



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS TO CHALLENGE UC REGENTS ON WEAPONS LABS MANAGEMENT

WHAT: Press Briefing prior to University of California (UC) Regents Meeting
WHEN: Wednesday, September 22, 8:30 am
WHERE: UC San Francisco – Laurel Heights Campus, 3333 California St., San Francisco
(map and link to driving directions: <http://www.ucsf.edu/maps/lhts.html>)
WHO: The Coalition to Demilitarize the University of California

San Francisco, CA (September 20, 2004) - A coalition of student and community groups is challenging the University of California (UC) Regents’ “hands off” management of the Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories. Students and community members charge that the Regents’ lack of accountability has enabled the aggressive and continuous development of nuclear weapons at the UC-managed labs.

The Coalition to Demilitarize the University of California will hold a press briefing prior to the next meeting of the UC Regents, Wednesday September 22 at 8:30 am, outside the Auditorium at the UCSF - Laurel Heights campus, near the public entrance to the building. Coalition members have also signed up to address the Regents during the Public Comment period that opens their meeting at 9:15 am.

“By managing the Labs, UC has provided a fig leaf of academic respectability to nuclear weapons design. Developing nuclear weapons is illegal under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. UC needs to weigh in on the mission of the Labs or get out,” declared **Chelsea Collonge**, a Junior at UC Berkeley.

For more than 50 years, the two major U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories, Los Alamos in New Mexico, and Lawrence Livermore in California, have been exclusively managed by UC. Scandals and “systemic management failures” in recent years have lead the U.S. Department of Energy for the first time to put up the prime management contracts for competitive bidding. The bidding process for Los Alamos is already underway. The competition for Livermore is expected to begin late next year.

The members of the Coalition to Demilitarize the University of California agree that UC should not participate in furthering the development of nuclear weapons.

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At Wednesday's Regents meeting, Western States Legal Foundation (WSLF) will release a new report, entitled, *Up For Sale: Bidding for Management of the Nuclear Weapons Labs*. The report provides an historical analysis of UC's relationship with the Labs, and a "who's who" of the likely corporate and academic bidders. It concludes that UC's continued management of the Livermore and Los Alamos Labs should be opposed, and that no university should consider bidding for the management contracts based on the fundamental inconsistency between their institutional mission and the furtherance of illegal and dangerous nuclear weapons policies and research. According to WSLF attorney **Michael Veiluva**, the principal author of the report: "UC's participation in nuclear weapons research and production is incompatible with international law and morality, just as University investments in corporations doing business in apartheid South Africa was twenty years ago."

Tri-Valley CAREs, a Livermore-based "watchdog" of the Livermore Lab is challenging the UC Regents to support civilian science and stop the proposed expansion of nuclear weapons programs at the Lab. "Major increases in nuclear weapons activities and materials are planned for Livermore Lab. This is a chance for the Regents to use their influence to demand an end to dangerous new programs at the Lab. The Regents say they are for science, but all we see coming out of the Labs are weapons designed solely to perpetrate violence," charges Tara Dorabji, outreach director for Tri-Valley CAREs.

Currently the Department of Energy is reviewing a ten-year plan for Livermore that includes more than doubling the plutonium stored on site to 3,300 pounds, enough for at least 300 nuclear weapons. Over eighty percent of Livermore Lab's proposed budget for 2005 is weapons related. Every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal was designed by UC employees at the Livermore and Los Alamos Labs

Michael Coffey, Director of Youth Programs with the Nuclear Age Peace foundation says, "The conversation is much bigger than whether or not UC should bid to continue managing nuclear weapons laboratories. Our current national leadership has co-opted non-proliferation language to point the finger at everyone but ourselves, especially Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. This issue is personal - California's public university system should not be complicit in the design, development and production of weapons of mass destruction."

The Coalition to Demilitarize the University of California consists 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.

"No university should partner with a facility that produces WMDs," said Forrest Wilder, a University of Texas at Austin alumni and member of UT Nuke Free concerned about UT's bid for Los Alamos. "While I hope that my alma mater won't get hitched to Los Alamos, I also hope UC files for divorce after its 60-year hellish marriage."

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Copies of *Up For Sale: Bidding for Management of the Nuclear Weapons Labs* will be available at the press briefing and following, upon request from Western States Legal Foundation (510) 839-5877.