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March 16, 2007

Executive Dean Pat O'Brien  
UCLA College  
2300 Murphy Hall  
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Dear Executive Dean O'Brien,

I strongly support the continuation of the Instructional Enhancement Initiative (IEI) course material fee. Since its inception it has provided the division with a sustained budget to equip the student and instructional computing labs, and to mount the Course Web site program. These funds have equipped our labs with state-of-the-art computers, peripherals and free student printing. The Web site program is second to none in the country. The faculty responded with a growing enthusiasm with nearly 90% of them employing the course Web sites in one form or another. With the loss of core computing funding during the last round of budget cuts, the fee increase allowed the Division to maintain this instructional advantage.

Despite the rapid growth and increasing importance of both student and instructional computing over the last 25 years, the University of California system has never provided a permanent budget for either. The Division's recognition of the growing desire and need to provide these services came with high direct and opportunity costs; and what funds it could muster were wholly inadequate to meet not only the pressing needs but the rapid obsolescence in hardware and software that each few years brought. Coupled with this was the anecdotal evidence coming from student surveys which indicated that students were regarding computing and access to computing to be integral not only to their academic needs but their subsequent choice of colleges as well. With the lead and support of the Chancellor's Office, UCLA stepped up, enacted the IEI, and in the process propelled itself into the national spotlight.

### **COURSE MANAGEMENT AND WEB SITES**

With the introduction of the IEI, the Division, along with the rest of the College, produced Web sites for every undergraduate non-tutorial class. A project on this scale was unprecedented.

Using funding from the IEI, this ambitious project captured the attention of colleges and universities across the country that, within a short time, followed UCLA's lead. The Division also used an open-source course management application—ClassWeb, developed by Web master Mike Franks—which also was a harbinger of the future. Social Sciences Web sites serve nearly 65,000 students annually, providing all of them with online access to their syllabi, to email contact with TA's and professors, to each other via class message boards, and to campus library and international reference resources. In courses where instructors choose to implement the other site features, students are provided with course-specific announcements, instructors' notes, study guides, additional reference materials, graphics, sound, video, and databases.

In addition, the course Web sites program spawned two other developments: the appointment of a vice-provost for educational technology, and the Faculty Committee on Educational Technology (FCET) that, among other duties, annually awards creative instructors for innovations in educational technology. As the international academic community embraced educational technology with astonishing rapidity and creativity in the years hence, the IEI has made UCLA's participation in this exciting arena possible.

## **STUDENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL COMPUTING**

The Division, under the aegis of Social Sciences Computing (SSC), also operates two modern instructional computing classrooms which double as common drop-in labs during non-teaching hours. In addition, the Division and SSC participate in the College Library Instructional Computing Consortium (CLICC), a library facility of common drop-in and laptop computing. CLICC also contains three instructional classrooms. The SSC classrooms and labs are supported completely by IEI funding, and approximately 25% of CLICC's facilities are as well.

The social sciences have been revolutionized by local and remote databases and statistical, graphics and simulation software coupled with ever-increasing computing power. Indeed, our Division has responded by developing an interdisciplinary minor called Human Complex Systems which teaches students the entangled complexity of social behavior—a curriculum made possible through the power of computing. By providing the computing resources that drive the new social sciences methodologies, the IEI is an integral part of this exciting future.

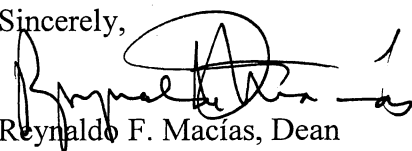
## **COMMON COMPUTING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The Division has made great strides since the IEI's inception. The ubiquitous course Web sites and access to computing are givens for UCLA social sciences students. The new generation of professors and many for whom computing came later in their careers have embraced the advantages and conveniences to be gained by employing course management systems in their classrooms. The IEI's purpose has been met in this regard. But these accomplishments will seem rudimentary as collaborative computing evolves over the next several years, possibly reflecting another technological revolution. The promise of common computing learning environments (CCLE) is that students, researchers and others can easily share desktops, tools, writing and calculation spaces, graphical interfaces, and data, all in a seamless end-user environment. The future holds great promise as UCLA helps to develop this collaborative world through innovative projects. Once again, the IEI will allow the Division to provide the personnel resources to lead these developments and the hardware, software and peopeware to deliver, sustain and develop the CCLE.

## SUMMARY

In the absence of any other alternative funding source, the IEI has met the students' and faculty's needs for over a decade. Without it UCLA would be a struggling to find funding for computing and operating in outmoded facilities. Because UCLA was quick to respond to the future electronic challenge with the IEI, we have long forgotten those days when our computing labs were shabby and ill-equipped, our faculty had no support for educational computing, and professors were restricted to blackboards and chalk, photocopy machines, and a desk phone. Today's world of course management systems, file sharing, Web posting, e-mail, text messaging and video transpondence is an everyday reality and is easily taken for granted. It is only through the IEI that we find ourselves in that envious position. Our student and educational computing on campus has never been stronger, thanks to the IEI. It has been a model not only for other campus units but outside the university as well. I strongly support its continuation as a course material fee.

Sincerely,



Reynaldo F. Macías, Dean  
Social Sciences Division