-9/11 research

UC has a long history of working on research now connected with the anti-terrorism effort. UC scientists are creating tiny electronic sensors — “smart dust” — small “lab on a chip” systems that can detect biological weapons. At UC’s national laboratories, scientists have devised a hand-held baggage scanner that can detect knives, nuclear materials or plastic explosives hidden in a suitcase or cargo container, and are developing tools to detect the telltale signs of nuclear materials smuggled in sealed cargo containers. Los Alamos National Laboratory is analyzing how terrorist-generated disasters might affect traffic, the electrical grid and other national infrastructure features. For more details: www.ucop.edu/news/archives/2002/sept6art1.htm

Merced campus moves forward

On Oct. 25th, UC will celebrate the founding of its new Merced campus and inaugurate Merced’s first chancellor, Carol Tomlinson-Keasey. The first major research university to be built in the 21st century, UC Merced is scheduled to open in fall 2004 with 1,000 students. The campus will eventually expand to 25,000 students. Today, more than 100 educators and professionals are on staff planning the campus’s physical and academic infrastructure. This year’s state budget includes $4 million to help bring the founding faculty to UC Merced. The campus will hire 15 professors this year and a total of 80 tenure-track faculty before UC Merced opens. To learn more about Merced’s progress: www.ucmerced.edu

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