

## **BERKELEY FACULTY ASSOCIATION**

### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR, 2018-19**

It's been a quiet year, relatively speaking. Chancellor Christ continues to steer the campus out of troubled financial straits, her latest accomplishment being the successful elimination of the \$150 million annual structural deficit inherited from her predecessor – although the budget transparency that would give greater confidence in the financial picture remains a goal rather than an achievement. Still, this progress in deficit reduction should put us in a better position with regard to the Office of the President. The overall strategy remains the same: raise revenues through expanded enrollment, develop “self-supporting” degree programs, enter public-private partnerships and attract corporate and donor sponsorship of programs and faculty lines—at the risk of creating intramural conflicts over the redirection of campus resources.

But the future is still blighted by the [costs of seismic “remediation”](#). Tolman is down, Evans is heading for demolition, and there are an unknown number of other buildings facing the same fate by 2030. This is a multi-billion dollar liability for Berkeley. We are not even including the cost of deferred maintenance, that hovers around one billion dollars.

There were no major scandals on campus, although Berkeley's reputation was tarnished by the racketeering scam that enrolled children of the elite through pay-offs to the Athletics Department. At the state level we have a new governor who has a more positive approach to higher education and recognizes [the affordability crisis](#). Still, as far as UC is concerned, the new budget offers only token increases in funding, despite the increase in tax revenues.

What follows are the highlights of some of the issues we took up during the year.

#### ***The Administration.***

Chancellor Christ has made one of her priorities to improve the desperate housing situation for students, staff and faculty. She has made it clear that if the supply of affordable housing cannot be improved, then Berkeley will not be able to sustain its reputation as a first-class public university. Rectification is not easy, given the scarcity of university-owned land. Each of the proposed housing projects – People's Park, Oxford Street and Upper Hearst – will face challenges, both external and internal. The first conflict emerged around the Upper Hearst Development Project, which involved demolishing a large parking structure, in order to build both a new space for the Goldman School of Public Policy and market-rate housing units, while severely reducing parking. Faculty were up in arms – some because of the loss of parking, others (including the BFA) because, in the absence of detailed accounting, the “public-private partnership” looked like another potential financial disaster. And it was not even clear that students or faculty would be able to afford the proposed housing. A special meeting of the Academic Senate voted to suspend the project, but the Chancellor sped ahead undeterred. The BFA noted this was another case of the abrogation of shared government.

The Chancellor is also in pursuit of another laudable goal – an ambitious program to diversify faculty on campus. A number of divisions where diversity is an especially deep problem have adopted novel approaches. In the same vein, Chancellor Christ aims to make Berkeley an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution), which requires 25% of students to be Hispanic. At the moment, only 14% of students are Hispanic--the lowest figure of all the UC campuses.

On one issue we clashed directly with the Chancellor: she chose, along with the other UC Chancellors, to add her signature to a joint letter opposing “academic boycotts,” which the letter characterized as representing a “serious threat to academic freedom.” The implicit target was BDS (a movement to boycott, divest from and sanction the Israeli state in protest against its occupation of Palestine). In a letter to the Chancellor, the BFA requested an evidentiary basis for her claim, and wondered whether the letter was itself was the real threat to academic freedom, creating an atmosphere of intimidation. She replied that she was within her rights of academic freedom to sign such a letter. This led a number of faculty to write an opinion piece for the *Daily Cal*, protesting her decision.

### ***The Berkeley Academic Senate***

The BFA cannot remember the last time it had such cordial relation with the Academic Senate, this past year under the leadership of Barbara Spackman. We shared a number of concerns.

- First, we criticized the increasing use of search firms to conduct searches for Deans, a practice which tends to limit broad faculty input into the decision-making process, and so to erode the important tradition of shared governance. We encouraged EVCP Alivisatos to respect the tradition of internal hiring, which strengthens the relation of faculty to administration.
- Second, we share a concern that the use of donor funding to increase the number of faculty could skew the academic balance of the university in favor of those disciplines that are more attractive to outside sponsors.
- Third, we supported the initiative of CAPRA (Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation) to start reviewing “administrative units” – in response to BFA and others’ long-term concern with administrative bloat.

### ***Relations with Unions on Campus***

This has been a very active year for all the unions on campus. The UC Student-Workers Union (UAW Local 2865, representing graduate students), AFSCME (representing staff workers), UC-AFT (representing lecturers and librarians), and UPTE (representing professional and technical workers) have all been in negotiation with UC central administration. There were a series of short strikes which the BFA supported. We also held a number of well-attended public meetings with other interests on campus.

- The first was sponsored by the BFA, the Academic Senate and UC-AFT to discuss the Academic Senate report, *Second Class Citizens: A Survey of Berkeley Lecturers*. This report drew attention to the multiple manifestations of the divide between Senate and

non-Senate faculty. The discussion focused on the dangers and challenges this posed to both sides of the divide.

- The second was a public meeting, co-sponsored by the BFA, UC-AFT and the Graduate Student Union, on Academic Freedom. The meeting featured short talks by Joan Scott and Hank Reichman, authors of two new books on academic freedom, with responses from Berkeley faculty (Wendy Brown), librarians (I Wei Wang), and lecturers (Khalid Kadir). The meeting coincided with a victory for the librarians to secure a clause in their contract that recognized their rights of academic freedom on a par with faculty.
- The third meeting was an inspiring talk by Dan Clawson, then Professor of Sociology at UMass, Amherst, who had played a leading role on his campus in breaking down the two-tier system between lecturers and tenured faculty. He showed how the impossible seemed possible. He triggered, once again, a conversation as to whether the BFA should open its doors to non-Senate faculty as its contribution to dissolving the two-tier system. Tragically, Dan died a month later from a massive heart attack.

As the administration becomes stronger and less accountable – a trend that has been developing over many years – so the BFA believes its interests are increasingly aligned with the unions on campus as well as with the Senate as it, in turn, becomes more alert to divergences between faculty and administrative interests.

### ***Council of UC Faculty Associations (CUCFA)***

The BFA is a member of CUCFA, a consortium of UC faculty associations, together seeking to articulate and defend the common interests of all UC faculty. This year, Constance Penley (UC Santa Barbara) was elected President, succeeding Stan Glantz (UC San Francisco). CUCFA threw its weight behind a number of important issues, including:

- Academic Freedom for librarians (see above)
- The end of a UC-wide contract with price-gouging publisher Elsevier; Elsevier exploits the voluntary labor of faculty by charging fees for publication as well as exorbitant prices for their journals. This largely affects the STEM fields, but it has stimulated a broader movement for open access to scholarship. The break with Elsevier was led by a consortium of UC librarians that had been fruitlessly negotiating with Elsevier for several months.
- The UCSF faculty association notched a rare victory against UCSF administration in forcing the suspension of the extension of links between UCSF Health and four Bay Area hospitals managed by the Catholic medical system, Dignity Health. The suspension came after public outcry against the restrictions the new deal might impose on the delivery of healthcare, especially to women and LGBTQ patients.
- At the same time the Office of the President (UCOP) has been trying to chip away at the medical benefits of retirees and CUCFA, as well as individual FAs, including BFA, have openly opposed such moves, which are part of a slow erosion of the benefit packages.

While there haven't been major scandals coming out of UCOP, nonetheless early in the year attention was drawn to the exorbitant salaries some executives earn. Thus, Chief Investment

Officer, Jagdeep Bachher, appointed in 2014 to look after UC's \$100 billion portfolio, received an annual bonus of one million dollars in 2018, on top of a salary \$632,000. If this is not sufficiently obscene, it was reported that Bachher used UC funds to invest in the company of Paul Wachter, the former Regent who was responsible for hiring him. The capitalist rot starts at the top!

### ***Changes in the BFA Board***

We had three Board meetings this year, and at the last one we decided that we should be led by a five-person team of co-chairs: Wendy Brown, Michael Burawoy, Celeste Langan, Leslie Salzinger and James Vernon. We thanked all members of the board, particularly Paul Fine, for his year as co-chair. He remains on the board but will also become the chair of CAPRA. We also thanked Lisa Garcia Bedolla, who is leaving the board to become Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Division. The Board unanimously voted to appoint three new board members: Anne-Lise François, Amanda Goldstein, and Mara Loveman. We now have a Board of 17 members.

As ever, we are heavily indebted to the Executive Director of CUCFA, Eric Hays, for his knowledge of all matters connected to UC and educational issues in Sacramento and to staff member, Deborah Rosenberg, for all the work she does for us. In the Fall we will continue with our weekly news digest, compiled by Tyler Leeds, and our weekly commentary (*That Was The Week That Was*). We look forward to your input and to expanding our membership in the coming year.

Michael Burawoy and Paul Fine, Co-chairs, Berkeley Faculty Association