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UCSD News

Literature Community Reacts to Cancer Cluster, Stages Protest

SOURCE: *The Guardian*
David Harvey

Residents of the Literature Building, home to a suspected cancer cluster — including eight cases of breast cancer since 2000 — staged a demonstration Feb. 17 in response to the university’s slow reaction to a report linking abnormally powerful, electromagnetic fields generated by the building’s elevator system to the high rate of cancer in longtime employees.

The protest, organized by professors John D. Blanco, Dennis Childs and Luis Martin Cabrera, led nearly 100 department affiliates from their classrooms and offices across campus, past Geisel Library, to arrive at the office of Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. There, demonstrators delivered a

petition — signed by more than 1,300 concerned citizens — that called on Fox to take immediate action.

Blanco read the petition’s introduction directly to the chancellor.

“We know the administration is capable of doing the right thing,” he read aloud. “But until the administration takes action, many of us cannot

in good conscience disavow the crisis of safety in the Literature Building, which has led to a fundamental crisis of confidence in your leadership.”

In July 2008, responding to a study conducted by epidemiologist and UCSD professor Cedric Garland, the university vacated areas with risk of exposure to

see *Literature*, pg 3



Joseph Hol/Guardian

Bold protesters march down Library Walk carrying signs and a coffin.

UCSD Budget News

Chancellor Outlines Campus Priorities Under Tight Budget

SOURCE: *The Guardian*
Yelena Akopian

Chancellor Marye Anne Fox hosted a town-hall meeting where she discussed the impact of the budget crisis at UCSD and opened the floor to faculty and staff concerned about the survival of vital department programs.

“Every unit on every campus will be affected,” Fox said. “We’re actively reviewing campus projects and trying to complete or delay them. These are not things we feel comfortable with, or things that we want to do.”

As state funding for higher education continues to decrease, the university has attempted

see *Budget*, pg. 2

Budget, from page 1

to deal with its shrinking budget through cuts to student enrollment, a voluntary employee buyout program, suspension of academic enrichment programs, postponement of ladder-rank faculty recruitments and implementation of soft-hiring freezes.

Fox listed several key areas of state-funding allocation that will most likely be saved from the chopping block.

“Cuts must have minimal impact on classroom and academic laboratory instruction,” Fox said. “We have to protect our students. Campus diversity efforts, including outreach to public schools, must remain intact. Patient care and environmental health and safety cannot be compromised. Administrative efficiencies will be followed rigorously.”

Fox also promised that maintaining job security for campus employees would be a top priority for UCSD.

“We’re going to do everything we can to avoid layoffs — whether we’re going to be able to do it, I can’t tell you,” Fox said.

In response to concerns raised by several students and a representative from the UCSD Chicano/Latino Concilio about retaining minority faculty and students, Fox stressed the importance of supporting campus diversity programs.

“Diversity is part of our heart and soul, and relevant to the success of this university,” Fox said. “We need to keep [diversity programs] intact. Intact does not mean that there won’t be cuts. It’s very likely that every unit is going to be cut on some level, but I can promise that there will be a high priority on diversity activities.

Senior Vice Chancellor Paul W. Drake promised that diversity efforts will be redoubled.

Addressing several concerns about parking and public access to the campus, Transportation and Parking Services Director Brian d’Autremont said that the university plans to maintain — and even expand — public transportation operations.

“We’ve tripled the size of [the] free bus program, added subsidies, frozen prices,” d’Autremont said. “Recently we froze parking increases ... We’re the only UC that’s done that. [These initiatives are] very salient demonstrations of the university trying to meet the needs of people coming

into campus.”

Fox also announced the launch of budgetline.ucsd.edu, a new Web site providing budget-related resources and news.

Opinion: Admin Should Stick to its Green Roots

SOURCE: *The Guardian*

Trevor Cox

The university may shelve a long-standing campus green project in favor of restoring a surface parking lot — totally contradicting its goals for environmental sustainability.

UCSD Physical Planning specialists drafted a plan 15 years ago for a four-phase sustainable open space consisting of trees, plants and pathways to be completed within Eleanor Roosevelt College, called the Wedge.

The first three phases of the plan were completed over the last six years (phases one and two in 2003 with the completion of ERC, and phase three in 2007 with the completion of the Rady School of Management). Each phase of the project found funding from varying sources, corresponding with the beneficiaries of the specific phase.

Phase three, for instance, cost roughly \$1.5 million by its completion in 2007 and was funded equally by Academic Affairs and campus resources. The fourth and final phase was to be completed with the new North Campus transfer-student housing by this June.

The area (dubbed Wedge Four) was paved 20 years ago and has been used as a surface parking lot. It presently serves as a construction lay-down for the North Campus housing development. But in the absence of sufficient funding for the estimated \$2 million project, the administration has suggested the space be used as a temporary surface lot — a prospect that might not seem so underhanded were it not the opposite of the space’s intended use.

Brian Gregory, assistant vice chancellor for Strategic Campus Resource Initiatives, and Brian D’Autremont, director of Parking Transportation and Services, discussed giving the space to Parking and Transportation Services for five years, to create a temporary surface lot. The lot would have 125 to 150 spots for “S” and “B”

Cuts must have minimal impact on classroom and academic laboratory instruction. - Chancellor Fox

see Wedge, pg. 3

Literature Building, from page 1

high EMF levels, and later replaced elevator motor devices and fluorescent light fixtures with equipment to reduce these levels.

Still, protestors expressed dissatisfaction with anything but a comprehensive facelift of the building — or permanent relocation — at a presentation held Feb. 10 by epidemiologist and UCLA professor Leeka Kheifets, who was selected by the university to perform a follow-up investigation on the building's potential dangers.

"Give these people a new building," said Stan Melad, son to a former staff member who passed away after being diagnosed with breast cancer. "These people just want to work somewhere safe; let's not drag this out."

Childs — concerned about Kheifets' affiliation with the Electric Power Research Institute, an independent nonprofit organization funded in large part by companies in the electric utility industry — questioned her funding sources. However, Kheifets insisted on the organization's independence and emphasized that without the work of the EPRI, there would be scarce, if any, research on the connection between cancer and EMF.

On Feb. 12, the two elevators suspected of causing elevated EMF levels were shut down by administrators from general use, and on Feb. 17, after the demonstration, the elevators were blocked by a mock coffin wrapped with pink ribbon and quarantined with caution tape by protesters.

According to Environment, Health and Safety Director Steve Benedict, the university is making EMF-measuring equipment available to anyone entering the Literature Building.

EHS is also hosting a Web site, blink.ucsd.edu/go/EHS-LIT, where all related documentation — as well as a selection of studies on both EMF and breast cancer — is posted.

The Web site is part of the administration's effort to increase the investigation's transparency, Benedict said.

Graduate student Soren Frohlich, a member of the department committee tasked with representing residents' interests in regard to the study, said that while transparency is important, it doesn't mean much if the university isn't taking the right actions.

**Give these people a new building.
These people just want to work
somewhere safe. - Stan Melad**

Wedge, from page 2

permit holders. According to Gregory, the university is committed to completing Wedge Four but lacks sufficient funding.

Though every surface lot is intended to be a temporary placeholder, many of the spaces lack future building plans, making them temporary strictly in theory. There's no guarantee that a temporary Wedge Four surface lot wouldn't be accepted as permanent time.

Restoring another surface lot would reveal the hypocrisy of both our supposedly green university and P&TS. P&TS promotes alternative forms of transit, having tripled the size of its free bus program with plans for route expansion.

But nothing with the lot is final yet. D'Autremont said P&TS is interested in using the area as a surface lot.

The student-run Social & Environmental Sustainability Committee hopes to prevent Wedge Four from becoming a surface lot. On Feb. 25, the A.S. Council approved its resolution, which provided alternatives to converting the space into a parking lot.

One alternative was seeking Wedge Four funding from campus departments such as Physical Planning, and from green technology businesses before abandoning the project.

Another possibility allows student groups to compete to use the land temporarily for sustainable purposes, such as an urban farm or garden, which would effectively maintain the Wedge's primary goal at minimal cost to the university.

Were the administration committed to increasing sustainability, solutions like these would have been investigated and researched before the P&TS possibility was even discussed.

Lacking the full \$2 million for Wedge Four's concept is no excuse to cast aside sustainability plans; this final phase was, after all, supposed to be completed in a few months' time.

Asking student orgs to pitch cost-effective, temporary alternatives to the current Wedge Four concept and considering those suggestions would advance sustainability goals without compromise.

Though we are facing economic hardship, and certain projects lack funding, that's no justification for throwing our ideals to the wind.

Even if we can't complete Wedge Four right now, we won't see progress if we stall plans — and we cannot justly call UCSD a leader in sustainability if we allow Wedge Four to become another surface lot.



In Case You Missed It: The Academy Awards

The Sexiest Man Alive, Aussie Hugh Jackman, hosted the 81st Annual Academy Awards on Feb. 22. The biggest surprise of the night was Mickey Rourke *not* taking the Best Actor award for his role in *The Wrestler*, though Sean Penn gave his good friend a nod during his acceptance speech. Penn also managed to touch on the Prop 8 debate during his speech, strongly voicing his opinion:

“I think that it is a good time for those who voted for the ban against gay marriage to sit and reflect, and anticipate their great shame, and the shame in their grandchildren’s eyes if they continue that way of support. We’ve got to have equal rights for everyone.”

Not to overlook a stirring musical vendetta by Jackman, Beyoncé and Zack Efron, nor to disregard a hilarious segment from *Pineapple Express* co-stars James Franco and Seth Rogen, but here’s a list of the big winners (*Slumdog* was the night’s star, taking away eight Oscars):

Writing (Original Screenplay): *MILK*

Writing (Adapted Screenplay): *Slumdog Millionaire*

Actress in a Supporting Role: Penelope Cruz (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*)

Actor in a Supporting Role: Heath Ledger (*The Dark Knight*)

Actress in a Leading Role: Kate Winslet (*The Reader*)

Actor in a Leading Role: Sean Penn (*MILK*)

Best Picture: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Sun God Festival An Overall Success

The 27th Annual Sun God Festival took place on Friday, May 15.

Despite a ridiculously long wait for wristbands that started at the Marshall tennis courts and ended at the Warren Mall, the festival went off without a hitch.

N.E.R.D.

The trio, comprised of Pharrell Williams, Chad Hugo and Shay Haley, put on a charismatic performance. Pharrell pulled multiple girls up on stage and danced with them as the crowd sang along.

Girl Talk

Gregg Gillis, a former biomedical engineering major from Pittsburgh, Penn., ignited the Coachella-sized dance tent with continuous beats. Toilet paper rolls flew over the crowd.

Iron & Wine

With his name taken from a dietary supplement he found in a general store, folk-rock singer Samuel Beam graced the stage earlier in the day.

Motion City Soundtrack

Formed in 1997, this pop-rock band from Minneapolis, Minn. delivered an upbeat set while the crowd sang along and some festival-goers fell down in the front row.

Sara Bareilles

Influenced by artists such as Ben Gibbard, the Police and Counting Crows, this California-native was a hit at the festival. She performed almost her entire album and praised the San Diego crowd as one of her favorites.

Also performed: Augustana, The Cool Kids, Grand Ole Party, Rootbeer