Anonymous
We Are the Crisis
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destruction, and breeding the future's managers, bureaucrats and careerists. Education for social good: No practical education!

- The expression of our solidarity and support for students internationally and in the US, and especially those in Vienna, UCSC, UC Berkeley CS Fullerton, CS Fresno who are fighting the commodification of education and the transformation of universities into business enterprises for private investors and money-hungry administrators.
- The encouragement of popular struggles among students and workers who are fighting to achieve meaning and autonomy in their lives.

Demand nothing,
Occupy everything.

only recognize a certain space and time (Kerkhoff, from 12 to 1pm) as a "free speech zone."

- Budgetary and investment transparency. Full disclosure on how bonds are issued to private investors, backed with student tuition, and used to fuel unnecessary construction projects. An immediate halt on all construction and issuance of bonds until such transparency becomes a reality. Default on all bond payments until educational and workforce goals are met.
- An end to all furloughs and worker lay-offs.
- The removal of Chancellor Block from UCLA, whose total annual compensation is $454,916 and is happy to issue bonds to fund police stations and sports arena renovations while cutting back library services, course offerings and putting employees on furlough.
- The removal of all Regents and President Yudof from power, as the students, workers and staff of the UC neither choose them nor endorse them.
- Disarm the university: UCPD cannot carry tasers or pepper spray on campus. The removal of military recruiters and the entire war apparatus from the university.

In the big picture:

- The negation of an economic system that links income to one's so-called level of education. We demand education for those without "qualifications" or the means to afford the ridiculous costs of tuition and we demand social and economic viability for those without degrees.
- The rejection of the role the university plays in funding the war machine, developing new technologies of

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A Brief List of Impossible Demands

While we do not believe in making demands to the University, like a dog waiting at the table for the scraps of the overfed, we do want to explain why we are fighting and what we hope to accomplish. Nor do we form an organized "movement" or claim to make these demands on the behalf of others, although we do expect that a great number of students and workers in the UC system and the larger sphere of public education will share some of our goals, while those invested in the current system of domination will share none of them.

These demands are impossible not in the sense that they cannot be realized, but rather that the current system would come undone if it did realize them. A brief list of impossible demands for this world.

The immediately realizable at all universities:

- The liberation of space for free student use, discussion and organizing. *We are the crisis!*

- Pushing public discourse to focus on the role of the university within larger economic structures and the impact of cut-backs on low-income people and people of color.

At the University of California with regards to its management, organization, and economic structure:

- The fulfillment and radicalization of the University's promise: absolute, free education for all, regardless of so-called "qualifications," test scores, race, class, gender or orientation.

- The declaration of the entire university as a "free speech" zone. At present, certain universities, such as UCLA,

victorious? Yes, if by victory we mean making life more tolerable. But, more emphatically, no, if what we mean is creating a more egalitarian society, where education does not determine economic success.

Instead, the promise of education for all must be radicalized, made a universal demand that strikes at the core of the economic structure:

We call for a university that cares nothing for the worth of what you have done before and has no bearing on your worth in society afterwards. A free university, devoted to universal education.

Therefore, the radical demand we make of the university appears as the most innocuous: since you cannot fulfill your own vision of universal education, we will do it for you and at your expense. Since you cannot use education as a means of liberating people, all people, from inequalities of wealth, class and status, we will take on this task. Since you exclude people from education based on the circumstances of birth, class, gender and race, we will allow everyone to join. Since your alchemy reduces knowledge and skills into the base metal of a person's profitability, we will destroy the link between education and worth. We will burn your degrees, the records of licenses acquired, classes taken, scores received, grades inked on a whim.

This new university is impossible for capitalism to realize. Therefore, we should not ask for the university to be destroyed, nor for it to be preserved. We should not ask it for anything. We should ask ourselves, and each other to take control of these universities, collectively, so that education can begin. We should use this chance to ensure that there are no more job talks, no more shitty lectures to attend, and that the university's degrees, and the little letters they would place after your name mean nothing more than the ashes left after a forest fire.

Vision of the New University

The first question that might present itself to anyone engaged in the current struggles at the university is this: is the university to be saved or destroyed?

To some, the answer seems obvious. Those who hope to salvage what may be no more than the university's illusion of public service certainly are right to see higher education as a path towards improved opportunities, towards a more even distribution of economic promise, without regards to race, gender and class. Therefore, demanding that financial aid and work study programs, cultural events, and course offerings in more potentially progressive departments such as Women's Studies, Chicano/a Studies and African American Studies stay off the chopping block is more than just; it is necessary.

To others, the opposite answer seems equally obvious. The university has become nothing more than one more space for venture apictalists to invest in, a space that, through tuition hikes, cuts to affirmative action and cultural programs excludes those it claims to help. It becomes a space where careerist twenty-somethings can buy their tickets to all the sterility of their parents' upper-middle class lives. To say that there is anything worthwhile left in the bureaucracy, cult of professionalism and alienation that attends the university would be tantamount to throwing your arms around a pile of bones.

So what's at the root of these two positions?

1.) The acknowledgment that the public university is caught in a profit model, not a public service model: it benefits from private capital in a way unimaginable at its inception.

In the 1960's the cost of a UC education, in inflation-adjusted dollars, was about $1,500 per year or $6,000 for a four-year education.[1] Under the November 2009 fee increases, students will

[1] California Progress Report www.californiaprogressreport.com

be paying over $10,000 per year. So why does tuition cost eight times more while quality plummets?

The answer is in appearance complicated, but at its root, simple: tuition increases, especially in the post-2000 UC plan are largely the effect of the need to pay back private investors. Instead of pushing voters to pass state-backed bonds to help expand the university, instead of putting political pressure on Sacramento to increase state funding, the UC has lured private investment by issuing bonds that can be backed by student tuition.[2] These bonds can be used to fund construction projects such as the renovation of UCLA's Pauley Pavillion sports center or the new Police Station. Jobs can go to private contractors, who do not necessarily use union labor.

Whereas state funds must go towards education, tuition is more flexible in how it can be used. In case the new projects (a new cafe, for example or a new law building) don't immediately (or ever) turn a profit, the UC can always raise tuition to pay back the interest on its bonds. Because investors know that the UC can always raise tuition and have pledged all tuition in the event of default, it is a "safe" investment for their capital.

2.) Because the university fails to put sufficient political pressure on voters and the state, educational cuts appear as nothing more than necessary evils, the result of an all-around belt tightening. Therefore, in its turn towards private capital, the university, now more than ever, is failing on its promise to be a public service. With tuition money pledged to investors and dwindling state funds, it lays off workers, reduces services, and especially disadvantages students of color and working class students. Entering students who often cannot afford rising tuition costs take out more loans, work longer hours or are forced to drop out. Some of the prospective students from disadvantaged backgrounds don't apply or don't get in when enrollment is lowered. The UC reduces services that would help people attend school such as childcare, work-study and cultural programs.

[2] Anyone who has taken even a cursory glance at Bob Meister's "They Pledged Your Tuition" or "UC on Wall Street" will not fail to be convinced by the role private capital plays in today's public university.

The university has to be remade to abandon the profit model and become a public service with a truly universal scope. The "universal" mission of higher education so far extends only to those willing to suffer through boring high school classes, are good at hiding their drug use, cheating and disinterest, and be willing to go into massive debt for a stake in the economic lottery and the promise of a decent living. True equality of opportunity doesn't mean allowing for better access to a workforce that demands some succeed while others live in poverty.

However, the failure of equal opportunity starts at the K-12 level, as public schools in working class neighborhoods are underfunded, since the tax base is not the same as in your suburban neighborhood across town. The university is just the last part of the slide-off in equal opportunity.

3.) What I would emphasize, that I think both the pro-university and anti-university camps have missed is this:

The university's promise of equal opportunity is not enough, but the fundamental promise of equal opportunity promoted by the university should not be abandoned.

To simply say "destroy the university" reduces the social need for education to a naive catch-all phrase. It is important to rage against this specter of ivy covered majesty, but it cannot be done at the expense of what is liberating about the promise of universal education and the equal distribution of knowledge. On the other hand, to assume that we should preserve a university that funnels students into unequal standards of living is pernicious. Complicity with economic disparity masquerades under the empty slogan of "equal opportunity." Suppose we repealed all the tuition hikes, reinstated all the classes and cut library hours, got back work-study and ended worker furloughs. Suppose we even reduced costs to 1960's levels. Would we be