



PRESS RELEASE

NOVEMBER 14, 2007

CHRIS VAETH
Campaign Director
917.687.0431 or 510.926.4026

VALERIA FIKE-ROSALES
Lead Organizer
510.499.9816 or 510.926.4013

JEREMY BEARER-FRIEND
Lead Organizer
401.378.7456

STUDENTS FILE STATEWIDE BALLOT INITIATIVE TO FREEZE TUITION AT UC and CSU

First-Ever Student-Led Ballot Measure Aimed at Helping Students and Economy

Berkeley, CA – Today, students and families took a dramatic step toward college affordability by filing California's first-ever student-led ballot initiative with the Attorney General. Under the banner of Students and Families for Tuition Relief Now, the group is organizing on every public campus across the state. The proposition, if qualified, would appear on the November 2008 statewide ballot during the Governor's planned "year of education" and would likely turn out record numbers of young voters.

The law would freeze tuition for 5 years for resident undergraduates in both UC and CSU. After those five years, any future tuition increases would not be allowed to exceed the inflation index. The law would raise new revenue specifically for the cost of educating UC and CSU students through a 1% tax on millionaires' income over \$1 million. Also, the law sets up an accountability process requiring UC and CSU administrators to report to a citizens' panel of students and parents how the new revenue is being spent.

Tuition has almost doubled in the past six years in UC and CSU, and many students and parents – especially those in the middle class – cannot afford it any longer. Neither can the future of California's economy, which depends – especially in Silicon Valley – on a highly educated workforce.

According to a recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California, an overwhelming share of residents (84%) said college affordability is a problem. UC Student Regent Ben Allen said: "Affordability is essential to the quality of a public university and the future of our state."

Utsav Gupta, Student Senator at UC San Diego, said of the ballot approach: "We can't get the legislature to pass a fee policy. We can't get the UC Regents and CSU Trustees to demand more state investment. Students need to try something new." Jason Robo, Chair of Student Government at Humboldt State, added: "These days it seems like the price of gasoline is about the only thing that rises as fast as the price of tuition." Concerned that skyrocketing tuition is shutting students out, UC Berkeley student organizer Hilda Morales asked: "Will the next foreclosure crisis be on students' futures?"

Campaign Director Chris Vaeth noted how the campaign's approach is different: "What we are attempting has never been done in California politics. Students don't run ballot initiatives, and ballot initiatives rarely involve volunteers. What we lack in money we make up in heart and a sophisticated field operation."

The campaign has launched an interactive website at www.tuitionreliefnow.org. The site features the full text of the initiative, Q&As, and how to volunteer and contribute. The campaign has support from Greenlining Action, a multi-ethnic public policy organization.

###