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CAMPUS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2017

Former chancellor Nicholas Dirks to be paid \$434K by campus while on leave



DANIEL KIM/FILE

BY BOBBY LEE | SENIOR STAFF

LAST UPDATED AUGUST 10, 2017

Former chancellor Nicholas Dirks will be paid \$434,000 by UC Berkeley through the next academic year, more than 80 percent of his pay as the campus's former top administrator — even though Dirks will not return to teaching on campus until fall 2018.

Dirks was originally [expected](#) to join the campus history and anthropology departments later this fall. Instead, he will go on paid leave for the next academic year and join the campus as a full time professor for the 2018-19 academic year. Dirks will be paid \$237,300 as a professor.

Under university academic personnel policy, former UC chancellors are eligible for a leave of absence "to retool and do research in preparation for a return to the faculty as a professor," according to university spokesperson Dianne Klein.

Compensation for UC chancellors, Klein noted in an email, generally ranks "in the bottom one third of compensation among public AAU universities."

"As is usual practice, UC Berkeley will pay his compensation during this leave, which lasts through June 2018," Klein said in an email. "Such a practice of granting sabbatical/transition leave after

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leaving the chancellor's post is common among public and private universities in the United States and, at UC, helps to compensate for the lower salaries that our chancellors receive."

UC Berkeley Faculty Association chair Michael Burawoy and campus molecular and cell biology professor Michael Eisen criticized the university for paying Dirks a percentage of the salary he was paid as chancellor instead of the pay he will earn as a professor.

In an email, Eisen criticized the university's policy as "not something the university should do," saying that although he did not begrudge Dirks' right to take a sabbatical, "he should be drawing a faculty salary."

Burawoy, who is also a campus sociology professor, added that campus faculty members with four years of full time employment would be eligible for only 44 percent of their salary during a sabbatical. Meanwhile, Dirks, who has a little more than four years of full-time employment with the campus, will be paid close to 82 percent of his full-time chancellor's salary during his paid leave.

"No doubt this is all laid out in (Dirks') contract as Chancellor, but it does appear to be a reward for negligence, incompetence and petty corruption," Burawoy said in an email. "It is an appalling commentary on the distribution of benefits at a time of supposed fiscal crisis and when many students can barely scrape together a living."

Dirks announced his resignation from the campus chancellorship in August 2016 and officially left the office earlier this July.

His tenure as chancellor faced a number of challenges, including criticism of his handling of campus sexual misconduct [cases](#), his administration's [efforts](#) to address a more than \$100 million campus budget deficit, and a university [investigation](#) which found Dirks had [violated](#) UC ethics by improperly accepting free campus athletic services.

Dirks' paid leave arrangement, according to campus physics professor and chancellor emeritus Robert Birgeneau, is "identical to that for senior administrators ... at virtually every research university in the country."

"As I understand it, Nick will be on campus this year pursuing his research and scholarship and, presumably, working on behalf of Berkeley," Birgeneau said in an email.

Bobby Lee is an assistant news editor. Contact Bobby Lee at bobbylee@dailyca.org and follow him on Twitter at [@bobbylee_dc](https://twitter.com/bobbylee_dc).

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