

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

*A letter from President Ana Mari Cauce
January 21*



Dear Colleagues,

State policymakers are in the second week of their 60-day legislative session, and this week I traveled to Olympia to meet with them. While not my first trip to Olympia, this was a special visit, as it was my first as President. My goal was both to thank our elected leaders for the significant support they provided to the University of Washington and higher education last year, and to advocate for our [2016 legislative priorities](#).

Last year, for the first time in modern memory, the Legislature and Governor joined together to reduce tuition at the UW, as well as Washington's public universities and community and technical colleges. And, just as important, we were able to advocate successfully to ensure that the reduction not jeopardize the quality of our students' education. Lawmakers pledged to keep the universities and colleges whole by replacing the reduced revenue with substantial new public investment. Our efforts in this year's session are focused on ensuring legislators keep that pledge.

While the 2016 session is not a primary budget-writing year, we are not letting up. I am making clear in my conversations with policymakers that in the next budget-writing session of the Legislature, we will be seeking an investment in excellence, with an emphasis on accelerating progress on improving faculty compensation. I will continue to emphasize that it is faculty that make us excellent through their teaching and their scholarship, and we need the Legislature to focus on both access and excellence. We can't have one at the expense of the other.

The challenges confronting our leaders in Olympia are many, but I'm proud to say they are not alone in this tremendously important work. Faculty colleagues are working with the Governor and Legislature to find solutions to today's major challenges.

(Ana Mari Cauce letter continued)

A sampling of issues they are working on includes [gun violence and suicide prevention](#), [impacts of climate change](#), [remediating causes of wrongful conviction](#), [marijuana research](#) and [clean energy](#), just to name a few. Our students across all three campuses benefit from involvement in these research experiences as well as internships in legislative offices and real-world experiences in public service.

All of these efforts help bring the UW's multitude of contributions to life in tangible, meaningful ways, and I thank you for the time you take to share your expertise with policymakers. Together we can be more than just a resource — we can be a force for good in our community, our state and our world.

You can get updates from Olympia and find ways to get involved through the [UW's Faculty Legislative Representative JoAnn Taricani](#), associate professor of music history, and the [UW's Director of State Relations Genesee Adkins](#).

For my part, I invite your suggestions about how we can work together to make our case even stronger. I always welcome hearing from you, and thank you for your active engagement in our government and society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Mari Cauce". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ana Mari Cauce
President
Professor of Psychology