

October 7, 2010...

# 'A Day to Defend Public Education'

October 7, 2010, has been designated as a national day of action to defend public education and to protest its privatization. APSCUF has joined the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in support of these efforts.

Privatization in higher education in recent decades has brought disproportionate increases in:

- non-educational, administrative expenditures;
- tuition and fees, with related proportional declines in state support;
- contingent appointments, in which faculty are hired and fired at whim, with limited or no protections for academic rigor (a few unhappy student “customers” can equal nonrenewal) or for addressing controversial topics in their teaching and research (often on key public policy issues) in the full range of fields in academe, including science and engineering; and
- costly ventures that often fail, for they are undertaken with too little consultation with the professionals who do the academy’s work.

Such patterns have compromised the provision of affordable, quality higher education for all who are qualified, the independent pursuit of knowledge in the public interest, the vitality of the academic profession as a national resource, and the ability and freedom of academics to fully engage students and to pursue knowledge.

“In many ways, in many cases, and for many years, privatization in higher education has largely failed, with the costs being passed on to students,” said Gary Rhoades, the AAUP’s General Secretary. “We must defend and invest in not-for-profit higher education to provide access and success for new generations of students to quality higher education at a reasonable cost, and to advance knowledge in the service of the common good.”

“The strength of our nation’s higher education system is a function of the strength and academic freedom of its professionals, and of their ability to exercise an independent voice in shared governance in shaping the path of the academy. Both conditions are grounded in the broad provision of academic due process and peer review exemplified in the tenure system. The founders of the AAUP understood and articulated that in their original declaration of principles. We reaffirm that message today. And we call on our members to exercise their collective voice on October 7, 2010, in defense of not-for-profit higher education.”