

President Robert C. Dynes
Remarks at "Focus The Nation" Teach-In, UC Davis
January 31, 2008



President Dynes with Teach-In panelists (l-r) California Special Assistant Attorney General Clifford Rechtschaffen, UC Davis Environmental Law Society president Emily Brand and UC Davis law professor Albert Lin; with UC Davis Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef and student planning committee members; and with the chancellor and more students at one of the many exhibit tables.

I appreciate the invitation to speak at this forum. [Climate change] is a subject that I've been spending a lot of time on, and it's a delight to be able to reflect a little bit on where UC has gone and, hopefully, where we are going to address climate solutions. Let me thank Chancellor Vanderhoef for inviting me to this. I was planning to visit the Academic Senate here today, and the opportunity to come and speak at this forum is like icing on the cake.

I do wear two hats, as introduced. I am the President of the University of California, and I'm also a Professor of Physics, and I'm going to move from one hat to the other as I speak. I also will remind you that I'm a child of the '60s and '70s, and I'm going to come to this in a little while, because it's related to my comments.

The University of California has had a long history of leadership in the environmental sciences. The concept of global warming, I would assert, came out of the University of California from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography before it was part of UC San Diego. The concept of global warming came out of a group of people that were at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Jay Keeling of the now-famous "Keeling curve" and Roger Revelle, who is actually one of the founders of UC San Diego. It turns out that, as UC San Diego was being founded, Roger took a sabbatical at Harvard in the '60s and taught a young student about the perils facing our planet, a young student named Al Gore. If you go back and look at his movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," and listen very carefully, Al Gore recognizes indeed that it was Roger Revelle of the University of California who first alerted him to the issues that he is now spending an awful lot of time on and is alerting the world and becoming a conscience for some of our leaders in Washington.

Through education and research at UC, we've emphasized environmental sustainability to many generations of students. And over that time, a quite remarkable thing has happened, and I've seen it happen in the past 5 years or so. As our students, some of you and your predecessors, grasped the seriousness of what's happening on this planet, you came back to us, I actually remember Regents' meetings in the not-too-distant past where this happened, you came to us on our campuses and at the Office of the President and said, "If you believe what you teach, why don't you practice what you teach?" And it was a little embarrassing, because in fact, they were right. And my hat's off to the students. We were

busy trying to get along trundling along and not being quite as conscious and as responsible as we should have been.

We learned. And we changed direction in two important ways that I'm going to talk about. First, we adopted institutional sustainability practices that have revolutionized our business operations at the University of California. Second, we took a more vigorous leadership role in the search for innovative solutions to climate change. After I describe those advances, I'll end with a few personal notes that will lead us back to the '60s and '70s, back to my generation, the generation of some of you up in the front row but not in the back.

In June 2004, largely at the urging of our students, I issued a "Policy on Green Building Design and Clean Energy Standards." Two years later, we expanded the policy to include sustainable transportation practices and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It was an ambitious undertaking for such a large and unmovable institution like the University of California. But I knew that we would succeed, I knew that we would change because, in essence, we are a "living laboratory"; once we set our minds to these things, we, the University – you, me – once we set our minds to these things, we actually do them. And we are really very capable of what I call "R, D, & D." You know what R&D is: research and development. The second D, which is really an important part of our mission, is delivery: research, development, and delivery. If we are not delivering the quality of people and ideas to society's benefit, we are not fulfilling our mission. And we are good at R, D, & D in many ways: health care, food, agricultural programs, high-tech new jobs, we're good at R, D, & D.

Two weeks ago, we received an annual report card on our sustainability practices. And we got As. I'm not sure that we really deserve As at this point, but we got As. There's still room at the top, there's room for As and A-pluses. In 2007, the University of California's green efforts won a slew of awards at the local, state, and federal levels. To give one example, and many of you know this, the Sierra Club's *Sierra* magazine named UC the fourth (so we have room) greenest university in the country and the highest-ranked public university in the country. I have always asserted that the University of California is the finest university in the country, public and private, so we have a ways to go still. Being the best public university isn't quite good enough.

Our energy efficiency projects are moving more than \$5 million annually into operational savings. So not only is it good stewardship of our resources, it's actually good business practice, as our students have emphasized to us many times, "If you do this, it's going to be good business practice." So, as you can hear, and I have said many times, my hat's off to the students who really did shake us into doing these things. And I continue to expect students to be our conscience as we continue to be more and more sustainable and greener and greener.

Let me turn now to the future as I see it and to a couple of things. Firstly, let me turn to a proposed California venture that I think has tremendous potential to reverse the effects of climate change and to stimulate the economy at the same time. On December 12, I led off a workshop at the California Public Utilities Commission to unveil a proposal for a new California Institute for Climate Solutions. UC was asked by the president of the PUC to develop this plan, and we did it in a few short months. We have proposed an institute to the PUC that would involve a consortium of public and private universities and colleges, UC, of course, CSU, and the community colleges, as the public institutions, and also Stanford, Caltech, and USC, as the private universities, and including the National Labs – the Berkeley National Lab has very strong energy programs – and industry partners as well.

This consortium will be considered by the PUC over the next month or so. I'm optimistic that they will make a decision over the next month or month and a half as to whether to support this institute. If approved, this would be a phenomenal enterprise. It would be funded

through ratepayer surcharges – let me tell you something about that; if you increase the bill on every ratepayer in the state of California by 50 cents, that corresponds to \$60 million a year – so this proposal would support this Institute for Climate Solutions for 10 years at \$600 million. The idea would be R, D, & D, research, development, and delivery. The first step would be to bring together the best minds in California and the best minds that we can bring in from all over the world to think about an energy road map, think about where we want to be 5, 10, 20 years from now, what are the technological and economic and public policy hurdles to get there on a scale of 2 years, 5 years, and 10 years, lay out that road map, and that will instruct how to fund research and training, hence we have the CSUs and the community colleges, research and training to prepare California to lead the world in the proper management of energy, both supply and demand, sources of energy and uses of energy, and integrate it in intelligent ways.

Looking forward to the future, it will also work on creating new educational programs and tools that will reach down into K-through-12 to prepare the next generation of folks either to work in the field or to simply be more conscious of the impacts of the way they're using energy in every area, heating, transportation, everything.

Let me wrap up with some thoughts on the issue of environmental sustainability and how it transcends generations. I started off by talking about Roger Revelle and the young Al Gore. We are holding this planet in trust for our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren. And I personally feel an obligation that my great-grandchildren and their great-grandchildren will grow up under the same blue skies I grew up under. This is to assure that following generations have the same world that we grew up in. Any of you who have traveled in other parts of the world, China for example, you know what I'm talking about. You don't see blue skies. We have the opportunities to lead here in California for the rest of the world. Each of us must begin to raise our own awareness and then sustain it through our lives.

Forty years ago, back in my generation, when I was sitting in the back row, a musician originating in my generation started an alternative rock band that took a pioneering role in warning about environmental degradation. If you had told me that the group Midnight Oil and Peter Garrett, who some of you may have heard of – I invite you to go to their Website and listen to their music – yes, Australian, you got it – if you had told me that Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil would be named Australia's Minister for the Environment, I wouldn't have believed it. But he was. He was named the Minister for the Environment in Australia just last year. The point is that in order to build a sustainable environment, we have to be sustainable ourselves, we have to sustain our own position on this issue and not let up.

Thanks for your attention. I look forward to blue skies, and I look forward to my grandchildren thanking you for blue skies. Thank you.

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