

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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PLACE: University of California, Berkeley, CA

### **Hundreds of Berkeley Faculty and Students Will Travel to Sacramento for March 4th “Educate the State” Day**

On March 4, a convoy of buses packed with professors and students from UC Berkeley will be heading to the State Capitol in Sacramento for an “Educate the State” rally, part of a statewide day of action in support of public education. 750 people have already signed up. More faculty and students will join them by car, train and bus from the Bay Area and Santa Cruz.

For the first time in California history, all sectors of the state’s education system — K-12, community colleges, CSUs, and UCs — will band together to defend education in a time of severe budget cuts, and to make the case to legislators and the public that education is the best investment that the state can make. There will be rallies and marches in San Francisco, Oakland and on campuses all around the state. It looks to be one of the biggest public protests in the state's history.

The rally at the Capitol will begin with a ritual attendance-taking of the two-thirds of all legislators who attended a Community College, CSU or UC campus, and it will end with a graduation ceremony in which all legislators who show up for the event will be given an honorary diploma in “Public Education.”

“The education crisis is everywhere,” said Shannon Steen, professor of Theater and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley and an organizer of the Sacramento rally. “It’s in K-12, where only three other states spend less than we do per pupil. It’s in the Cal State system, where they’re turning away 40,000 students this year. And it’s in the UC system, where programs are being cut and tuition is spiking. So we’re all acting together to say, ‘Enough is enough.’”

Even Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has publicly recognized that, with state funding for prisons eclipsing spending on higher education, politicians need to take a hard look at their priorities. “All the blame cannot be put on the economic downturn,” observed Scott Saul, Professor of English; “after all, public higher education in California could be restored to 2000-01 funding levels – with a rollback

of student fee increases – for a mere \$32 per average taxpayer, according to the Council of UC Faculty Associations."

"For thirty years, we've been starving public education," said Richard Walker, professor of Geography and chair of UC Berkeley's California Studies Center. "This is unbelievably short-sighted. The deprived elementary school student of today is the underprepared college student of tomorrow. And the worthy student who doesn't get into college is one less contributor in the skilled labor force that California requires to fuel its future growth."

The March 4 rally will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the steps of the Capitol and will be structured as a "basic curriculum" on California's public education system, with lessons in "History," "Political Science" and "Economics". Speakers will represent the various levels of the state's educational system and will also include Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico and UC Berkeley Professor George Lakoff, who has spearheaded an effort to restore majority rule to state budgeting

The rally will be immediately followed by a series of two-minute testimonials from faculty, alumni, and students of California's public colleges – both those who have benefitted greatly and those who are suffering severely from cuts and fees. These testimonials will take place in a video zone, where members of the media may film them directly for later use. The video zone will be located on the north lawn of the capitol (look for signage).

**This press release has been issued by SAVE the University, an organization of UC Berkeley faculty dedicated to preserving access to education, excellence in teaching, and transparency of administrative decisions in the wake of the unprecedented budget crisis facing the University of California. For more information, go to: <http://saveuc.org/>**

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