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Dear students, faculty, staff, alumni, supporters and friends of Cal:

After much careful deliberation, we are today announcing our plans for a sustainable financial future for Intercollegiate Athletics at Cal. Athletics plays a valued and indispensable role in Berkeley's long tradition of excellence and deserves appropriate support from the campus. Through a variety of circumstances, the costs of delivering our Intercollegiate Athletics program have been rising dramatically, requiring growing financial support from the campus budget that now exceeds \$12 million annually. This is not sustainable for our campus in a time of drastic State budget cuts to the university that are affecting all of our faculty, staff and students. The situation has raised heated debate about the size and cost of our Intercollegiate Athletics program among many of our campus constituencies. We have received advice from a Task Force of the Academic Senate and from a Chancellor's Advisory Council made up of both faculty and alumni. Both groups have advised us that the level of support to Intercollegiate Athletics must be significantly reduced. Our plan is to reduce that support to approximately \$5 million by 2014, a level more consistent with that of our public peer institutions and much less than that typically provided by our private peers.

The senior administration working closely with Intercollegiate Athletics have concluded that, given this reduced level of support, we cannot sustain the level of excellence that we expect of everything that we do at Cal and still maintain all of the Intercollegiate Athletic sports that we currently have. The strategy we have chosen is to reduce the number of Intercollegiate Sports from 29 to 24. At the end of this academic year, men's and women's gymnastics, lacrosse (women), baseball (men), and rugby (men) will no longer represent the university as Intercollegiate Athletics sports. Across the country at everywhere but Cal, men's rugby competes at an elite level as a club sport. For Cal men's rugby, which was a club sport for many years up until the early 1990's, we anticipate a new tier of "varsity club".

This will allow rugby to compete at and maintain the same high level of national and international excellence which it currently enjoys while becoming self-sustaining. We are working through the details of this transition. These complex decisions also take into account the requirements of Title IX and of our ability to provide our student athletes with the support programs and facilities that they need to succeed and excel on and off the field.

In addition to these program scope reductions, Intercollegiate Athletics will continue to work to reduce the growth of expenses, beyond the reduction already taken this spring, and to raise income through fundraising and other avenues of targeted investment such as television revenue.

We believe that we have a well-defined and compelling plan that in three to four years will reduce campus support for Intercollegiate Athletics to approximately \$5 million annually. We anticipate that this support will represent about one-half of the cost of athletics scholarships at that time and recognizes that our intercollegiate athletes are students first and athletes second.

We deeply regret the disappointment that these decisions will cause to many members of our Cal community. We will do everything in our power to help student athletes, coaches and staff deal with the difficult challenges of this transition. The campus will honor existing scholarship commitments for all student athletes who choose to remain at Berkeley, and assist those who may wish to explore the possibility of competing at another institution.

In these difficult circumstances, we believe that our decisions are consistent with Berkeley's long-cherished traditions and values and will support Berkeley's commitment as a preeminent public university to sustaining access and excellence in all of our endeavors.

Detailed information can be found at <http://newscenter.berkeley.edu/goto/athletics2010>

Yours sincerely,

Robert J. Birgeneau
Chancellor