

Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

The meeting was convened at 6:00pm.

Usual Place, October 29th, 2024

Items for the good of the order:

- A Fellow shares a reminder about the upcoming presidential election, suggesting that it is important to stay in contact with the University of California Police Department (UCPD) in case of any concerns related to the election results.
- The Steward encourages all Fellows to consider running for the positions of Scribe and Steward for the next semester. They emphasize that without a Steward, there would be no pre-dinner meetings.
- Another Fellow expresses gratitude to the Order Council, noting the value of community connections during this time. The Fellow shares that they attended Homecoming for the first time in years, as well as the Chancellor's inauguration. They commend the Chancellor as the best person to lead in this period, highlighting their gratitude, authenticity, and collaborative spirit. The Fellow expresses optimism for the coming years. They also mention the importance of Black Homecoming in celebrating and showcasing the community. Additionally, the Fellow reflects on a recent book launch by the Director and Assistant Director of the Othering and Belonging Institute, and though they don't know them personally, they believe these voices are valuable to the fellowship.
- Another Fellow suggests reaching out to members of the police department, noting a tradition of having Fellows from UCPD in the past. He encourages extending the fellowship invitation to them, given their significant role in security, especially during this time. He also recommends inviting the Chief of Police to join the fellowship.
- A Fellow recalls previous Order meetings starting at 6:10 pm, with caroling beginning before 6:00 pm. They raise a question about whether starting the meeting at 6:00 pm might exclude some people, and encourage experimenting with the schedule to find what works best.
 - Another Fellow suggests conducting a survey to gather feedback.
 - The Warden states it will be discussed at the next Order Council meeting.
- The Warden announces the newest Fellow social after discussion, featuring cupcakes and opportunities to reconnect and ask questions regarding Fall Elections. The nomination form for the upcoming electees will be sent out on Thursday via email.
 - They encourage participation in planning the celebration of the 125th Birthday of The Order of the Golden Bear, and will provide a Google Form for submitting ideas on how to mark the occasion.

Items for the good of the university: Navigating Financial Sustainability in Higher Education

- *Navigating Financial Sustainability in Higher Education*

- *What is the financial status of the university and how does that affect students, alumni, faculty, city of Berkeley, and the country?*
- *What are our current philanthropic efforts? Ie: Light the Way Campaign, Big Give, Oski's Birthday. What should be our next one?*
- *Where is the money coming from and where is it going to?*
- *Financial Aid/Scholarships for Students in Undergraduate and Graduate School*
- *Work Study*
- *ASUC Funding and Allocation*
- *Getting Funding for Buildings Getting Rennovated or Built*
- *Funding for research/academic opportunities*
- *Campus Partnerships*
- *Funding for Cal Athletics and its connection to University funding*
- *State Funding*
- *Endowment efforts*
- *Tuition & Fees changes*
- *Issues with budget cuts: what are the affects to the campus*

The Warden opens the floor for discussion.

- The Fellow discusses challenges in funding the Disabled Students Program (DSP) and other disability services. They highlight the program's limited budget, as evidenced by testimonials from program participants, and make comparisons to other initiatives on campus. The Fellow strongly advocates for increased funding for students with disabilities, including those with learning and hidden disabilities. They emphasize that between 50-70% of these students face difficulties in finding employment, underscoring the need for alternative support methods like scholarships. They believe that more funding from the Order of the Golden Bear or outside donors would benefit all disabled people, whether they are 59 or 15 years old.
- The Fellow shares firsthand experiences of budgetary constraints in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) department, noting the strain on budget allocation. They report reduced funding leading to longer wait times during office hours and an overworked staff. While they appreciate increased state support and tuition adjustments as creative solutions, they find it unfortunate that instruction and research are not prioritized in budgetary decisions and cuts.
- The Fellow expresses curiosity about which departments receive the most funding. They observe that Cal Athletics often receive a larger share, while other departments like Sociology, English, and Political Science receive less. Additionally, they raise concerns about the DSP, which supports 800-1,000 students with disabilities, and inquire whether there are special campaigns to fund these departments.
- The Fellow asks about the status of endowments, questions whether current fundraising efforts are sufficient, and asks what we can do to improve things.
- The Fellow remarks that the Berkeley Law department's team has decreased from 15 to 13 staff members due to budget constraints preventing replacements for those who leave or retire. They stress that while student advocacy is important, recognizing staffing limitations is crucial. They also mention the importance of initiatives like providing free coffee to law students and describe personal contributions to the program, such as organizing events at 6 am to distribute coffee. An

Alumni funded this initiative each year on their birthday to give back to the community. They express concerns about inflation impacting the department and special programs like these.

- Another Fellow inquires about the potential revival of the coffee program, asking what resources or funding would be needed and where those funds could come from.
- The Warden discusses a tuition program that locks in tuition rates for students, highlighting that throughout this four years, she has benefited from this policy. They share a personal experience of the difference in tuition with a transfer student who is also Class of 2025 and note that this unique program prevents individual tuition increases.
 - Another Fellow follows up this comment with ensuring that parents and supporters understand costs of tuition throughout the four years in their admission package.
- The Fellow reflects on the Occupy Cal movement, pointing out that one of its main concerns was the influence of the Regents on tuition policy, which took place about a decade ago. They express solidarity with all students who experience tuition spikes and emphasize the importance of speaking up about these disparities.
- Transfer students experience a significant difference in tuition, often amounting to thousands of dollars, which disproportionately affects them. They are curious about the reasons behind these changes.
- The DSP (Disabled Students Program) previously had a residential program, but over the years, the Department of Rehabilitation has cut these services, creating challenges for students with disabilities trying to integrate into campus life. The Fellow notes that many students with disabilities have relied on rehabilitation counselors and stayed in contact with them throughout college. Without adequate funding, the Fellow anticipates an increase in academic challenges unless additional financial support is directed towards the DSP. They believe that if funding isn't improved, there could be a decrease in minority representation in academic spaces.
- The Fellow raises broader questions about private funding, emphasizing how old wealth and successful alumni from private institutions can be incentivized to give back to the university. They believe that alumni would be more inclined to support their community, such as specific colleges like the College of Environmental Design. They mention that graduate students benefit from tuition remission through job opportunities like Reader positions, depending on the college. They are also curious about the experiences of out-of-state students.
- The Fellow suggests that donations to the university decrease when football and basketball teams perform poorly, as the support for these sports often results in more financial contributions. They describe this as a "toxic mediocrity," where the mentality of "I struggled, so you must too" persists, and they believe overcoming this mindset is crucial to understanding undergraduate struggles. They argue that hiring successful Cal alumni who were supported financially could create a cycle of giving back, which UC Berkeley does not actively prefer Cal Alumni in job positions compared to non-alumni. They explain that other campuses like UCSD are more inclined to select their own alumni.
- The Fellow proposes a model where new Alumni start donating \$50 per semester, gradually increasing their contributions each year to create significant growth in annual donations. They mention that state funding has decreased from around 80-90% to just 10%, and this drop has been compensated by increased donations and grants. The Fellow has worked with organizations like the Goldman School of Public Policy, the library, and University Development & Alumni Relations (UDAR), and notes that donations have grown substantially over time.

- They share that private schools like USC maintain legacies, which gives them an advantage over UC Berkeley. While these private institutions often benefit from wealthy donors, the Fellow acknowledges that signing a \$15,000 check is not realistic for many people with lower incomes. They emphasize that Cal has a dedicated faculty willing to forgo higher salaries to work with students, and they encourage students to think beyond themselves and consider the university's needs, such as the library, which faces budget cuts that lead to reduced hours.
- The Fellow believes that Cal shapes its students, and every dollar given, even after death, should reflect this gratitude. They recognize that some groups, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, may not have the same resources to contribute. They suggest that even small donations can make a difference, encouraging students to budget and contribute to the parts of the university that helped shape their education.
- A Fellow expresses disagreement with a previous speaker, arguing that opinions about schools like Stanford and Harvard are not always accurate. It is not true that everyone at these institutions can afford to write large checks. Although these schools have been around for centuries, it isn't just old money that sustains them. They believe these institutions effectively support their students by cultivating connections, including the importance of giving back through philanthropy. Unlike Cal, schools like Princeton, for example, actively foster a culture of giving from the beginning, encouraging donations regardless of the amount. These institutions are successful as they cultivate community, connections, and understanding, including why giving is important, but Cal does not do any of these things.
- Another Fellow shares their perspective on first-generation and transfer students who have and expresses disappointment with the lack of affinity and cultural spaces.
- A Fellow highlights that there are more "Pell Grant students" at public universities like UC Berkeley than private institutions, emphasizing that the needs of Berkeley's diverse population mean that following the models of other universities is not always feasible.
- Another Fellow reflects on the importance of sports and school spirit, particularly in regions like the Midwest, where alumni engagement is high. They note that despite not winning, having a College Game Day at Berkeley brought pride and unity. This sense of community and shared identity can motivate alumni to give back. They believe that reminding people they are part of one big family can encourage donations and incentivize support.
- The Fellow shares insights into fundraising efforts and questions how much emphasis is placed on this aspect. They wonder if there is a dedicated grant manager or if Berkeley mainly relies on alumni contributions, events like Big Give, and lighter fundraising strategies.
 - Another Fellow points out that UDAR has extensive gift officers and a large alumni database called URSA, which tracks donors and engagement. However, they believe that despite its sophistication, UDAR falls short in alumni relations and outreach. The Fellow suggests that collaborating with the Cal Alumni Association to enhance data sharing could be beneficial, particularly for reaching 50,000 potential donors. They emphasize the importance of teaching new students about campus traditions and fostering a sense of belonging, especially for first-generation students. Building a strong cultural connection is as important as fundraising.
- The Fellow highlights a significant recent fundraising achievement—a \$7 billion campaign—but notes ongoing challenges, such as competition for resources and differences in funding between

departments. They acknowledge that unlike smaller private institutions, UC Berkeley serves all of California, offers more majors, and supports more students, which presents unique challenges.

- The Fellow asks if there is a lower donation rate from transfer students compared to first-year students, partly due to their shorter time on campus.
- Another Fellow mention the Jewish tradition of donating 10% of one's income, with children being taught the importance of giving from a young age. They believe that this cultural practice contributes to the Jewish community's strong financial support for UC Berkeley. The Fellow expresses confidence that all students and alumni, regardless of financial abilities, can contribute.
- The Fellow shares a reflection on the past, recalling that 10 years ago, it was difficult to donate small amounts like \$10 because the focus was on large donors. They shared personal experiences from elementary school where classes were in competition to reach the fundraising goal and presents the idea for the campus community today. They advocate for instilling a culture of giving from day one by highlighting the contributions of alumni and communicating the university's limited state funding (only 10%). They suggest that whether it's the Chancellor, UDAR, or the Cal Alumni Association, all parties should emphasize the importance of participation and create a habit of giving early on. Recognizing and celebrating all donors is also crucial.
- A Fellow mentions reaching out to current students' families and engaging adjacent family members as a way to enhance donations. They point to efforts like Big Give, Cal Philanthropy, and letters mailed to parents as effective outreach strategies.
- A Fellow highlights that state funding for Berkeley is inconsistent, and there is ongoing disinvestment in California. They note that Berkeley's "pie" is larger, which has led to unequal distribution across departments. For instance, business and engineering receive more funding, while smaller language units in the College of Letters & Science face resource constraints. This competition for funding impacts various academic areas. Student tuition consistency helps ease financial planning, especially for parents over four years, despite periodic increases.
- The Fellow discusses revenue partnerships with companies and corporations. They express pride in securing equity positions and mention missed opportunities, like Stanford taking intellectual property that became Google. They suggest that Berkeley should market itself and pursue these opportunities, as revenues from successful startups could be distributed equitably across departments.
- They share that the Parent Donor Board has worked on fundraising by encouraging smaller, regular donations, like \$5 per month, to make giving accessible to families. Introducing the idea of giving during student orientation, however, must be handled carefully to avoid creating a transactional experience that may overwhelm students as they adjust to university life.
- A Fellow reflects on missed opportunities with innovations like CRISPR, questioning whether Berkeley's decision not to take equity positions cost the university. They note that, in their experience at Bank of America, people are more likely to donate when directly asked. Coordination among departments to avoid multiple, uncoordinated donation requests would help maintain good donor relations.
- The Fellow compares UC Berkeley's liberal arts education to state universities in the South and Midwest, which are eliminating humanities and history departments in favor of encouraging students to pursue business-related fields. They emphasize the importance of preserving a liberal arts education and having an independent alumni association and ASUC (Associated Students of

the University of California), which may provide more advantages despite their independence from the university.

- The Fellow mentions that small liberal arts colleges are closing across the United States at a concerning rate. They warn against following the trend of eliminating programs like English or bannings such as African American studies, which would not be acceptable at Berkeley. It's essential to keep an eye on other institutions to avoid short-sighted decisions.
- In response to the conversation, another Fellow suggests framing philanthropy discussions around educating students about how a percentage of their costs, experiences, and events are covered by donations. They propose teaching financial literacy and encouraging students to donate small amounts, like \$5 or leftover meal swipes, to create a habit of giving back to the community. They called this "Feed Oski, & Feed Yourself".
- The Fellow also expresses concern about changes to work-study funding and the shutdown of certain programs due to state budget cuts. This year FASFA also changed some rules with negatively impacted students' day-to-day experiences. They express that they personally do not qualify for work study and face additional financial barrier.
- Another Fellow suggests offering a free, one-year membership to the Cal Alumni Association for graduating students to encourage involvement. They believe a colleague of theirs would benefit from such initiative. This could be an incentive for alumni to donate or continue their membership. They emphasize the importance of fostering connections at a large institution like Berkeley, where gathering in smaller groups is challenging.
- The Fellow references the concept of "othering and belonging" from the book *Belonging Without Othering*. They believe that adopting a mindset where everyone rises together can help shift discussions away from an "us versus them" mentality, promoting more inclusive spaces and revolutionary ideas on campus.
- A Fellow acknowledges the difficulty of donating while paying for tuition and the moral dilemmas young alumni face when asked for contributions during crises and choosing to give their money to hurricane relief instead of the University. They suggest that including a small percentage of donations from events like Big Give toward external causes may be another incentive.
- A Fellow mentions the challenge of maintaining fundraising expertise as seasoned staff retire. They share an anecdote about a charismatic Cal Alumni staff member who was replaced by someone without the same drive or skill, affecting donations. They wonder if training programs could help cultivate these skills in new staff members.
- A Fellow shares a story about a successful national competition called Ideathon, where a Berkeley team won with an app that allows students to donate unused meal swipes. This is an example of Berkeley's inventive spirit, but the Fellow notes that the university hasn't always benefited from such innovations in the past. They reference the College of Engineering's founder pledge and the development of SkyDeck and a ventures fund as progress. They mention a Berkeley alumni-founded startup, Perplexity AI, whose CEO wants to offer their product to Berkeley students and staff as a way to give back. However, procurement rules complicate this partnership.
 - The Fellow concludes by mentioning the Chancellor's perspective on Berkeley's future amid a looming demographic cliff. They express optimism that Berkeley will continue to

prosper as one of the nation's top universities, despite the ongoing challenges with state funding and budget constraints.

Discussion Adjourned at 7:30 PM. The Meeting closed with Song. Notes were compiled by the Chronicler.