

PLEASE NOTE: The letter reprinted here does not include the article from *The Atlantic Monthly*. It can be found online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/03/press.htm>

March 10, 2000

## **THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

I enclose for your information an article on industry-university partnerships from the March 2000 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. As you will note, it takes a largely negative view of such relationships and reflects a number of the criticisms that are sometimes leveled against them. The authors conclude with several recommendations they believe should guide industry-university collaboration; enclosed is a summary of what UC is doing in the areas covered by these recommendations.

UC has had a long history of cooperating with industry to advance research, instruction, and public service. Industry and research universities have always had an intellectual partnership in the United States, especially in fields like engineering and medicine. This partnership has generated a vital give and take between science and technology, research and application. A classic example of the productive relationship between basic and applied science is the work of Louis Pasteur, who made fundamental discoveries in microbiology while trying to improve the French brewing industry. A more recent example is the radio telescope, an invention that evolved from efforts to reduce static in microwave communications.

Cross-fertilization between academic and industrial research is what distinguishes science in the U.S. from that of most other nations and is one of the reasons that university scientific discoveries are so rapidly translated into new industries, companies, products, and services. It is also one of the reasons the U.S. is generating new companies, new jobs, new products and services that improve the lives of our citizens at a much faster pace than in the rest of the world.

It is certainly true, as the *Atlantic* article points out, that the number and scope of industry-university partnerships have expanded in recent years. Clearly, we need to be alert to the dangers in collaborative efforts between industry and universities, especially during this period of rapid growth, but we need to keep the significant advantages they offer in mind as well. Because of its importance to the University, this is an area that we review carefully to see that our policies and practices serve UC and the public well.

UC has more patents issued annually than all of the Ivy League schools combined--a reflection of the high research productivity of our faculty and a reason why UC is sought out by industrial sponsors. Yet industry support for R&D, although valuable, is a small portion of UC's research budget. Excluding the UC-managed national laboratories, in fiscal year 1999 the federal government supplied 71 percent of all UC's external research funding, as compared to 9 percent

from industry. Federally-funded basic research comprised almost two-thirds of all research conducted at UC.

Three years ago I convened a retreat to assess UC's interactions with industry and to consider changes in programs, policy, or structure that could improve research and technology transfer relationships while supporting the University's mission and values. If you wish further information about the retreat, UC's relationships with industry, or about our policies, you may wish to visit the Office of Technology Transfer's Web site at <http://www.ucop.edu/ott/>.

Yours truly,

Richard C. Atkinson  
President

Enclosures

cc: Chancellors

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