

Budget

What is being done at the Chancellor, System, and Regent level to address the ongoing budget crisis? Why does UCSC seem to be disproportionately impacted?

Is UCSC struggling more than other campuses budget-wise? How do we compare in layoffs to other campuses?

The Chancellors, President, and Regents are all advocating to state and federal officials about the importance of the UC in educating and employing Californians. They are also working to communicate the importance of the partnership between the federal government and universities that has historically provided funding for research and research infrastructure that could benefit the greater good and ensure our preeminence as a world research leader.

Generally speaking, UC Santa Cruz is not struggling more than other campuses. Some are planning larger percentage reductions for next FY, some less. Those with larger federal funding footprints are girding for larger reductions than they had previously planned. Almost all, if not all campuses had a structural core funds deficit, even before factoring in the impact of potential federal funding reductions.

How are the changes and actions by the federal government changing our budget situation? Will the federal changes/actions affect the planned budget cuts this year and in coming years? How long do you think our campus will be in a budgetary deficit?

Changes to the federal or state funding we receive will impact the budget framework and updates may need to be made. We do not yet know the scope of federal funding changes and cannot yet predict how they will impact our budget. Federal research funding cuts will impact our core funds budget to the extent it reduces our ability to cover costs for facilities and administration that supports research. And reductions in Pell grants could have impacts as well. We will continue to monitor these and any other impacts and make adjustments if/as needed.

Our current budget framework, if current assumptions hold and it's successfully implemented, would eliminate the deficit by 2028.

I saw the 19% cut mentioned in Vice Chancellor Reiskin's email from Jan 14. Lately I've been hearing there might be another cut on top of that. Is that true? I get that it depends on the division, but just in general—is the situation worse now than it was back in January, and are there gonna be more cuts than we thought?

At this time, we have not made changes to budget targets for FY26 or future years. We will continue to monitor federal changes and may need to make adjustments as they become clearer and more readily quantified.

What options have been explored for the Scotts Valley Center? This seems like a high cost, long term lease; would getting out of the lease benefit the campus budget?

The lease started in 2017 and does not expire until 2037. We cannot get out of the lease due to contractual restrictions, but are exploring subleasing options. Finding a sub-tenant is challenging due to a surplus of commercial office space available in the market since the pandemic but are actively seeking opportunities.

Why are administrators receiving pay increases in the midst of a budget crisis, as those of us at the university who make the least yet serve our students most directly are laid off?

Decisions about raises for non-represented employees are typically initiated by the UC Office of the President, which creates a [budget proposal](#) for the UC Regents that includes the proposed increase.

Employee Retention and Hiring

There is so much uncertainty regarding budget and potential layoffs. When will individuals know the certainty of their positions and/or layoffs and what level of transparency on this issue will be provided to the campus staff?

How can those fearful for their job fight to save positions campus-wide?

Each division has a budget reduction target for FY26, FY27, and FY28, which has been approved. This budget framework is subject to change if there are unexpected impacts on our budget. The FY26 reduction plans have been submitted and are now being enacted by division leaders. Divisions will work with respective ER reps to notify impacted staff. We work to protect employee privacy throughout the process. We are hiring in some critical positions, and we are working to prioritize impacted staff whose positions are eliminated for positions that are posted as exceptions to the hiring freeze.

This is a time of uncertainty and we wish we could provide a solution that would give folks more comfort. Unfortunately, as we discussed in the forum, there are so many unknowns facing the institution. We're doing all we can to prioritize reorganizations around retirements and voluntary separations to minimize impacts to filled positions.

Thank you for putting processes in place to help reassign those who have lost their UCSC jobs due to budgetary corrections. Will these reassignments be halted due to President Drake's hiring freeze? It seems "reassignments" are different from "hires". What is your perspective and intention for future actions?

No, even though there is a hiring freeze, critical positions and those related to health and safety can be posted through an exception process and the Transfer in Lieu of Layoff (TiLOL) process will continue. UCSC has a long history of taking meaningful action to preserve employment when possible. The TiLOL process will continue as long as there are vacant positions to fill.

Housing

What progress has been made about rebalancing the rules for allocating housing opportunities between staff and faculty? Historically, the rules have heavily favored faculty. Ed has previously said the rules should be balanced, because it is "employee housing" and shouldn't favor one group over the other.

Will faculty still get priority with employee housing?

On March 18, 2025, the CP/EVC issued a charge letter to form the Employee Housing Workgroup, which includes two representatives from the Staff Advisory Board. As part of that charge, the workgroup will be reviewing and providing feedback on proposed updates to the campus Employee Housing access guidelines. The updates will include a proposal for a more equitable distribution of employee housing between faculty and staff.

The starting point for the proposed changes to the Employee Housing access guidelines will be equal distribution, rather than prioritization for faculty or staff. However, this proposal needs to be reviewed by the Employee Housing Workgroup, which includes members from both the Academic Senate and Staff Advisory Board. The Employee Housing Workgroup will make a recommendation to the Chancellor. What the final distribution in the updated version of the access guidelines will be is still unknown at this time.

As a staff member who personally reached out multiple times over the two years I was eligible for the staff housing program, I found that identifying accessible housing was essentially dismissed. What metrics are being implemented to ensure that your prioritization process is truly equitable and doesn't favor one group over another? Additionally, considering the rental rates for units in the new construction, how will these apartments be made affordable—especially in light of what many staff members on this campus actually earn?

We have engaged a campus ADA Compliance Officer to assist in reviewing the current Employee Housing rental portfolio and access process, currently underway. Proposed changes to the access guidelines will include updates related to accessibility. Regarding rental rates for new construction, a new off campus employee housing rental project with 62 units is scheduled for start of operation in fall 2027. Seven units will be reserved for low-income households and twelve will be reserved for moderate-income households. Affordability is a top priority in existing and new employee housing programs. However, due to the need to cover new construction costs, not all units can be offered at deeply reduced rates and we need to take into consideration potential tax implications for the employee (imputed income) when setting rates.

Workload

The messaging has been doing less with less but this is clearly not aligned with reality as staff will have to do more with less as the budget cuts continue. When will the administration pivot and acknowledge that more work is being done by staff with less resources? To not do so is disingenuous and turns a blind eye to the extra work staff are doing to keep things going.

How is "doing less with less" truly going to be communicated to, received by, and impact students and their support networks?

A reorganization requires the review of job descriptions, workloads, and capacity. The effort is to create a systematic review, refinement, and improvement of existing workflows to enhance performance, align with best practices, or improve how we support our client workgroups. With these new tools being created, the hope is to help our workforce feel supported and provide the tools and resources needed to be successful. Even with a reorganization plan that seems like it will work on paper, it's going to be important to continue to assess workloads and the impacts of changes on staff. The people closest to the work are going to have the best idea about what those issues are, and being able to talk with your supervisor candidly will be important for staff. An important part of this work that will have to happen in every unit is that we have to decide what we will stop doing and where we can streamline.

This will be an ongoing challenge as we work toward budget sustainability. The answers are going to be a little different in every unit, depending on the type of work.

Community Building

With the recent passage of AB 2821 amending California Education Code § 67312, which includes a formal request for the University of California to establish a Disability Access and Compliance Training Program for faculty, staff, and students, I wanted to ask: what steps are currently being taken—or are planned—to align with this request and implement such a training program across our campus?

Our campus collaborates with UCOP on all required systemwide training. UCOP has just hired an inaugural Systemwide Disability Rights Director, Wendy Tobias who will start on May 6. We will be working closely with OP to meet the January 2026 implementation deadline.

We have principles of community but lack training on how to build community. Has L&D looked into building trainings on this?

The principles of community guide ALL of our training content, and are featured in many, including popular offerings like the EDGE Management Series, Navigating Difficult Conversations, Value Driven Work, Psychological Safety, Conflict Management, Teambuilding, and many more. L&D's goal is to support the campus's mission," promoting and protecting an environment that values and supports every person in an atmosphere of civility, honesty, cooperation, professionalism, and fairness." You can find a catalog of workshops on the L&D website, or reach out to Learning & Development at learninganddevelopment@ucsc.edu

What is the University's official position on collecting student pronoun data? Some believe that systems like UCPATH and AIS aren't doing enough to gather this demographic information, while others question whether it should be collected at all, given the current climate.

UC has no official position on pronouns, but policy indicates it can be an option at each campus.

UC GRLN Policy indicates "Pronouns — Locations may choose to add fields for pronouns, so that they may be used on class rosters, correspondence and other locations."

At UCSC, providing pronouns in MyUCSC is an option available to students, staff, and faculty. Just like in Zoom or email signatures, faculty, staff, and students have the option to make an individual decision to add their pronouns to facilitate respectful communication, such as in a class or other settings.

The campus strives to create an open and inclusive community. This has been a historical practice at UCSC since 2016 and was referenced in communications about this new campus directory feature announced to students (June 25, 2020) and to staff and faculty (February 16, 2021) as it became available.

Other

We get paid rural pay, so what are the benefits offered to staff at a rural campus? We have doctor shortages and need to travel long distance to even use our PPO medical benefits. Also many of us have issues with power outages, flooded or unusable roads, mold in our rentals, and we need farm animal care/insurance in addition to child care or pet care in some cases. So overall how are the needs of rural staffers being addressed and acknowledged?

The UC salary structures are determined by utilizing information provided in nationwide salary surveys and includes building in appropriate market-based differences in pay scales based on geographical labor market rates, not cost of living. UCSC's cost of labor is approximately 15% above the national average. Which means our salary scales should be set 15% above the market average. Prior to FY23-24, our salary scales were set at 10% above the national average. Effective 7/1/2023, our salary scales were increased by 8.7% to align with the cost of labor and keep pace with inflation and effective 7/1/2024, our salary scales were increased by 3.5% to keep pace with inflation.

There is no "rural" pay classification.

The University only maintains roads and rental properties on campus and issues related to county or city roads and issues with landlords will have to be addressed directly with those who have the authority to make changes like government officials and landlords.

UC offers employees the option to purchase pet insurance through Nationwide Pet Insurance with preferred pricing. More information can be found at; <https://www.petinsurance.com/uc/>

In an effort to provide employees with more health care options, [UC Santa Cruz partnered with UCSF Health](#) to bring primary care services to employees with UC Health Plans in the Santa Cruz region. Dr. Elisa Washburn and Dr. Andrew Lewis are part of UCSF Health, and are in-network with most major health plans, including UC Health Plans and Medicare. Their offices are located at:

1665 Dominican Way, Suite 224

Santa Cruz, CA 59060

831-246-8772

Visit: <https://ucsf-familymedicine.ubcp.org/>

In this person's opinion, all of the political content coming out from the uc system seems to be geared towards one side of the political parties. This is not a safe feeling for those that may have different views that don't pick a side but decide based on topic at hand. What are you doing to make everyone feel safe if they have a different opinion than the masses?

UC Santa Cruz and the UC System do not support a particular political party, but you may find yourself discussing issues that impact your work that are the result of political actions. Those conversations do need to happen and it's important that everyone is respectful of viewpoints while ensuring we continue our work. If you feel uncomfortable or as though your perspective is not being respected, you can always talk with your manager, the Ombuds or consult with EEP.

With everything coming down from both the federal and state levels lately, it feels like a lot to keep up with. Cindy, how are you doing through all of it?

One of the best things about UC Santa Cruz is the way that people come together to support each other. This is true of the staff in the chancellor's office and my leadership team who are especially helpful with managing challenges and issues related to their areas of expertise.

Chancellor, First, thank you for hosting these forums! How do you personally stay grounded and focused during periods of significant change?

I relax every day by walking our dog, Holly. She is always so glad to see me when I come home at the end of the day. I benefit so much from the support of my family and friends. Our grandkids are 7 and 9 and spending time with them helps me keep at the front of my mind what is truly important - that is the people in my life, including all of UCSC's amazing employees, students and alumni.

It's been a challenging year, and it seems like not everyone sees things from the same perspective. Can you share one small win or moment from this year that made you feel proud or hopeful?

I am so excited by the progress we are making in building housing. Every time I see the crane at Kresge from afar or drive by the new family housing and our project on Delaware, I feel proud of the work the campus is doing to support our students and employees. By fall 2026 we will have 120 new apartments for student families, a new childcare center, new housing at Kresge for 600 students, and apartments on Delaware Ave for 400 students and over 60 employees. What a difference that will make.