

*As delivered*

**Chair Janet Reilly – Opening Remarks  
UC Board of Regents Meeting  
Luskin Conference Center  
Wednesday, March 19, 2025  
8:30 AM**

Good morning. I'd like to welcome everyone to the March Regents meeting. It's always great to have the Regents back at my alma mater, UCLA. To begin this morning, I'll ask the Secretary and Chief of Staff to call the roll of the members of the Board.

[ROLL CALL]

To those of you who have taken the time to sign up for public comment today: thank you. Your voices, perspectives, and passion remind us why this work is so vital and we value public input and the sharing of a variety of viewpoints, and an exchange of ideas.

While we understand that some of the comments shared today may elicit disagreement, I ask that we approach today's comments with respect and empathy, honoring the courage it takes for individuals to share their thoughts.

The Secretary will now review the procedures for public comment.

[PUBLIC COMMENT]

Thank you to the speakers for your comments at this meeting of the Regents. We appreciate your time and opinions.

Before diving into the specifics of our meeting this week, I'd like to take a moment to share some thoughts on the unprecedented challenges facing institutions of higher education in our country today.

As we gather here today, our University and our industry stand at a pivotal moment — a moment shaped by change and challenged by complexity. Recent government actions and increased fiscal challenges have sparked conversations about the future of universities, opportunity, and innovation. This moment requires thoughtful leadership and that is what President Drake and I, along with the Board, the chancellors and so many others are engaging in every day.

Since its creation in 1868, the University of California has been a beacon for ideas that change the world, a blueprint for the California dream, a catalyst to solve the world's most pressing problems and the pinnacle of academic research excellence.

We have been a training ground for thousands of leaders and a source of opportunity for millions, empowering them to create extraordinary things, challenge the status quo, and lead with purpose and vision.

The foundations of this great institution were laid long before any of us in this room arrived. And we must recognize what is at stake in this critical moment for higher education.

The fact that this foundation could be shaken or dismantled reminds us that we – all of us – have the responsibility and privilege to do everything in our power to make sure this University continues to thrive and serve future generations in the same way it has for decades.

Make no mistake, this is a contrived crisis – one that has been imposed upon us and universities across the nation.

But it is also an opportunity – an opportunity to look at ourselves with a critical eye – to re-evaluate where appropriate, to question and to do better. To be better. Because even the greatest of institutions are a work in progress.

As a Board, we are working closely with President Drake and are committed to continuing our collaboration with chancellors and other UC leaders. We are navigating uncertainty with strategic foresight and resolve.

Recent federal activities remind us of the power of others to shape our institution. But they should also remind us that the people of California have created an institution that is the envy of the world.

I want to take a moment to thank President Drake, our chancellors, and UCOP leadership for their steadfast advocacy in protecting UC's mission and for keeping our community informed. In a time when so many are seeking clarity, direction and reassurance, your dedication and thoughtfulness about the University's future and our community members are deeply appreciated.

Let us ensure that our policies reflect our principles. Let us advocate for resources that empower our students, champion inclusive excellence that strengthens our communities, and pursue discoveries that better our world. And let us use our creativity to meet any obstacle that we encounter.

The work ahead of us will not be easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is.

I would now like to turn to our agenda and highlight a few items.

UC continues to lead in the ever-evolving landscape of health care—through groundbreaking research, exceptional teaching, and the delivery of high-quality patient care.

At this meeting, the Health Services and Finance and Capital Strategies Committees will meet in closed session to discuss the Vision for the UC Riverside Health Clinical Enterprise. UCR has established itself and will continue to grow as a beacon of health care in the Inland Empire, one of the most medically underserved regions in our State — a gap UC is committed to addressing.

Health care is also the focus of this month's UC Inspires item, where we will highlight UC's efforts to cultivate physician leaders and support California communities through the UC Programs in Medical Education – UC PRIME.

Just this January, UC Health published an insightful collection of interviews with PRIME alumni, reflecting on the program's challenges and triumphs over the past 20 years working to expand access to quality care in California. We look forward to hearing more tomorrow about this important program.

Additionally, we will discuss the latest Annual Report on Basic Needs on Thursday. As I have shared, helping students meet their basic needs while they attend UC is one of my top priorities as a Regent and Chair. I am looking forward to hearing more about the report and discussing how we can continue to further support our students.

In closing, I would like to update the UC community about our search for the University's next president. The Special Committee on the Selection of a President has been working diligently on this important search for several months. We are committed to identifying a leader who can help the University continue the positive trajectory that President Drake has built.

Thank you. That concludes my remarks.