Parents might be wondering how the California budget crisis has impacted the quality of life of their students. Even under the current constraints, UCSB has been working to make improvements that will resolve a number of ongoing issues exacerbated by the budget cuts. Yet, throughout this year, it has not been uncommon to hear students complain about the challenges of getting into the classes of their choice or express fears of the situation worsening.

In an effort to improve the student experience, the College of Letters and Science has reviewed available enrollment data and made some surprising discoveries. The average course load per student this quarter was at a healthy 14.65 units. While this figure is slightly lower than the 15.03 units per student in winter ’09, it is still higher than the winter ’08 average of 14.59 units. Additionally, increasing numbers of students are taking more than the minimum course load. While there was approximately a half percent increase (.42%) in the number of students with less than 12 units this quarter compared to winter ’09, the total number of students taking more than 12 units this year was higher by many hundreds of students than the previous two years. In short, while it’s true that the university is experiencing significant resource limitations, the numbers are encouraging.

So what seems to be happening? One of the factors that may be contributing to students’ difficulties is the decreased availability of instructors, which has led academic administrators to increase individual class size while reducing the number of times each course is offered. Therefore, even where the number of seats available for each course has remained the same or increased, the reduction in time slots has made it harder for students to work around their scheduling conflicts.

The colleges have launched a number of initiatives to minimize the impact of this situation and improve the student enrollment experience. Along with numerous schedule planning workshops offered through the College of Letters and Science, students now have access to better online tools for curriculum planning and scheduling, including the Gaucho On-Line Data (GOLD) system, a new course waitlist system, and the Degree Audit System (DARS). Students will soon have access to an online version of the catalog and schedule of classes, which will offer improved searchability and include real-time information on the number of available classes and spaces. College and Registrar administrators have also proposed major changes to classroom scheduling policy to be implemented in fall 2010 with the goal of improving students’ ability to register for their desired classes. With this proposal, the Office of the Registrar is encouraging academic departments to standardize course lengths and start times, thereby reducing course overlaps; to limit course offerings in the prime-time, high-traffic periods to no more than 50%; and to spread more classes into Friday time slots, which are generally underutilized.

How can parents help their students? Encouraging them to follow best practices and investigate all the available resources is the first step. The College strongly recommends that students plan their curriculum well in advance by using the degree audit system and talking with their college and major advisors. Parents should also remind their students to use their first registration pass time – and use it wisely – as this is the best opportunity they have to ensure they are enrolled in critical, required classes.

According to Mary Nisbet, acting dean in Letters and Science, faculty and students have done a great job of keeping pace with change at UCSB: “This has been a transition year and students have had to be really strategic in planning their education. The reason our numbers look as good as they do is because students have worked hard to adapt and they deserve a lot of credit for this.” About the challenges faced by UCSB with regard to limited resources, she concludes: “This is still a great school. You can still get the great education you want here and we’re committed to keeping it that way.”
Budget Update: Impact on Student Services

IN THE FALL edition of Campus Connection, we reported on the serious impact of the state’s financial crisis on UCSB and its student services, noting that our campus is dealing with a $45 million budget deficit during 2009-2010. Salary reduction and furlough programs have covered $15 million of this year’s shortfall, but a substantial funding deficit remains to be filled through direct cuts to departments.

UCSB’s Division of Student Affairs has responded to our ongoing budget reductions by imposing a freeze on creating new staff positions and refilling vacant positions, by cutting expenditures on travel and supplies, by reducing programs and hours of service, and by trading paper for online processes wherever possible. We have also implemented sustainability projects to cut utility and other overhead costs and combined management and administrative staffing across departments. In the face of such massive funding losses, however, other actions, including layoffs, may still be necessary. One foremost concern as we face these ongoing staffing reductions is maintaining our student mental health, crisis response, and disabled student services at adequate levels.

In addition to lower budgets and reduced staffing, Student Affairs is also experiencing substantial personnel changes as the Baby Boomers hit retirement age. During the last year and a half, the Division of Student Affairs has lost 29 staff to retirement alone, approximately 8% of our workforce, including some of our key senior leadership. While these retirees left UCSB with 650 years of accumulated wisdom and know-how, we have for some years now been planning for such a scenario with comprehensive succession planning that includes management internships, professional development programs, and a broad effort to transmit our student-centered values, principles, and practices to Student Affairs’ new staff and emerging leadership. We want to assure parents and students that, despite the many changes we are experiencing, we care deeply about the campus environment, and we remain committed to providing a high-quality experience for all our students.

Some good news on the horizon is that Governor Schwarzenegger’s budget proposal for 2010-11 does restore $370 million to the University of California, including $51.3 million to fund enrollments. While this is a promising sign, some of the funding is contingent on federal stimulus money, and the total still falls well below the $913 million needed to offset UC’s current budget shortfall. The next step in the budgeting process is for the legislature to review the governor’s proposal and approve it or offer revisions. Another highlight of the governor’s budget is the inclusion of funding for Cal Grants (again contingent on federal money), which means that eligible low-income students will receive enough money from this state program to cover the recently approved mid-year and 2010-11 UC fee increases. Additionally, under an expanded UC Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, California undergraduates with household incomes of $70,000 and lower will have all their systemwide fees covered by grants if they are eligible for financial aid, and most will receive additional grant support for other educational expenses. More information about this plan, including how to access aid, is available at http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/blueandgold/.

Governor Schwarzenegger has also proposed an amendment to the state constitution to shift money from prisons to higher education. This amendment proposes to guarantee that the University of California and California State University systems together would receive no less than 10 percent of the state’s general fund revenue. If implemented, such a proposal would stabilize the UC’s budget and help maintain affordability, access, and excellence – including providing support for our many important programs and services for students. We are hopeful about the governor’s budget and other proposals to provide a stable funding stream for California higher education. We encourage you, our UC parents, to become educated about the issues and involved in advocacy for the University of California at the state level. More information is available at http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/budget/.

Career Tips for Web-Savvy Job Seekers

ON A WARM night in 2006, as Storke Tower’s bells tolled 12 midnight, more than 100 students dressed as zombies began a walking performance in the streets of Isla Vista. The moon was full, the “zombie flash mob” was large, and more than one late-night reveler got quite a scare. Most of these zombies had never met one another. They learned about the zombie mob on the then nascent Facebook.com site.

It is not likely that the zombie incident could have been organized in the way that parents of UCSB students organized rallies and gatherings during their college years. Social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, and the emerging location-based tools like Foursquare.com, are now very compatible with the student experience. In many ways, these tools represent one of the new faces of student leadership, doubling as forums for political and community engagement, as recent electoral and international relief campaigns have shown. They can be used to organize large-scale events and impromptu class discussions, obtain information about professors, find roommates, learn about concerts and lectures – and yes, even find jobs.

Savvy, media-aware job seekers can benefit greatly from tools that include social components. It’s easier than ever to gauge the culture of a future workplace by using tools like Glassdoor.com and Careerinsider.vault.com. In addition to professionally written content, these sites feature information submitted by actual employees of various companies. Information carefully collected from these sources can make a big difference as a job seeker crafts a cover letter or interviews for a position.

UCSB students need to be proactive about their “social graph,” that is, what current and potential employers and community members can learn about them through an online search. Career Services is giving two pieces of advice to all UCSB students. First, if you “play” on Facebook or MySpace, keep your privacy settings locked down tight, be sure you understand the site policies, and monitor how they change over time. Second, use social media to your advantage by building a profile that reflects the best, most professional parts of your life. LinkedIn.com is a great place to create your personal “brand” – in other words, to start professionalizing your image on the web. Google’s “profile” feature at www.google.com/profile is another great way you can, essentially, control what people first learn about you when they type in your name during a search.

Is it too early for students to use professional networking sites like LinkedIn? Not at all. To learn more about leveraging the power of social media for their careers, students are welcome to visit UCSB’s Career Services in person or online at http://career.ucsb.edu/. They can also call (805) 893-4412 to schedule an appointment with a career counselor.
FAQs: Financial Aid Information

If a student has not yet applied for financial aid for the 2010-2011 academic year, is it too late?
No, although the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) priority filing deadline for 2010-2011 financial aid was March 2, 2010, students can still apply for financial aid for the 2010-2011 academic year to be considered for the Pell Grant, Direct Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), and the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUs). The FAFSA application is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. UCSC’s school code number is 001320.

If a student has already applied for financial aid for 2010-2011, when will he or she receive an offer of financial aid?
If additional documentation is required to verify the accuracy of the FAFSA information, an email will be sent in April or May directing the student to check his or her “Aid Status” on the Financial Aid Office website (www.finaid.ucsb.edu). When all requested documents are received, they will be reviewed and a final offer of financial aid will be created. At that point, the student will be sent another email with directions to view the Financial Aid Award Letter (FAAL) on the website.

How does a student receive financial aid?
Most of the types of aid that a student has accepted will be credited to the student's account with the UCSC Billing Office (BARC). If the aid placed on the student's BARC account does not cover all of the institutional charges, he or she will be expected to pay the difference by the fall quarter fee deadline of September 15, 2010.

What is the PLUS Loan?
Parents may borrow a PLUS Loan on behalf of their dependent undergraduate student to help fund educational expenses. A PLUS Loan may be a type of loan offered on the student’s Financial Aid Award Letter. The interest rate is fixed at 7.9%. Repayment begins 60 days after the last disbursement of the loan. Parent PLUS loan borrowers may choose to have repayment deferred while the student is enrolled and for an additional six months after the student is no longer enrolled. Interest that accrues during these periods will be capitalized if not paid by the borrower. All PLUS Loan applicants must pass a credit check to have their loan approved.

Is financial aid available for Summer Session 2010?
Summer session financial aid (grants and loans) will be available only to eligible incoming freshmen, transfer and continuing UCSC undergraduate students who are in good academic standing and who have a complete 2009-2010 FAFSA on file with the UCSC Financial Aid Office. To apply, a student must submit a Summer Session 2010 Financial Aid Application (which will be available on the Financial Aid Office website on April 13, 2010). The priority filing deadline for the Summer Session 2010 Financial Aid Application is May 28, 2010.

Changing Lives Through Scholarship Support

In these difficult economic times, as family incomes shrink and educational costs increase, scholarships are more important than ever. Both need- and merit-based scholarships help to maintain the spirit and reality of public education by enabling students and families, regardless of their economic circumstances, to realize the dream of higher education. Scholarships also ensure the excellence, high quality, and diversity of UC Santa Barbara’s student body.

In the last two years alone, Gauchos parents, alumni and friends gave more than $1.7 million to the Office of Financial Aid to help students and families afford a UC Santa Barbara education. Our heartfelt appreciation to all who donated so generously to scholarships at UC Santa Barbara.

If you would like to join those giving to scholarships, please visit http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/giving/sa/ to make your gift online or contact Laurie Hoyle, executive director of Student Affairs Grants and Development, at laurie.hoyle@sa.ucsb.edu or (805) 893-5037. For information about scholarships at UC Santa Barbara, please visit the Office of Financial Aid website at http://www.finaid.ucsb.edu/Scholarships.asp.

Your dollars to scholarships change lives. Thank you for considering a gift today.

Campus Connection

Campus Connection is published by the University of California, Santa Barbara, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, to provide news and resources to the parents and families of UCSC undergraduates.

The University of California, Santa Barbara and the Division of Student Affairs recognize the diversity of our society and the many important people who have become “parents” to our students; these include stepmothers, stepfathers, uncles, aunts, grandparents, siblings, friends and others who play a significant and supportive role in the lives and successes of UCSC undergraduates.

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www.sa.ucsb.edu/parentnewsletter

SCHOLARSHIP LEADERSHIP CITIZENSHIP
**Student Affairs is Pleased to Welcome...**

Kirsten Gabriel, PhD, is a clinical psychologist at Counseling Services, where she provides assessment and psychotherapy for UCSB students. She completed her doctoral training in clinical psychology at the University of Georgia and interned at the University of Maine Counseling Center. Prior to coming to UCSB, Dr. Gabriel worked at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Counseling Center. Although she is a generalist by training, she has specialized in working with combat veterans and their families. Dr. Gabriel also leads mindfulness/yoga-based cognitive therapy groups for depression and anxiety. She and her partner, UCSB Chief of Police Dustin Olson, enjoy long walks with their dog.

Barry Mills, MD, PhD, joined Student Health as a psychiatrist earlier this year. He is a former member of the Harvard University faculty and came to UCSB from Massachusetts, where he was a medical director at Cambridge Health Alliance. Dr. Mills is a recipient of the Rappaport and Laughlin Fellowships from the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law and the American College of Psychiatrists. In addition to his medical training, Dr. Mills holds a PhD in cultural studies. He is originally from Texas, where he was a competitive athlete. Outside of work, Dr. Mills is an avid motorcyclist, husband, and father of three children in college.

Linda Nuru, PhD, is the student and parent liaison and associate director of operations in the Office of Student Life. As student and parent liaison, Linda assists students and their parents who are experiencing crisis or emergency situations. Linda completed a master’s degree equivalent at the University of Rome in Italy and an MA/PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, where she also taught courses in the English department and worked in the residential living system. Before coming to UCSB, she held training, personnel, and operations management positions at Google. Linda’s transition into Student Affairs was motivated by her long-time passion and dedication to holistic personal, staff, and student development. Linda was born on the island of Sardinia and has divided her years equally between Italy and the United States.

Dustin Olson, MS, is the new chief of police at UCSB. He completed his master’s degree in crisis and emergency management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and attended the FBI National Academy. Chief Olson served in the Marine Corps for 10 years and most recently worked as the assistant chief of police at UNLV. He is committed to the tenets of community policing and actively collaborates with members of the campus community to promote public safety. He has published articles and given national workshops on sexual assault in college, emergency notification systems, and helping students of concern. He and his partner, Dr. Kirsten Gabriel, enjoy long walks with their dog.

Ryan Sims is the assistant coordinator of student mental health services in the Dean of Students Office. Ryan serves as a primary contact for members of the campus community who are seeking support for students with mental health issues and assists various departments in coordinating their efforts to help those students. Ryan also directs UCSB’s mental health peer program (i.e., the mental health interns) and is the staff advisor to Active Minds. Ryan received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of San Diego and teaching credentials from the University of La Verne. He is well on his way to completing master’s degrees in education at the University of La Verne and in counseling psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute. Before coming to UCSB, Ryan worked in the Santa Barbara community as a social studies teacher at Carpinteria High School, a marriage and family therapist trainee at a nonprofit community clinic, and an instructor for the Jail Prevention Program at the Santa Barbara County Jail.

**Mental Health Programs Reach Out Across Campus**

**The Mental Health Interns (UCSB's mental health peer program) and Active Minds (the local branch of the national student organization) have been working to reduce stigma and promote awareness about mental health issues across campus. Advised by Ryan Sims, assistant coordinator of student mental health services, both groups have launched a number of exciting programs to accomplish these goals.**

The mental health interns designed and implemented a campus-wide mental health awareness campaign this year. Over the course of five months, they ran more than 30 ads in The Daily Nexus, the campus newspaper, each of which highlighted a mental health-related topic and provided students with information on where to find resources and support. In addition, the mental health interns delivered presentations on depression, anxiety, and available campus resources, which were attended by hundreds of students. They are currently working on sponsoring a mental health public speaker for the culminating event of Mental Health Awareness Week this spring.

UCSB’s chapter of Active Minds received a generous scholarship from the national organization to attend its 2009 Mental Health on Campus conference at George Washington University. Motivated by a conference workshop provided by Student Veterans of America, a growing student organization and veteran advocacy group, Active Minds is organizing UCSB’s first annual “Veteran Classic” basketball tournament, scheduled to tip off later this year. The tournament hopes to raise funds for veteran charities and promote mental health awareness in the veteran community on campus. Active Minds also sponsored an event that brought to UCSB an inspirational guest speaker, Jordan Burnham, who shared his own powerful story of healing and hope after a long struggle with depression.

To learn more and become involved with these student-led initiatives, students can visit their Facebook pages under “UCSB Mental Health Interns” and “UCSB Active Minds.” For information on UCSB’s mental health response resources, visit http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/distressedstudentsguide/.

**Voter Registration at UCSB**

**COMING OFF THE HEELS of a highly successful 2008 presidential voter registration drive that netted nearly 11,000 registrants and resulted in UCSB’s earning the title of national Ultimate College Bowl champs, the Voter Registration Volunteer Coalition (VRVC) is gearing up once again for a major registration drive and get-out-the-vote campaign this spring.**

Long supported by federal legislation requiring higher education institutions make a “good faith effort” to distribute voter registration forms to all enrolled students, UCSB provides students with several options for registering to vote both in person and online. Student volunteers, who make up the non-partisan Coalition, plan to conduct registration in residence halls, classrooms, and highly trafficked areas of campus. They will also be present at various student activities and campus events and will canvass door-to-door in the Isla Vista community. With the recent passage of California Senate Bill No. 854—Chapter 481, state-funded higher education institutions—community colleges, California State University, and the University of California—are required to allow students to request voter registration materials online through a link in their course registration system. As a result of this new legislation, UCSB students are able to request a voter registration form on the UCSB Gaucho On-Line Data (GolD) system at the same time that they are searching and registering for academic classes. A direct link to the California Secretary of State website allows students to fill out the National voter registration system. As a result of this new legislation, UCSB students are able to request a voter registration form online through a link in their course registration system.

In anticipation of California’s primary election to select major party candidates for the office of governor, the VRVC will launch its campus voter registration drive on March 29, when students return from spring break. The voter registration deadline for the June 8 primary election is Monday, May 24.

The Coalition campaign, which is spearheaded by voter registration interns Beth Goodman and David Preciado, aims to remind students of their critical responsibility to deliver their message to Sacramento at a time when the University of California faces great challenges in order to maintain educational quality, access, and research. Electing a new governor is an important step towards putting California’s commitment to higher education back on track.
The United States Census 2010 is now upon us, and Isla Vista households should each have received a questionnaire on March 15. Students living away from home most of the year should complete their own questionnaires to avoid being counted twice (or not at all) in the census. Each rental household can fill out just one census form for everyone's information. If a household didn't receive a census form, tenants can find one at a local Be Counted site in Isla Vista. Please encourage your student to participate to ensure that Isla Vista benefits from an accurate census count.

Billions of dollars in federal funds are awarded annually to states and communities based on census data for transportation, public safety, medical care, and road repairs. Census data also affects college tuition grant and loan programs and informs important research done by college faculty, students, and community leaders. For more information, please visit www.countyofsanta.barb.org/2010census and http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/census/2010census_CountMeIV.php.

Please keep in mind that thousands of graduating seniors will be inviting family and friends to the commencement ceremonies. Students should limit their number of guests to a maximum of six to help maintain a high level of comfort and decorum. For more information, call the commencement hotline at (805) 893-8289, send an email to commencement@sa.ucsb.edu, or visit the website at www.ia.ucsb.edu/commencement/. for accommodations information visit www.ia.ucsb.edu/commencement/accessibility. for more information, call the commencement hotline at (805) 893-8289, send an email to commencement@sa.ucsb.edu, or visit the website at www.ia.ucsb.edu/commencement/. for more information, call the commencement hotline at (805) 893-8289, send an email to commencement@sa.ucsb.edu, or visit the website at www.ia.ucsb.edu/commencement/.

UCSB Campus Calendar: http://events.ucsb.edu/calendar/
UCSB Home: http://www.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-8000
Campus Connection Newsletter: http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/parentnewsletter
Campus Learning Assistance Services: http://www.clas.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-3269
Associated Students: http://www.as.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-2566
Counseling Services: http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/ or call 4411
Career Services: http://career.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-4412
Division of Student Affairs: http://www.sa.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-3651
Educational Opportunity Program: http://www.ucsb.edu/eop or call (805) 893-3235
Financial Aid Office: http://www.fnaid.ucsb.edu/ or call (805) 893-2432
Gauchos Parents: http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/parents
Housing & Residential Services: http://www.housing.ucsb.edu or call (805) 893-2760
Office of the Registrar: http://www.registrar.ucsb.edu/ or call (805) 893-3592
Office of Student Life: http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/osl or call (805) 893-4569
Orientation Programs: http://www.ucsb.edu/orientation/ or call (805) 893-3443
Student Health Service: http://www.ucsb.edu/studenthealth/ or call (805) 893-3371
UCSB Bookstore: http://www.bookstore.ucsb.edu/ or call (805) 893-3271
UCSB Wellness Program: http://wellness.sa.ucsb.edu/