Remarks presented to the
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The Faculty Affairs Committee, charged with issues concerning faculty interests, is most concerned about the quality of the education received by California's young people. We want to ensure that students at the California State University receive the best possible education.

Along these lines, we believe that the quality of the education of our students is in direct proportion to the quality of the faculty who teach them. If the University appoints faculty of the highest quality, the education received by our students will remain high. It is to that goal that I direct my remarks.

I must tell you that while the Faculty Affairs Committee has separately discussed all the topics I will mention this morning (salaries, workload, temporary faculty, and housing), the committee did not combine the topics as I will today, nor would the committee necessarily reach the same conclusions. Thus, this report will move somewhat beyond the committee’s discussions, and I herewith absolve the committee of any responsibility for the conclusions which I will draw.

Most of the faculty in the California State University were appointed more than twenty years ago. Most of these faculty are ready to retire. Studies show that well over 12,000 faculty will need to be replaced within the next decade. Thus, the next few years will be a time of great opportunity as well as a time of great peril. Just as the faculty appointed in the 1960s and 1970s shaped the California State University in the last quarter of the twentieth century, so the faculty appointed in the next few years will shape the California State University for the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

We face five separate but interrelated challenges:

First, faculty salaries in the CSU lag behind those of comparable institutions by roughly 8%. (There are 20 comparison institutions, and we rank 17th in faculty salaries.)

Second, housing costs in most parts of the state are incredibly high, while housing costs in selected areas are nothing less than astronomical.

Third, the expected teaching load at the CSU is much higher than that in the comparable institutions; we are expected to teach eight classes a year, while most faculty in the comparable institutions teach 5 classes
a year. (And, I might add, they are teaching fewer classes for more money, a fact that is not overlooked by job-hunting young Ph.D.s.)

Fourth, temporary faculty are increasingly utilized to teach classes. Since they are paid primarily for teaching and not for committee work, committee work falls more and more on the shoulders of the senior faculty.

Fifth, these senior faculty are retiring at an increasing rate. Just when senior faculty should provide the stability and continuity needed by a system that is trying to integrate many new faculty into its ranks, these senior faculty are leaving the system.

Of the five factors I have mentioned, housing costs are being addressed by a number of initiatives taken by the Office of the Chancellor. The high teaching load as well as the low faculty salaries must both be addressed by a long-term strategy to reduce the workload and raise salaries. This strategy is partly in place today, although its success depends on the completion of an often-acrimonious collective bargaining process.

Two elements of the problem that could be addressed successfully are the ratio of temporary to permanent faculty and the increasing retirements of senior faculty. These two issues are interrelated and solving one will affect the other.

Our temporary faculty are at a tremendous disadvantage. A number of professional organizations have studied the characteristics of temporary faculty, as well as the problems with over-reliance on their use; their report, entitled Statement from the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-time and Adjunct Faculty issued in 1997, forms the basis of some of my remarks. Temporary faculty are paid on the basis that five, not four, classes constitute a full-time load; they are, therefore, not paid to do anything other than teach—they are not paid to serve on committees, to advise students, or to serve on committees to examine m.a. students or read ma theses. They often have to spend hours on the freeways going from one campus to another. Because they teach more classes, they have less time to spend per class; because they have less time to spend per class, they may be forced to shortchange their students. Let it be said that this is not their choice; this is a choice imposed upon them by economic realities. Because all of their time is taken up with teaching, grading, preparing and commuting, they have little time for research, little opportunity to keep up with their academic disciplines. Indeed, within a few years in some fast-moving disciplines they are in danger of being
left behind, castaways on the shoals of the academy. When the California State University chooses to utilize so many temporary faculty, we are doing a disservice both to them and to their students.

There is yet another downside to the increasing use of temporary faculty. Our system relies on self-governance. Personnel recommendations are made first at the departmental level in an elaborate system of peer review by full-time faculty. Recommendations for appointment of new faculty are made first at the departmental level and the work there, too, is done by the full-time faculty. Most committee work in our departments, colleges and universities is also performed by these same full-time faculty. Of course, these senior faculty are also the ones who teach most of the specialized classes; and they are the faculty to whom students look for guidance for masters theses and honors theses, senior projects and senior portfolios. Yet, these same senior faculty, often at the peak of their scholarly productivity, also want to work on their research. It is no wonder that our senior faculty are retiring in large numbers. It should not surprise you to hear that one very bright student, who should have gone on to earn advanced degrees and who should have taken her place on the faculty of a prestigious university, told me that she was abandoning her academic studies for a well-paying position in industry. Her reason: “I’ve seen what you do, and you don’t have a life of your own!”

All of the factors I have analyzed, the high housing, the low salaries, the heavy teaching obligation, the heavy use of temporary faculty and the inordinate demands placed on senior faculty, all of these factors directly affect our ability to attract and retain bright young Ph.D.s. The statistics are stark: three out of every ten searches for new professors fail. The word is out to young Ph.D.s: “Stay away from Cal-state. They don’t pay well, they work you to death, and their collective bargaining process looks like world war III.”

As faculty, we look to our Trustees for vision and leadership and partnership. We need a plan that will take advantage of an opportunity and avert a disaster. We need a carefully-devised and politically-astute design for the future that holds hope for tomorrow.

Surely we can embark on an ambitious set of goals:

1. We must adopt a five-year timetable to increase the percentage of permanent faculty from 60% to 80%.

2. We need to eliminate the salary gap, and to lobby for the necessary funds to accomplish this goal.
3. We should continue to lobby for a housing plan to help attract and retain young faculty.

4. We must lower the teaching obligation—at least for new appointees.

We need for the CFA and the Chancellor to go before the legislature arm in arm, working together for the good of the University as a whole. We do not need the Chancellor to denigrate the faculty; we do not need the union to bash the Chancellor. Honest disagreements at the bargaining table should not preclude a collegial approach at the legislative table.

We are not talking about wages and benefits for employees, we are talking about the future of California itself. The people of California expect us to treat their sons and daughters like the precious resources they are, and not like thousands of widgets spewing off an educational assembly line. Just as our young people are not created with easily-replaced interchangeable parts, so they are not educated by easily-replaced interchangeable professors. If the people of California want the youth of California to be treated like the unique resources that they are, then they need to treat the faculty in a similar manner.

The university stands at a crossroads facing a prospect of promise or a future of failure. We look to our Trustees for the vision to devise solutions to our personnel crisis, for the will to lobby for these solutions, and for the courage to implement these solutions. As faculty, we can only advise; as Trustees, you can create. We look forward to your efforts.

Thank you.

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