

# UC Regents Slash Frosh Admissions, Citing Budget

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For a public school system used to feeling the knife, this can hardly be classified as "news."

The UC Regents, the governing board for the nation's largest public higher education system, voted Wednesday to curtail freshman enrollment for the 2009-10 school year to offset deepening budget cuts.

The 26-member body recommended cutting UC enrollment by 2,300, roughly 6 percent of the 37,600 2008-09 freshman and 1 percent of the over 220,000 currently in the system. The recommended cut also came with an increase in transfer enrollments of 500, citing encouragement of a "cost-effective, alternate path to a UC baccalaureate degree," according to a press release issued last week from the UC Office of the President.

"It is an excruciating decision to reduce opportunity for students in any way, but the lack of sufficient state funding leaves us no choice," newly-crowned UC President Mark Yudof said on the UC website.

The cuts would be spread

across the campuses, though UC Berkeley and UCLA — the most popular schools in the system — would remain exempt. UC Merced would also continue attempting to spur enrollment, an ongoing struggle for the newest UC, which has roughly 2,700 students enrolled despite opening in 2005.

UC Santa Cruz will face an expected drop in enrollment of 335 students, according to campus spokesperson Jim Burns. Graduate enrollment will not be affected.

"It's not as though we're closing the doors to all new freshmen," Burns said. "I think what the UC president is saying is we can't continue growing to accommodate the needs of students without appropriate funding from the state."

Burns, echoing the regents' sentiment expressed in the press release, blamed the state's budget problems for bringing about the need to cut.

"Because the University of California's mission is to educate some of the best and brightest of California's students, no one is enthusiastic about the prospect of turning away potentially thousands of applicants who are enthusiastic about UCSC and worked hard to be here," Burns said. "But we

already have enrolled students ... on campus for whom the state is not providing budgetary support."

Wednesday's meeting also proposed an across-the-board freeze on salaries for Senior Management Group members and limiting bonuses for anyone earning over \$205,000 per year.

The Senior Management Group includes most of the UC's highest executives, including the president, each campus's chancellor and provosts, and division-level deans at each campus. UCSC has a total of 18 members, including Chancellor Blumenthal, who earns \$282,339.68 each year, and Vice Chancellor and Campus Provost David Kliger, who takes home \$257,165.97, according to a state worker database compiled by the *Sacramento Bee*. Yudof receives a compensation package totaling \$828,000 per year.

The vote overwhelmingly supported the recommendation, with only two votes against: Educational Policy Chairman Eddie Island and Student Regent D'Artagnan Scorza.

Scorza, a Ph.D. student at UCLA, said that he wished the regents considered more than just that option.

"I voted no because I don't

believe we see enough options ... to address this issue," Scorza said. "Why is this the only option available?"

Though he does not necessarily oppose limiting enrollment, Scorza says that a number of options were left undiscussed, and felt uneasy choosing one without considering the others.

The regents approved a new budget last November that included a \$530 million increase in state funding and, for "planning purposes," a potential 9.4 percent fee increase across the system. This increase, which would mean \$662 for undergrads and \$748 for grad students, seems more likely now that state funding is once again failing to come through due to the state's growing budget gap.

Scorza described the fee increases as "more than likely," and that the amount would equal "9.4 percent at the very least."

"We've run models that suggest we may need up to 15 percent," he added.

Scorza said that he wanted the regents to petition the legislature for a tax increase, which he sees as the best way out of the budget crisis plaguing the state.

"We need to raise taxes," he said. "As bad as that sounds, that does not sound as bad as limiting accessibility and enrollment ... Curtailing enrollment is a big deal for the state, we're literally saying 'there is no place for you.'"

Even for those who are enrolled in the UC system, due to the state's poor financial situation, many students would not receive needed financial aid, Scorza said.

"We're talking about maintaining jobs and opportunities," he said. "This is the equivalent of laying off hundreds of thousands of students."

He also strongly condemned the other regents, who are mostly wealthy private-sector businesspeople.

"They don't see the impact," he said. "They're not living with the consequences of this decision."

Scorza also called on students across the state to demand budget solution soon, before conditions deteriorate even further.

"I'm calling on people in California to stand up and fight for their universities, fight for their schools, tell Sacramento that we will not allow this to continue," he said. "We elected them to fix this, and they're not fixing it. We need to march on Sacramento."



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