

HOW TOUGH ARE THE TIMES?

Administrators sit pretty amid budget slashing and tuition increases

BY GREG KLEIN, *The Auburn Plainsman*, AUBURN U.

While students empty their pockets to attend universities where they can't get into classes because of a "budget crisis," some administrators are enjoying luxuries like mansions and cars purchased with those same strapped funds.

And Jeanette Adams and students like her are angry. They're angry that their administrators are living like kings and queens while students face tuition increases, bigger classes and fewer resources.

"Getting classes is really hard here, and like any big school, there's problems with classes being quite large," Adams says. "I think there needs to be a breakdown of the funds available and re-examining of where they're needed."

Adams, an elected at-large representative of the Associated Students of the U. of Washington, believes university funds might be spent more effectively than by giving administrators big raises. And across the country, students impaired by budget constraints are airing the same complaint.

Universities are under scrutiny by students and faculty members for giving administrators packages including generous salaries, cars and houses in spite of economic problems ravaging many budgets.

The nine-school U. of California system was caught in the middle of that dispute last year. While battling an ongoing budget crisis, the system concurrently approved a million-dollar retirement package for outgoing President David Gardner.

The system is awaiting a budget that will be slashed even further than the 40-percent cut last year, and the campuses still are reeling from an 80-percent tuition increase during the last five years. At the same time, UC has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy out Gardner's contract after he announced his resignation in December.

The UC Board of Regents finally approved, after lengthy debate, a plan that will award Gardner on Dec. 31 an annual pension of \$126,000, a one-time payment of \$797,000 from a deferred income retirement package and three months of administrative leave beginning Oct. 1, totaling \$60,000 based on his annual salary.

Board Chairwoman Meredith Khachigian says the regents had no choice because Gardner legally had earned the money.

"We contracted to give him the money so there was a legal obligation," she says. "In reality it isn't that much money, but since it is a lump sum it has been blown out of proportion."

Andrea Jones-Hartsough, vice president of the Associated Students at U. of California, Davis, doesn't think she's blowing anything out of proportion.

"The regents say they need big packages to attract quality people, but a good president won't do any good if all the faculty leave because of low pay and the students are gone because they can't afford to attend the school," she says.

Gardner's salary and retirement package aren't the cause of the system's budget problems, but they're a symptomatic of administrative prioritizing nationwide.

Khachigian says the controversy will help shape the



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AT ISSUE

EYE OF THE STORM: David Gardner, right, head of the U. of California system, came under fire this year when a million-dollar retirement package coincided with the state's deepest budget cuts.

board's actions in the future.

"I think that you always have to adjust accordingly to economic times, and these extreme economic times have made us look realistically at what we can provide to administrators," she says.

But the problems aren't limited to California; they are as widespread and diverse as the geographic regions they affect.

At Youngstown State U. in Ohio, President Leslie Cochran — in addition to his \$130,000 salary — receives a yearly \$6,000 car allowance, \$24,000 annual housing allowance and a paid membership to the country club of his choice, says Shirley Carpenter, executive director of personnel services.

But Cochran's salary is among the lowest in the state for public university presidents, which may indicate the money crunch at Youngstown where state funds of more than \$4 million were cut from the 1992-93 budget. Thirty-two employees recently were laid off, the equivalent of 109 full-time positions have been

fund for long-term growth. But the money could not be used for raises. University officials said using funds from the endowment is not university policy and usually is illegal.

Robert Carroll, president of UD's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, disagrees.

"There are large amounts of money that go in the endowment fund that are unrestricted," he says. "We're not near the poverty level... there are tremendous endowment resources."

Some, like Khachigian, say educational quality begins with solid leadership and schools get what they're willing to pay for.

"The scope of administrative responsibility is different and much larger than that of a professor," she says. "This is not to say that one is more important than the other."

To others, increasing salaries for administrators is tough to swallow when programs are being cut and tuition is skyrocketing.

At the U. of Washington, where officials are considering a fall tuition increase of as much as 25 percent, regents voted to give President William Gerberding a bonus package, boosting his income from \$155,000 to more than \$200,000 — the most ever paid to a state of Washington employee.

Regents say the bonus was necessary because school officials feared losing Gerberding to another university.

But students aren't convinced.

Richard Broncheau, an at-large representative of the Associated Students of U. of Washington, says administrators have to show their worth. "When we're talking salaries, administrators need to prove why they make that much," he says. "I don't know that the Gerb is worth \$200,000 a year."

Student government members at UC schools feel a kinship with the U. of Washington students.

Jones-Hartsough says UC's student regent is looking into the incoming president's package, which is rumored to be similar to Gardner's.

"The student regent is trying to get information, once we find out, we'll make a public stink," she says. "I'm frustrated and angry and feel a real need to do something."

"...A good president won't do any good if all the faculty leave because of low pay and the students are gone because they can't afford to attend..." — Andrea Jones-Hartsough

cut and the yearbook — a campus fixture for 60 years — was cut.

At the State U. of New York, Albany, the school provides President H. Patrick Swygert with \$126,800 annually and a state-owned car. Since September 1990 students at SUNY schools have endured an 89-percent tuition increase and the system has lost 13 percent of its state funding, but Swygert has a housekeeper courtesy of the physical plant, says Vincent Reda, associate director of University Relations at Albany.

At the U. of Delaware, administrators told professors negotiating a pay raise that the school was broke, but a consultant hired by the professors revealed the school is one of the country's wealthiest.

The search exposed \$390 million in an endowment