During the 2008-09 academic year, UCLA began to feel the first effects of California’s unprecedented budget crisis. Although the immediate impact of the recession was relatively moderate then, by year’s end, it was clear that the fiscal situation was worsening and significant budgetary challenges lie ahead. By the spring of 2009, we clearly understood that there would be a loss of state funding that would affect nearly all aspects of our core academic and administrative programs, including employee compensation, course offerings and student fees.

Nevertheless, the accomplishments of our campus community were many and varied. In several meaningful ways, we advanced our objective for UCLA to be the model 21st-century public research university in an urban setting, and we further solidified our position as one of the world’s leading institutions of higher education.

In fall 2008, UCLA enrolled 4,735 new freshmen from a pool of 55,437 applicants — the most in the nation — and 3,220 transfer students from 15,075 applicants. Freshmen came from 55 states and territories, and 37 countries; transfer students came from 14 states and territories, and 39 countries.

Continuing a tradition now in its 30th year, we presented UCLA Medals to people who have made truly extraordinary and distinguished contributions to their professions and to our society. Honorees in 2008-09 were Jonathan Fielding, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health; UCLA alumna Rachel Robinson, founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation; cinematographer Haskell Wexler; and Dolores Huerta, a labor activist best known as co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America.

In 2008-09, UCLA faculty received more than $966 million in research awards, setting a campus record. Of that amount, about $20 million came from grants through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Faculty continued to earn an impressive number of prestigious awards and honors. Six were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, two to the National Academy of Engineering, two to the Institute of Medicine, three to the National Academy of Sciences and three — including Chancellor Emeritus Albert Carnesale — to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In addition, three won Guggenheim Fellowships, two were named Howard Hughes Medical Institute Early Career Scientists, two were...
among Discover magazine’s 50 Best Brains in Science and one was selected for Fast Company magazine’s list of the 100 Most Creative People in Business.

The Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation’s top three hospitals and — for the 20th consecutive year — the best in the Western United States.

We entered exciting new partnerships, both locally and abroad. UCLA signed a memorandum of understanding with USC and Caltech, as well as local government and business agencies, to launch a bold initiative called CleanTech Los Angeles, which is designed to establish our city as the nation’s clean-technology hub. CleanTech L.A. will draw upon research generated by our faculty and students. We expect the effort to create new jobs and produce significant economic benefit for our region. In addition, we signed an agreement to establish a joint research institute in science and engineering with Peking University and furthered our partnerships with universities in Korea, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Our students again displayed the remarkable talent, creativity and drive for which UCLA scholars are known. Scott Hugo ’09 and Christopher Joseph ’08 were selected as the 10th and 11th Rhodes Scholars in UCLA’s history. In addition to their outstanding academic achievements, our students continued their involvement in volunteering and public service. Four received Charles E. Young Humanitarian Awards for their extraordinary efforts: Frank Rodriguez, for his leadership in a program that provides English language and computer skills training to day laborers; Wendy Tseng, for founding an initiative that provides tutoring to Skid Row residents; Jonathan Lee, for founding a group that encourages fellow students to donate unused meal-card funds to provide food for the homeless; and Laura Petry, for her involvement with a mentoring program at Marina del Rey Middle School.

Students excelled in athletics, as well. The women’s water polo team won its fifth consecutive NCAA championship, extending UCLA’s national record for team titles to 104.

Gifts and pledges to UCLA in 2008-09 totaled $361 million. This is an impressive total in any year, but especially in the current fiscal climate of the state and nation. Notable gifts included $5.8 million from the J. W. and Nellie M. Macdowell Trust for student support in the College of Letters and Science, and $5 million from UCLA alumni Marjorie and Ralph Crump to establish the Crump Institute for Molecular Imaging.

In January, we announced the launch of the Bruin Scholars Initiative, which is dedicated to building financial support for undergraduate scholarships and graduate student fellowships. This support will be critical to ensuring that deserving students from various socioeconomic backgrounds will have access to a world-class education at UCLA. The fund’s goal is to raise $500 million by June 2013.

Amid the budgetary challenges we are facing, we are committed to ensuring that UCLA emerges even stronger when the economy recovers. I am confident that we will be even more prepared to respond to the needs of our students and those of the people of California.

Gene D. Block
Chancellor