Spring Colloquium Series

"The One-University Idea and its Futures"

Featuring Patricia A. Pelfrey,
Senior Research Associate, CSHE, UC Berkeley

Wednesday, March 30, 2016
12:00pm-1:30pm

8th Floor Barrows Hall
Social Science Matrix

The University of California is unique among American multicampus systems in that it is organized around a principle known as the one-university idea. Its premise is simple: that a large and decentralized system of ten campuses, differing in size, resources, aspirations, and stage of development, can nevertheless be governed as a single university. The one-university idea has long been regarded as a major force behind UC’s rise to pre-eminence among American research universities. But does it have a future in the age of public disinvestment in higher education?

CSHE Senior Research Associate Patricia A. Pelfrey discusses the one-university principle in the context of UC’s history, its contemporary relevance to the governance of the UC system, and the drive for institutional redesign in American universities.

Senior Research Associate, Center for Studies in Higher Education. Co-author (with Margaret Cheney) of A Brief History of the University of California (University of California Press, 2004) and editor of The Pursuit of Knowledge: Speeches and Papers of Richard C. Atkinson (University of California Press, 2007). Her most recent book is Entrepreneurial President: Richard Atkinson and the University of California, 1995-2003 (University of California Press, 2012), a study of the Atkinson presidency and the principal issues facing the University of California. She has also authored or co-authored papers on affirmative action, undergraduate admissions, industry-university relationships, and other higher-education topics. Before joining the Center in 2002, Pelfrey served for more than thirty years as a member of the immediate staff of five University of California presidents: Charles J. Hitch, David S. Saxon, David P. Gardner, J. W. Peltason, and Richard C. Atkinson. Pelfrey holds a Ph.D. in English literature from UC Berkeley. Current research interests include nineteenth-century ideas about knowledge, cognition, and higher education and their relation to contemporary thinking; UC as a public multicampus system; and the role of the president in UC and other public research universities.