

A Declaration of Academic Independence

CONCERNED STUDENTS, FACULTY, & STAFF

STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF!
YOUR UNIVERSITY IS IN DISTRESS!

When in the life of a university it becomes necessary for students, staff, and faculty to dissolve the political bands that connect them to an unscrupulous class of CSU Executives, and to assume among fellow citizens, the equality and freedom guaranteed to all persons by the Law of Nature, a decent respect to the opinions of those same citizens (and taxpayers) requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these academic truths to be self-evident: that, concerning governance, all members of the university are equal; that staff, students, and faculty are endowed with reason and, thus with equal rights; among these rights are life, liberty, and full participation in all decisions concerning the university. To secure these rights, democratic procedures for governance must be implemented assuring the participation and consent of those who are directly affected by university decisions. Whenever any form of university governance becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the staff, students, and faculty to alter or abolish such governance and to institute a new governing system, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form which seem most suitable to assuring their future academic freedom and integrity.

Staff, faculty and students have demonstrated that they are more disposed to accept inept, inefficient, and self-serving administrators when tax revenues and University budgets are ostensibly flush. The current fiscal crisis has given CSU Executives an opportunity to solidify their power and expedite the process of privatization. The history of Charles Reed, the Board of Trustees, the CSU Presidents, and the senior administrators' at all twenty-three campuses has been one of Executive financial gratification, aggrandizement of their own powers, and undermining of democratic governance. When a long history of abuses of power, pursuing a single objective, indicates a design to reduce staff, students, and faculty under absolute despotism, it is the right and moral duty of the University Community to proactively address such problems by throwing off such despotism and fundamentally altering the existing system of University governance to safeguard the future security of University education. To illustrate this, let facts and examples be submitted to a candid world.

- CSU Executives have shown a persistent and pervasive lack of academic advocacy. They have taken a passive role in regards to advocating for fiscal prioritization of higher education funding in the State of California.
- The oligarchic structure of the CSU governance inhibits full political democratic participation and self-governance inclusive of all Staff, Students, and Faculty. Consequently, student and faculty governing bodies have been co-opted by CSU Executives, by limiting them to a non-binding advisory role, which gives the appearance of shared governance, but reinforces the status quo.
- CSU Executives, by their own admittance, allow non-uniformed state agents to conduct surveillance on students and faculty at university events.
- CSU Executives make investment decisions such as the Oracle/PeopleSoft system that serve their personal financial interests at great expense to the university.
- CSU Executives operate clandestine auxiliary corporations that have refused public records requests and funded non-academic, financially questionable schemes including Save Mart Center, University Village, Campus Pointe, and other continuing construction projects.

- CSU Executives invested millions of dollars in lobbying against state legislative bills that would have required full fiscal transparency in University auxiliary corporations.
- Administrative negligence for Title IX costs the CSU system millions annually in legal fees. They have diverted private monies intended for academics to the athletics department and failed to provide adequate accounting in athletics. They have hired coaches who have failed to follow NCAA rules and failed to adequately supervise athletes.
- CSU Executives have significantly increased their own salaries and provided themselves perks including lavish university homes, cars, maids, moving expenses, closing costs on personal houses, and continued salaries even after leaving the employment of the university.
- CSU Executives, by reason of economic crisis, cut tenure-track slots, laid-off faculty and staff to be replaced by part-time faculty. All the while, they maintained salaries higher than those of corporate executives for athletic coaches, salaries of administrators and campus presidents that eclipse those of leading members of Congress, and monetary compensation for Chancellor Reed that exceeds that of the President of the United States.
- CSU Executives, in violation of the California Master Plan for Higher Education, have implemented policies that deny enrollment to eligible students, illegally enact retroactive student fee hikes, and deny access to classes necessary for students to graduate.

In light of these facts and the indifference with which CSU Executives have met our previous petitions, we, the concerned University Community, out of our sincere regard for the real purposes of university education and research, declare that the staff, students, and faculty are, and of right ought to be, free and independent arbiters of the future of the university. We absolve all allegiance to the present administration and sever all political connections between ourselves and them. We reject the oligarchic methodology of decision-making concerning our University, and the corrupted, market-imposed ideology of higher education as merely a means of labor production. We pledge ourselves and our honor to taking the necessary steps for establishing an autonomous, self-governing university dedicated to equitable, accessible & quality education, and excellence in teaching and research.