

# Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

*The meeting was convened at 6:00pm.*

**Usual Place, February 18, 2025**

## **Items for the good of The Order:**

- A Fellow reminds everyone that Big Give is coming up on March 13th.
- A Fellow announces that the 642-WALK Campus Walk can be assessed by students for safe walk escort from Dusk - 2:30 am.
  - Another Fellow shares modes of transportation and proposed planning for UCPD to receive input on bike rentals, especially for community members who are disabled.
- A Fellow invites all February birthdays to join Order Council and afterward to Freehouse.
- A Fellow invites everyone to the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland (5000 Piedmont Ave.) for a 2-hour walking tour led by Cal Alumni on March 8th.
- The Warden announces a new Steward. Reminds that all dinners will be provided for Fellows who sign up in advance.
- The Warden proposed a bylaw addition which was presented in writing to the fellowship with a vote among students scheduled for the next regular meeting.

## **Items for the good of the university: The State Budget Cuts and UC**

- *Large Budget Cuts announced by Governor for the 2025-2026 school year*
- *The effects to research and at UC*
- *What could UC Berkeley stand to cut funds to? What are the priorities of the students for the university?*
- *Tuition Stability Plan. What is the future of this?*
- *The effects of budget cuts to Sonoma State University and what that means for UC and CSU*
- *The future of UC*
- *Effects to Faculty and Administration Programs*
- *Effects to Campus Infrastructure*

*The Warden opens the floor for discussion.*

- A Fellow asks how the cuts will affect disabled students and DSP programs across the country. They share an understanding of the budget deficit but also wonder how many layoffs there will be. How will this affect the once-great university?
- A Fellow asks about budget cuts for Sonoma State University.
  - Another Fellow shares that they have seen the deficit on Sonoma State's campus as a local. The campus had significant cuts, including all athletic programs, about 13 departments, and graduate programs across humanities and science. Current students will complete their programs, but future students will not be able to. They assume students will move to other campuses, which has complications.

- A Fellow follows up by saying that they believed there were other avenues. They wonder if students are as well organized at Sonoma State University as they are on our campus. They think that without more student organizations, they fear it will continue.
- A Fellow adds that the CSU and UC budgets differ, but both face cuts across all 23 campuses. They believe that all finances have to be cut by 7.7%. They think the cuts will affect the campuses differently and out of the governor's preliminary budget. It is a political statement from the governor's office produced through debate, negotiation, and statement as the budget for the fiscal year. The budget is not approved by the governor but by the legislature of California in Sacramento. They urge Fellows to contact their Representatives if they would like to get involved.
  - Moreover, athletic departments at CSUs are state budgets, whereas ours is not dependent on state funding but rather an auxiliary of the campus, like Berkeley Housing of their entity. They receive subsidies from the university but not from state funding.
- A Fellow asks why Sonoma State University has experienced these drastic budget cuts compared to other California schools.
  - A Fellow answers that for the past decade, Sonoma State University has faced difficulties not representative of all campuses.
- A Fellow shares that in their previous work with Fresno State, they witnessed a lack of enrollment, which resulted in layoffs. They express interest in the relation to the federal government withholding money for research and student support services. DSP has a program that accepts federal funding, among other programs, but finances remain in limbo. This is a challenging budget year that impacts jobs and real-life events.
- A Fellow mentions that historically, this university was funded by tax-offs. Proposition 13 of 1978 shocked the campus, but this community and system are resilient.
  - A Fellow adds that budget cuts have occurred in the UC system before. Notably, in 1973, registration fees increased with significant changes in campus and job rates. Each campus will have its own target. In the late 1990s, faculty salaries were rolled back 7%. The phases of cuts have occurred over 1-2 years. For example, UC Davis took a significant cut in one year, which harmed the campus heavily, and immediately they were able to recover. While UC Berkeley's cuts in 1-2 year phases led to years of recovery.
- A Fellow asks if budget recollection affects students. They recall the vision of the UC charter was to be tuition-free. They ask how this can be an opportunity to reimagine what a research university should look like. What is the model that we are moving forward? How will we impact other campuses, such as UC Davis and UCSF? How do we treat endowments? This requires understanding and outside stakeholders to soften the blow of campus budget cuts.
- A Fellow asks how the budget cut will affect other departments. They suggest a strategy for students or alumni to go to the UC regents together. They discuss a presidential veto and strong community organizing. They recognize this as less of an interest for the Order but as something shared individually.
- A Fellow states that in a conversation with student peers, they found out that the tuition is set for students throughout their undergraduate years, increased annually. They were shocked at how much tuition increased for the 2022-2023. They found that the UC Board of Regents had a 9.9% tuition height. They worry about future students as tuition costs rise.

- A Fellow shares that the tuition and cost of living increase is frustrating. The increase in price is not tied to the quality of education. As a student in the new College of Computing, Data Science, and Society, they know that the number of majors has already increased. The amount of instruction decreases while administration increases. The UC must prioritize its costs and should focus on educational instruction. For UC Path, they wanted to streamline payroll, and by the end of the process, they spent millions of dollars more than expected and weren't successful in their initial goal. This serves as an example of cost priorities, as they believe a shift must occur.
- A Fellow reminds us that only the Order Council can make decisions for the fellowship, and it is highly inappropriate for anyone to contact others intentionally representing the Order.
- A Fellow mentions the concept of cutbacks, whereas the idea of administrative cuts will not make an everlasting impact. Our administration cuts grow for reasons outside our control, such as regulations and national laws. Especially, in research departments, which can be very expensive.
- The Fellow shares dissatisfaction with resources from other campuses.
  - Another Fellow adds that the changes in resources would be done by the administration, so we can't cut their costs. As Alumni, they believe that the resources we are looking for are essential to work alongside the administrators.
- A Fellow suggests the philosophy of giving what you can. This gets people in the habit of giving and supporting students when financially able.
- A Fellow shares certain data restrictions that have negatively affected students' research experience as national data is halted due to federal administration setbacks.
- A Fellow shares that in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) research, that has become a problem for students. To afford research, they have sought private sectors in collaboration with private companies, which has limits and regulations for the principal investigator (PI) but allows post-doctorate students to be sponsored.
- A Fellow shares that in STEM fields, the entity of cost in the private market can come into the gaps rather than cutting programs that rely more on government funding. They wonder if this will present challenges for the future to come. Where are the revenue sectors of the research institutions? There are accomplished people at UC Berkeley, such as Noble Laureates, so how can we monetize this?
  - Fellow adds that we have innovators on campus. For example, those who invented the hypertext link and computer mouse received monetary compensation. They encourage everyone to not sell themselves short when they invent and then give back to the campus.
- A Fellow shares the impact of why Prop 13 was driven by corporations, especially a fossil fuel corporation in Richmond.
  - Another Fellow shares that the modified version of Prop 13 placed a tax of deduction protection where millions of homes will not be covered.
- A Fellow asks what students are willing to do without and what services they would be okay to cut. Does every campus have to be the same? For example, we have the only nuclear engineering program in California. What if we move a program to another campus— how would that help us?
- A Fellow shares that Residential Hall holds many events with a \$300,000 budget. They believe social events in recent years have faced low attendance and wonder if their impact on campus belonging is strong enough. For this reason, they feel the money can go elsewhere.

- A Fellow shares that the topic is complex. This shares that there must be movement by students to distribute funds. They urge that the students encourage the attendance of Chancellor Lyons in The Order to compromise the funding with students and distribute an understanding of what students are okay to go without. They believe that a survey should be conducted and sent to Fellows.
- A Fellow shares that the state's economy is demanding and not focused on education but artificial intelligence (AI). How do we capitalize on this shift? They add that private institutions such as USC have a phenomenal way to raise money with strong student engagement from day one.
- A Fellow shares that they would suggest a shift in University Health Services (UHS) and the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) costs. They shared that since their enrollment, they have not utilized eTang. They ask how UHS and health insurance function and why they offer to students who already have health insurance.
- A Fellow shares that programs they don't use are the ones they don't know. They have value in the opportunities that are not available anywhere else. For example, the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (URAP) has made it more accessible for students to gain research experience.
- A Fellow shares that one service for students they find helpful is from the many news outlets that students can access, such as the New York Times, Purdue, etc., which otherwise would need monthly subscriptions.
  - A Fellow responds that the publications and articles they see are available, licensed, and free for students.
- A Fellow asks if Berkeley has gotten too big. Would it be more financially feasible to move our departments to other campuses? They believe it is acceptable to focus on STEM for now.
- A Fellow shares that through RSOs, it is challenging to confirm campus spaces and classrooms. One RSO started another club just to get more meeting/ classroom booking hours, as there is a limit. There are over 1000 student organizations. There are only so many buildings to sustain our students.
- A Fellow shares that new ideas are needed for this campus. They believe that our focus should be shifted to integrating AI in different ways. They believe that AI will not be able to create creative ideas and solutions in the future but may impact and limit human jobs and opportunities. The scope of our campus is leading these innovative ideas.
  - A Fellow builds on the silver lining of supporting humanities through monetizing STEM. They believe that innovation at Cal and creative ideas are made by students at Cal and campuses like us. The division and level of undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students have different needs that should be further explored.
- A Fellow shares that Cal Athletics can compensate sports financially. They determine the revenue of Cal Athletics and other facilities.
  - A Fellow adds that the superstars in Cal Swimming are exceptional, so is there a method of revenue they are not tapping into?

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