

For immediate release

University of California union members join statewide Refund California actions this Wednesday

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Joining protests across the globe, members of several unions at the **University of California** are holding **a day of action on November 9, 2011 at all campuses and medical centers**. (A partial list of events is available at <http://upte.org/refundCA>). The following Wednesday (Nov. 16), union members will converge on the **California State University Board of Trustees meeting** in Long Beach and the **University of California Board of Regents meeting** in San Francisco.

“We have been hurt by budget shortfalls due to an economic crisis created by Wall Street. Wall Street profiteers should pay to heal our economy. Budget cuts to education, and specifically to the University of California, only serve to hinder any future recovery,” said **Bob Samuels, a UCLA lecturer and president of UC-AFT**.

The University of California has laid off thousands of employees over the last 2 years, leaving workload for many remaining UC employees unmanageable. Many of UC’s most basic functions -- from classroom maintenance to library services -- are suffering.

Wages are also falling farther even behind inflation since UC reinstated employee pension contributions. “Many of our members are barely surviving on near poverty wages. They should be paid so they can make ends meet today and have the benefit of decent retirement after giving their working lives to the university,” said **Kathryn Lybarger, a lead gardener at UC Berkeley and AFSCME 3299’s president**.

At the same time, student fees have increased astronomically. Overall, students are being asked to pay more for a reduced education. The unions stand united with students in their demand for affordable, quality education.

The unions say that the UC Regents have pursued policies of “slash and burn” instead of becoming vocal proponents of affordable public education. “Rather than leveraging the system’s considerable financial resources and advocating for tax increases on the wealthy, UC has chosen to make policy changes downscaling employee benefits and escalating student fees as their principal budget balancing strategies,” explains **Cheryl Deutsch, a graduate student at UC Los Angeles and president of UAW 2865.**

The protests, commencing with statewide actions on November 9, call on the UC Regents to sign a pledge to advocate for measures that will raise adequate revenue by taxing those who have profited from previous years of excess.

The unions call on UC to collaborate in a campaign to restore adequate state support for higher education. “Unfortunately, instead of seeking partners in a campaign to defend the university, UC has engaged in a campaign of union-busting as a way to push through its cost-cutting measures, which hurt students and employees. We call on UC to reallocate the resources spent on outside counsel used to attack unions and their leaders, into a campaign to refund UC and refund California,” said **Jelger Kalmijn, a staff research associate at UC San Diego and UPTE-CWA’s president.**

The coalition of UC unions participating in the day of action includes AFSCME 3299, the California Nurses Association, UAW 2865, UC-AFT and UPTE-CWA.

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