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CECIL H. AND IDA M. GREEN
INSTITUTE OF GEOPHYSICS AND PLANETARY PHYSICS
SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY (0225)

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92093-0225

March 25, 2011

Drs. Milton Glick and Marc Johnson
President's Office
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557-001

Dear President,

I was informed that UNR is going through a period of major budget cuts and there is a proposal to drastically reduce the budget for the NBMG. I'm writing on behalf of my colleagues at NBMG to urge you to reconsider making significant cuts to their laboratory. Here at the University of California we also have a worsening budget problem. Last year UC instituted mandatory furloughs of 1 day per month for university faculty and researchers as a potential cost savings measure. During the discussion leading up to the furloughs, the accountants determined that furloughing state funded people saved money. However, the state actually lost money when researchers were furloughed. This is because the "soft money" people pay their own salary out of contracts and grants but more important, they pay the University 54 cents for every salary dollar. Some of that funding supports the University mission. Indeed the solution at UC was to institute a furlough day for all university employees but then allow researchers with contracts and grants to be paid by external funds on the furlough days. Of course this penalized faculty who do not have grants but it results in a true cost savings and enables the University to retain their top researchers.

In addition to the economic issues, which I cannot fully understand from afar, the geodesy group at NBMG has some of the top geodesists in the country, Geoff Blewitt, William Hammond, Corne Kreemer, and Hans-Peter Plag. As President of the Geodesy Section of the American Geophysical Union, I am aware of their scientific contributions, international stature, and their ability to attract external funds. These are important assets for UNR and if they move elsewhere the stature of the NBMG and UNR will decrease substantially. So I urge you to make the cuts wisely to retain the best people who generally provide a net influx of funding to the University.

Sincerely,

David T. Sandwell

Professor of Geophysics