

It's Clark Kerr's fault.

“Forty-seven years ago, the president of the University of California introduced an idealistic, untested and truly

I'm not sure I could get into UCLA. That's not the point. I can't play with the Philharmonic either.

immodest plan to build the finest public higher education system in the nation.

“Happily, Doctor

Kerr's Master Plan succeeded, but there was an unforeseen consequence: It overperformed.

“Today, California's public universities (including one that's not even 100 years old and is in L.A., of all places) rank among the most highly regarded universities, public or private, in the nation or the world. Period.

“That freshman you just passed on Bruin Walk may be the next Bill

Too many Californians think that the state government fully funds the UC budget.

Gates, the next Picasso, the next Jackie Joyner-Kersey. That professor over there could create an unforgettable piece of music, a cure for a

deadly disease, ten thousand new high-tech jobs or a math program for failing schools that actually works.

“So, how can UCLA maintain that momentum, that excellence? How do we nourish this priceless community asset, this spectacular economic engine that enriches us all?

“Start with this reality check:

“California state government funding for the university system has gone

from 42% a generation ago to less than 18% today. And that money's not coming back.

“Which brings us back to us, the citizen/owners. Not just alumni. Not just the university family. We need every business, large and small; every member

of the leadership community—anyone

who benefits from this university. That would very likely be every one of us.

“One last thought: The future has been around for a very long time. It

will be there tomorrow. But now is now. The momentum, the excellence, the need is now.”



Sherry Lansing is a regent of the University of California, former CEO of Paramount Pictures and founder of The Sherry Lansing Foundation, dedicated to raising awareness and funds for cancer research.

Private money is a small fraction of the overall university budget.

But when you need to get from good to great, it can be the fast-forward button.

Sherry Lansing. UCLA, Unabashed.