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UC STUDENTS DENOUNCE PENDING BID FOR WEAPONS LAB

Los Angeles, California (November 16, 2004) - The saga regarding the University of California's role in nuclear weapons development continues this week as UC Regents meet at UCLA. On Wednesday, UC Students will be able to express their thoughts on whether or not UC should manage Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories – the nation's primary nuclear weapons labs – during a Public Comment Period. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson will follow with comments on the issue. On Thursday, the Regents and broader community will learn the results of the 2004 University of California Undergraduate Experience Study (UCUES), which included questions about UC-managed Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories.

The release of results from the student survey is significant because it follows 2 separate, but similar efforts polling lecturers, librarians and faculty.

However, some students are already criticizing the survey conducted last spring.

"The UC Regents need to be more accountable to students. A student survey is not helpful when only 11 percent of the undergraduate population responds and not when controversial questions about nuclear weapons labs are introduced without education and outreach on the issue," says Gloria Ross, an undergraduate at UC Santa Barbara. "The Regents should shift their focus from making nuclear weapons to making education accessible for all and contributing toward a safe and peaceful future for generations to come."

UC Berkeley undergraduate, Chelsea Collonge states, "I applaud all efforts to give students more voice as stakeholders in the UC community. However, the UCUES introduction to the questions regarding the nuclear weapons laboratories was misleading. It said that the labs' research was for 'maintaining the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile,' but in reality lab scientists are designing new, more powerful, and more usable nuclear weapons. These activities are out of compliance with international law, and students need to know this to make an educated decision."

Both students are a part of the Coalition to Demilitarize the University of California, which is made up of student groups on UC Campuses at Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles working in collaboration with the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara, Tri-Valley CAREs in Livermore, the Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, and the Nevada Desert Experience in Berkeley. For more information about the Coalition, visit: www.ucnuclearfree.org.

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