



The scandal, the scapegoats, and the suicide

In late 2005, the *San Francisco Chronicle* broke the explosive story of UC's secret practices of rewarding its top officials extravagant bonuses and perks—at a time when the system was in financial crisis. Yet the two highest-ranking executives who ultimately paid a price were women whose sexuality had become part of the story. What really happened to ruin the meteoric career of provost M.R.C. Greenwood and drive chancellor Denice Denton to the roof of the tallest apartment building in San Francisco?

BY DIANA KAPP

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIO HUGO

Last September, M.R.C. Greenwood, the affable, 63-year-old former provost of the University of California, stood before a group of 70 top UC female faculty and administrators in the Lange Room of the UCSF library. Her presentation would be on a topic she knew as well as anyone: gender issues in academia.

The audience comprised women for whom Greenwood was a legendary, controversial figure. Ten years before, she'd warned that women and minority scientists trying to crack academia were "dancing with wolves," but she herself had enjoyed a stellar career and had eventually been appointed by UC president Robert Dynes as his right-hand woman and UC's highest-ranked female figure ever. In her private life, though, Greenwood was a frustrating enigma to many. She'd been living with a woman for decades, and together they had raised three children from both their previous marriages. Yet she steadfastly refused to define her sexuality; as a biologist, she found such labels overly simplistic.

Greenwood projected the first slide of her presentation on the wall behind her. About a year before, the *San Francisco Chronicle* had learned that Greenwood had hired a close woman friend at UC, Lynda Goff, despite having a business tie with her, and Dynes, under the cloud of a brewing scandal about hidden executive compensation, had ignominiously pushed Greenwood out. But her first slide did not refer to any of this personal history; instead, Greenwood showed a photograph of a large, round-faced woman with wildly curly brown hair and glasses.

The crowd knew the woman in the picture. It was Denice Denton, the first openly gay UC chancellor, who had followed Greenwood as the head of UC Santa Cruz. Greenwood didn't have to tell this group what had happened to Denton, or to herself. She just looked out into the audience and repeated her warning of so long ago. "The wolves are still circling," she said.

Colleagues described Denton as a doer with a fiery will and a brilliant mind. She is "the perfect candidate for Santa Cruz," Dynes said in heralding her arrival.

Former provost M.R.C. Greenwood was the ultimate pathfinder. She was UC's number-two administrator and had long been a crusader against the glass ceiling in academia.

THE HIRING

In December of 2004, Dynes announced to the local press that, after a 700-candidate search for the next chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, he'd decided to hire Denice Denton, a spirited, 45-year-old dean of engineering at the University of Washington. She would be among the youngest chancellors ever on a UC campus. Denton was a doer with a fiery will and a brilliant mind. Her early colleagues called her "Tsunami." (She preferred "Panzer," after the powerful tank used in World War II.) Likable and comfortably unconventional—she would leap out of the car and dance whenever the mood struck her—she was "the perfect candidate for Santa Cruz," Dynes said in heralding her arrival.

Denton was an apt choice for many reasons. While home to activist legends bell hooks and Angela Davis, Santa Cruz is today as much a leading technology institution as a liberal bastion. With the boom in Silicon Valley, just over the hill, what used to be a fringe campus in the 10-university system has become a genomics powerhouse whose website hosted the first draft of the human genome. It boasts top rankings in space, marine, and the physical sciences; a brand-new school of engineering; and increasing ties to industry. Not only was Denton an MIT-trained electrical engineer, but she had successfully worked with tech giants "Bill and Paul" (as she referred to Gates and Allen in a *Santa Cruz Sentinel* interview) to build UW's \$72 million Center for Computer Science and Engineering. While in no way a schmoozer, she was a gifted networker among female scientists and had mentored many at both UW and the University of Wisconsin, where she had first taught. "She's going to set Silicon Valley upside down," Dynes told the *San Jose Mercury News* at the time.

Denton's appointment also helped solve a festering gender problem Dynes was under pressure to address. UC had come under fire for the low representation of women in its faculty and administrative leadership positions. In 2000, when then state senator Jackie Speier was conducting hearings on the issue, UC was still very much the white male bastion it had been for the last century. On many campuses the number of new female



hires had actually gone down. “We found that people tend to hire people that look like them,” Speier says. The statistics that emerged from the hearings were striking. Between 1996 and 2001, for example, UC Berkeley’s Boalt Hall law school hired no women at all; at UC San Diego, where Dynes had been chancellor, the faculty in 2000 was over 80 percent male, and the percentage of new female faculty hires across UC had dipped below the 1992 figure. In 2005, a list of the 50 highest-paid UC employees published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* included just one woman, Denton’s predecessor M.R.C. (pronounced Mar-cee) Greenwood.

Dynes was committed to reversing the slide. In just two years as president, he’d hired Marye Ann Fox as his successor at UC San Diego and brought on the strong-willed Greenwood as an agent of change within his Oakland office, where his other top advisors were all men (Bruce Darling, James Holst, Joe Mullinix). Denton’s \$275,000 salary wouldn’t be quite high enough to land her on the best-paid list, but it was close enough.

Denton’s political credentials also seemed as Santa Cruz as they come. An idealist drawn to progressive causes, she minced no words as she sought to expose sexism and bust what she saw as academia’s glass ceiling for women, gays, and nonwhites. Several weeks after Dynes introduced her, she catapulted herself to the forefront of the women’s movement by challenging Harvard president Larry Summers’s assertion that there are innate intellectual differences between men and women. Saying she would “speak truth to power,” she appeared on *World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings and was interviewed by the *New York Times*, NPR, and the BBC.

Still, she was an unusual choice for a system with a tendency to choose polished senior administrators from the inside. She’d had little experience as a public figure and had few friends inside the labyrinthine UC administration. While people were drawn to her crusading spirit and down-to-earth style—she was a beer drinker who could laugh at herself, particularly about what she and her friends acknowledged as her terrible taste in flowy, ethnic clothes—she was also a self-described geek and lacked Greenwood’s exceptional poise. According to Greenwood, Dynes later said that asking Denton to make the leap from engineering dean to the politically complex chancellor role was “something of a stretch.” But he believed that he, Greenwood, and the other nine chancellors, who meet monthly, could back her up. After a standard contract negotiation, during which Dynes offered to hire her partner in the Office of the President and renovate the rundown chancellor’s house, including fixes to the yard to accommodate her two border collies, Denton signed on.

For her part, Greenwood was pleased that this talented female scientist—indeed, one she had attempted to bring into her own administration at Santa Cruz—would follow her there. She was concerned, though, about Denton’s insistence on touting her gay status (which she hadn’t done at Washington). She believed that being



When UC president Robert Dynes hired Greenwood and Denton, the system was still very much a white male bastion.

A Berkeley linguist appearing on NPR had a simple explanation for the *Chronicle’s* “lesbian lover” headline. “They were trying to sell papers.”

guarded about her own private life had served her well professionally and was afraid that Denton’s sexuality could become a big distraction.

Greenwood had reason to worry, since her own sexual orientation had long been the subject of curiosity and rumor around campus. In a 1999 interview with the UCSC student newspaper, she was asked directly about it. “I don’t like to answer that question,” she said. “I think my personal life is just that. I get offended that men don’t get asked that.” She urged UC’s communications team to consult an outside expert about how to handle Denton’s sexual orientation in her hiring announcement to the public, but she was overruled. The press release went out on December 14 stating that Denton would be accompanied by her partner of seven years, Gretchen Kalonji.

“LESBIAN LOVER”

Five weeks later, Tanya Schevitz, the higher-education reporter at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, picked up the newspaper from her doorstep, pulled out the Bay Area section, and winced. On the front page, above her story about UC’s hiring of Kalonji, the headline read: “UC hires partner of Chancellor: Creates \$192,000 post for Santa Cruz chief’s lesbian lover.” For several months, Schevitz had been nosing around a topic that had raised some red flags and seemed like it could turn into a big story: UC’s management expenses at a time when the system’s budget was in crisis and student fees were skyrocketing. The partner hire, she wrote, had “some observers” wondering about the system’s priorities. But the headline was “inappropriate,” Schevitz said, for a story that had nothing to do with the women’s sexuality.

Later that day, at the regents meeting at UCSE, Michael Reese, head of UC’s press communications, told



Schevitz, “The paper has sunk to a new low.” (Schevitz and Reese had tangled over stories for the five years she’d been covering UC.) Schevitz responded that she had had nothing to do with the headline.

Inside the paper, Robert Rosenthal, the *Chronicle’s* managing editor, gave the headline writers’ supervisor an informal talking-to about relevance and sensitivity. But three weeks later on NPR, commentator Geoffrey Nunberg, the renowned UC Berkeley linguist, had a simple interpretation for why the paper put a “lesbian lover” headline on what he called a “singularly unsalacious” story: “They were trying to sell papers.” Like many newspapers in the Internet era, the *Chronicle* is fast losing readers and is reportedly also losing \$1 million a week. Many observers—both inside and outside the *Chronicle*—think the paper is taking an increasingly sensational approach. A recent *SF Weekly* story cited an instance when the *Chronicle* reprinted a *New York Times* story and changed the word “surprise” to “shock.”

Denton’s sexual orientation was now a public issue in Santa Cruz, as Greenwood had feared. “Pillow talk must

Denton and her border collies at the vacation home she shared with Gretchen Kalonji. The run that was built for the dogs at her campus home became a symbol of the scandal engulfing UC.

be very profitable,” quipped a letter to the editor in the *Sentinel* on February 6, one of 14 the paper ran on the topic. It also published an opinion piece calling Kalonji’s job as UC’s international strategy director a payout and demanding an explanation. UC rushed to prepare an extensive defense of this new position and Kalonji’s qualifications—she is a distinguished engineer and the first woman to hold an endowed chair at the University of Washington—which the *Sentinel* published in full.

Concern about the financial aspect of Kalonji’s hire made sense in antiestablishment Santa Cruz. There was something distasteful about ivory tower administrators getting big packages and special perks. Basically, Santa Cruz is a place where it’s nearly impossible to be politically correct enough. “Unless you wear a sackcloth and live in the woods, *someone* will hate you for *something*,” says a UCSC alum.

But the venom of the criticism revealed fault lines within Santa Cruz. There had long been a sharp town-gown split in this small, resistant-to-change community. The university up the hill had doubled in size in two decades and was scheduled to expand further, raising concerns over the impact on housing prices, traffic, and general congestion. On campus, faculty were up in arms about dwindling budgets, low pay, and program cuts, while lefty student groups in support of mostly minority service workers were spinning the wage issue as a race issue. Many students, meanwhile, were angry over increasing fees. Denton’s longtime identity may have been champion of the downtrodden, but as chancellor, she was commanding big dollars and standing on the pedestal, where groups from all sides could take aim.

Unfortunately, Denton’s first meeting with the Academic Senate, a group of faculty leaders, did not get things off on a good foot. Her manner was casual, as she leaned against the podium eating peanuts and swigging from her water bottle. During the meeting, she conducted a schoolmarmish call-and-response session, throwing out questions in different languages and calling on faculty members to translate. At Wisconsin and Washington, Denton’s folksy, laid-back behavior seemed appropriate, even charming, for a professor and a dean, respectively. But here the effect was “strange and awkward” said one of several faculty members who expressed concern about her un-chancellorlike presence.

Already under scrutiny, she became embroiled in several controversies that left students questioning her commitment to progressive politics. The day she assumed her post, the Student and Worker Coalition for Justice demonstrated outside her Kerr Hall office against low campus wages and high student fees. In April, military recruiters, on campus to participate in a job fair, were driven out by war protesters who stormed the building and slashed the recruiters’ tires. When Denton publicly apologized to the recruiters and condemned some of the students’ actions, she was decried by the left. The flag-wavers were no happier and flooded her office with threatening calls and e-mail.

Later, during another protest, she authorized police



Denton was a long-time champion of women, gays, and minorities, but at Santa Cruz she was painted as a racist and as “elitist scum.”

to use pressure point tactics on student protesters, pressing nerves in their necks until they moved; 200 faculty signed a petition condemning Denton’s “unwarranted” use of force. This time, Denton told Bettina Aptheker, a friend and Santa Cruz professor of feminist studies, that she regretted her inexperienced handling of the situation, but the damage was done.

Soon, the local press began following what would remain a hot-button issue for months: the renovations on her 7,000-square-foot home, most of which was public space used for university functions and which had not had major upgrades in 20 years. According to a March front-page story in the *Sentinel*, the \$600,000 makeover, though paid for out of privately raised funds, was nevertheless “raising eyebrows among campus employees,” who hadn’t had raises because of the university’s financial troubles. The bad press quickly became personal. A cartoonist, Steven DeCinzo, skewered Denton in the local alternative rag *Metro Santa Cruz*, depicting a fat, masculine-looking czarina, complete with stubble on her chin, holding court outside her ostentatious palace. A butler balancing two bags of gold, one labeled “UCSC Chancellor’s salary” and a bigger one labeled “Chancellor’s lousy girlfriend’s salary” pronounced, “Your new remodeled home, Mr. Denton... er, I mean Ms. Denton!”

This level of homophobia was something Denton had never experienced. “It hurt her very deeply,” says Kalonji. “It hurt her to have me under attack, too.” Oddly enough at a campus known for its anything-goes attitude, her appearance also triggered nasty attacks. A blogger on Santa Cruz Indymedia mocked: “Have you ever wanted to buy an orange blazer but couldn’t unless you could find a pair of matching glasses to go with it?” One staff member admitted sending an e-mail message to Denton’s assistant that read: “You don’t have to

Denton’s bad press quickly turned personal. A local cartoonist depicted her as a fat, masculine-looking czarina holding court outside her ostentatious palace.

respond to me. I would really encourage you to work with the Chancellor on the hairdo. People are talking about it.” The staffer recalls, “People were merciless.”

The chancellor position at a highly politicized campus like Santa Cruz requires thick skin and a willingness to mix it up. “You are the show in town,” says Karl Pister, a Berkeley professor and chancellor at Santa Cruz prior to Greenwood. (Pister says he and his wife were taken to task over a new washer and dryer they bought for the chancellor’s home.) But Denton had a private nature, friends say, and a propensity to take criticism to heart. Her confidantes consisted of a small group of lesbian faculty members and Liz Irwin, her head of communications; otherwise, she spent an increasing amount of time alone in her office. A female senior scientist was surprised that Denton had never asked her out to coffee. “Doesn’t she want a kitchen cabinet?” she wondered. In fact, Denton seemed to shun the campus social scene altogether, often preferring to meet up with a townie friend to hang out or go to the dog park.

At 2:45 a.m. on June 10, Denton was awakened by a wood-and-metal parking barricade crashing through her guest-bedroom window. No group ever claimed responsibility. But the university ordered \$43,000 in security upgrades to her home, and a security guard was detailed outside every night from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The worst was yet to come.

A SCANDAL APPROACHES

As Santa Cruz let out for the summer, the *Chronicle*’s investigation of UC’s compensation practices was heating up. Schevitz, a tenacious and likable young reporter with a strong list of sources around UC, had months before requested from Dynes’s office line-by-line expense reports, which she now had in hand. They detailed what top executives were spending on business dinners, club memberships, and other extras.

The system, like many public universities across the nation, was struggling, largely due to the rising cost of education and reduced per-student state and federal funding. Just one year before, under financial duress, UC came to the brink of breaking its commitment to accept all students who meet specified entry criteria. Adding to the stress was a population bulge the university calls Tidal Wave II: in four years, starting from 2000, enrollment increased 19 percent while state appropriations dropped 15 percent. To compensate, student fees were surging—up 79 percent in the past four years. Yet the expense reports suggested the university wasn’t exactly spending as if times were tight.

Shevitz’s burgeoning story piqued the interest of her newest colleague, Todd Wallack, a bulldog-aggressive young reporter who specialized in finding stories embedded in data, a practice called computer-assisted reporting. Wallack submitted a public records request (PRA) for UC’s payroll database in its entirety. UC argued that disclosing several years’ worth of names and salaries, which could be an indication of employees’ performance, was a violation of privacy, but the *Chronicle*

was unrelenting. In September, three months after the PRA was filed, UC turned over a disk containing 255,718 employee pay records, and Wallack began running database searches of all kinds. In late October, the UC communications point person got an e-mail message from Schevitz with a long list of questions focused primarily on the compensation packages for Kalonji, Denton, and Greenwood. But she also slipped in a question about professor Lynda Goff, whom Greenwood had promoted to a job working directly for her: “How does UC handle the conflict in M.R.C. Greenwood overseeing her partner Lynda Goff?” (This is not the same woman Greenwood was living with.)

The question sent UC into a panic. For several weeks, the communications team had been fielding a steady stream of questions from the *Chronicle*. The investigation was of a magnitude that could threaten their funding from Sacramento and their ability to attract top people. The Greenwood-Goff issue could turn out to be serious. For years, their friendship had been a steady topic of gossip. The two were walking partners and had often been seen dining out or at UC functions together, though Greenwood insists that they were always just close friends, not lovers. “When it’s two male golfing buddies, nobody has a problem,” she said later. “But when it’s two women...”

Trying to forestall the *Chronicle* from going with the story, Reese convened a conference call with the reporters. The atmosphere was already tense when Wallack abruptly shifted the conversation away from Goff and Greenwood’s personal relationship. “We’re talking about a business partnership,” he said. The reporters had turned up Goff and Greenwood’s names together on a current property deed, something no one at UC knew anything about.

Greenwood, taken aback by Wallack’s allegation, made a few phone calls. She was certain she had dissolved any business connection with Goff more than a year before. But within a few calls, she realized that a rental property they had co-owned as an investment had not, as she thought, been transferred fully into Goff’s name. She immediately went to see Dynes. The two had been hired as chancellors on the same day, and even though Greenwood had been in consideration for Dynes’s job, they were good friends. “I’ve got a problem,” she said. She explained the *Chronicle*’s information and said she would resign if he wanted her to. (“Good provosts fall on their sword,” she said later.) As Greenwood tells it, Dynes told her not to get ahead of herself, that the incident was unfortunate but not fatal. Greenwood claims he repeated this assurance a few days later when another nepotism allegation—this time regarding the hiring of Greenwood’s son for an internship at UC Merced—bubbled up. Dynes referred both matters to an audit team to examine and told Greenwood he was eager to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

While Dynes was waiting to hear back from his advisers, Denton’s formal induction activities were under way

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at Santa Cruz. She finished her opening remarks with the words of Julius Caesar, spoken as he stood at the bank of the Rubicon ready to invade Italy: *Jaeta Alea Est*—the die is cast. Diversity was her platform, and every aspect of the proceedings—two packed days of pro-diversity symposia, speeches with Swahili proverbs, and the dismissal of “patriarchal, white conventions”—had been orchestrated to make her core mission clear. But with all the challenges facing Santa Cruz, not everyone was thrilled with the singular focus. “She overdid it, and I wasn’t alone in that view,” says Pister, who was in the audience to support her that day.

Meanwhile, as Denton was preparing for the final events of the weekend, Greenwood was about to get the shock of her life. She was on her way to Santa Cruz to join the celebration when Dynes called to tell her he was putting her on paid leave of absence. She was in a box: she could either resign or face a humiliating investigation. But either way, her 16-year bullet-train ride to the top echelon of academic power was over. She urged him to slow down and pleaded for a face-to-face conversation to discuss why he’d changed his stance. But all he said, according to Greenwood, was, “This can’t wait. We have got to get out ahead of this story.”

Apparently, the auditor had reported back to Dynes that he had more questions than answers about the two women’s relationship and business interactions. Dynes discussed these findings with his top advisers and was also hearing from various sources about Greenwood and Goff. Even though he believed Greenwood’s claim that she and Goff had never been lovers, he felt he had to act. “There were all these rumors swirling around,” he says. “In view of all the things I was hearing from lots of fairly powerful people, I was protecting her.”

In keeping with Denton’s cursed timing, the morning after her official debut, the “UC Shocker” earned the *Sentinel*’s biggest headline. The story said that although “the university has not determined whether any wrongdoing occurred,” Greenwood had resigned. Some people felt her end was deserved. She had been sloppy, they said, and even if others at UC were guilty of more substantial infractions, she deserved what she got. But a powerful group of Bay Area academics and businesspeople came to her defense, arguing that her punishment didn’t even remotely fit the crime. A letter to the editor in the *Chronicle* by Santa Cruz sociology professor E. Melanie DuPuis saw shades of old-fashioned sexism. “Guilty women are tied at the stake and burned for the sins of all of us,” she wrote.

For her part, Greenwood felt betrayed by Dynes. Her missteps with Goff had been inadvertent, and the business dealings she was accused of amounted to one investment with Goff in a single rental home in Davis. And she was eventually cleared completely in the case of her son. Yet her hard-won career had been destroyed by a swirl of rumor. She faulted Dynes for making her the story in an effort to save face for himself and the university. Greenwood also acknowledged that the perception

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that she's gay may well have contributed to her demise.

Don Miller, a member of the *Sentinel's* editorial board, wrote that the "eerie juxtaposition" of Greenwood's fall and the black cloud that had been following Denton wasn't a coincidence; perhaps the partner hire of Kalonji is what fanned suspicion about Greenwood and Goff, he said. Miller concluded that Greenwood's mess "adds fuel to the whisper campaign that what is seen by some as a powerful coterie of lesbians has gained power and influence within the UC system." His assertion was lambasted as "lesbophobia" by some UCSC faculty, and some community members descended on Miller's office to complain.

Dynes saw the column in a routine distribution of UC news and called Denton to register his disgust. But as in the case of the lesbian lover headline, UC issued no response.

THE \$871 MILLION SECRET

Nine days after Greenwood's resignation on November 4, the *Chronicle* finally began publishing a series of stories that Dynes had tried to get ahead of. Starting with the stunning fact that 8,500 staffers had collected at least \$20,000 each in unreported bonuses and extra pay in the previous year, Schevitz and Wallack methodically cracked open a secret culture of executive compensation more widespread than anyone could have imagined. At the heart of the series was a blockbuster number Wallack had teased out of payroll data. According to his calculations, \$871 million had been "quietly handed out" in "administrative stipends, bonuses, and other hidden cash compensation." There was a veritable canyon between UC's reported salaries (plus overtime) and the total payroll.

The tone was dramatic and indignant, referring to staffers "pulling down" bonuses and "an impressive array" of perks, from separation pacts and low-interest home loans to "free mansions for people of means." Greenwood's 15-month paid leave (after which she was planning to return to her tenured post at UC Davis) was called out. Davis head Larry Vanderhoef was exposed for offering a secret separation agreement to a vice chancellor, and UCSF medical school dean David Kessler for getting a litany of extras above the \$540,000 "total compensation" UC publicly reported. It was even noted that San Diego chancellor Marye Anne Fox served on many corporate boards.

Denton was among the offenders most often cited. Ten of the 40-odd stories that appeared between November 2005 and July 2006, often on the front page, mentioned Kalonji's hire, Denton's severance plan, and her home renovation. In one story, they said she had "requested" certain home improvements. But in a story two weeks later, the changes were something Denton had "demanded," though no explanation was given for the change. Her dog run drew particular ire. The sizable pen was originally budgeted at \$7,000, but the cost grew to \$30,000 to accommodate changes required by the property's topography and predators. While the run grew into a symbol of UC's recklessness, the explanation for the overruns and the fact that Denton hadn't been told about them until the work was done—all information UC gave the *Chronicle*—was never published. Other than her

suicide, the dog run is still the only thing many people know about Denton.

The paper's coverage of what was now being widely referred to as the UC compensation scandal was in many ways an impressive display of watchdog journalism. The drama of the revelations triggered an almost Pavlovian cycle in state government and within UC, with each new finding generating a response—hearings, audits, policy reforms—followed by new stories. And the university never disputed the *Chronicle's* assertion that it was not being above board in its compensation practices and was even circumventing its own policies. In February, at the first of two legislative hearings, Dynes personally apologized for UC's failures. Later, he acknowledged its "culture of secrecy" and its history of "trying to get away with as much as possible and disclose as little as possible."

In mid-January, however, without fanfare, the *Chronicle* published a story that appeared to backpedal on the financial aspect of the scandal. In a brief, cryptic piece, buried in the middle of the Bay Area section, Schevitz and Wallack reported that UC had by this time provided a full breakdown of the \$871 million, and by its accounting, over half of the amount was clinical revenue paid to hospital administrators and health sciences faculty. Another \$221 million was faculty pay for additional teaching and research and union pay for unusual shifts. Millions more was attributed to "compensation under special contracts" and speaking honorariums. All of these expenses, UC argued, while admittedly not included in the official wage and overtime budget—and therefore not transparent to the public—were legitimate and standard forms of salary.

UC also complained that the series left readers with an exaggerated impression of how much top-tier executives were getting. Its official report states: "While senior managers at the University have been the focus of the *Chronicle's* stories, these senior managers received only \$7

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million, or less than 1 percent of the \$871 million figure.” The \$7 million figure did not appear in the *Chronicle* story, nor did the paper ever respond to UC’s charge that the focus on senior management had misled readers.

Another problem with the series was the lack of context about academic compensation nationwide. Only two articles, which ran six months into the series, addressed UC’s primary line of defense, that the pay and perks have become a competitive necessity in recent years. A number of heavyweight UC backers, including Warren Hellman, Gordon Moore, Walter Haas, and Doug Shorenstein, have publicly expressed this view. Also, little was written about the fact that such compensation has become a trend, particularly among public universities that increasingly have to compete with highly endowed private schools. Rosenthal acknowledges this shortcoming. “I think we could have done better, sooner,” he says.

As for Dynes, he never publicly defended many of the people—his own executive hires—who had been targeted in the *Chronicle* saga. He never defended Denton’s home renovations, even though he had offered them in her contract. Nor did he attempt to deflect the attacks against the hiring of Kalonji. “Because of that,” Greenwood says, “it was made to be seen like an outrageous appointment, even though it was nothing out of the ordinary.”

NOT A QUITTER

A year after the “lesbian lover” headline, people on campus began to notice that Denton was not doing well. Her behavior was erratic, and though she meant well, she could be abrupt, tactless, even mean at times. She seemed to be pushing people away. “You never knew which Denice you were going to get,” one UC administrator has remarked. Denton’s mother, Carolyn Mabee, says she was becoming increasingly isolated. “Here she was, living in a glass house with no support, nobody to talk to,” Mabee says. “She would occasionally drive to Watsonville just so she could walk around, get something to eat, and enjoy the anonymity.”

It’s unclear how much support Kalonji was able to offer during this time. The two were rarely together, since Kalonji’s new job had her traveling a lot, and when she was in the country, she was living over an hour away in San Francisco. This strained a relationship that friends describe as never having been easy, given their equally steely wills. Kalonji, a tall woman with long hair and a flamboyant style of dressing, is a striking presence with as large a personality as Denton’s.

Dynes did become aware Denton was struggling and offered help. “Why don’t I just come to Santa Cruz, and you and I will walk the campus shoulder to shoulder,” he says he told her. “If there are elements that you are concerned about, we can talk about them.” She declined his offer.

Denton was seeing several doctors, though, including a psychiatrist, because of symptoms she thought might be thyroid related. She had been on synthetic hormones for years after having a cancerous thyroid removed in her 20s, and periodically her medication needed to be adjusted. Just after arriving at Santa Cruz, in fact, she had needed treatment for an “acute thyroid condition,” as her mother put it in the press. Depression is one possible symptom of a

thyroid problem.

Greenwood visited Denton's home for lunch in late February. The two had not seen each other in months and in fact had never become close. But Greenwood could see the chancellor was distraught. Denton mentioned several times that she was concerned about her safety and was worried that someone would hurt her dogs. She also told Greenwood she wasn't sure whom in Dynes's office she could trust. Right after the visit, Greenwood called several colleagues on campus. "Denton needs help," she told them.

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, the chancellor at Merced and the person Denton had grown closest to in the UC administration, had already come to the same conclusion. In fact, she urged Denton to consider calling it quits. She tried to convince Denton that, after just one year, she could write the appointment off as a bad fit and move on. But Denton didn't see it that way. "Woman. Engineer. Gay. She thought she was representing those three constituencies," Tomlinson-Keasey says.

While Denton persevered, the signs of her unraveling were everywhere. Aptheker noticed Denton was obsessed with blogs about herself. She told her to stop driving herself crazy by looking at "this junk," but Denton insisted she needed to stay abreast of what people were saying about her. One blogger, in reference to the \$10,000 Sub-Zero refrigerator installed in her home, called her "elitist scum." Another took her to task about the Kalonji hire, saying she "sought the sanctuary of victimhood, of someone at the mercy of red-state yahoos." She began canceling engagements so consistently that people avoided booking them to save the embarrassment. Some days she didn't even go to work.

On June 6, Denton called Tomlinson-Keasey. She had just had a very frightening experience, she told her. While leaving a lunch engagement, Denton had been surrounded by 60 or so student protesters, who were criticizing UC's "institutional racism" and her

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A friend was so alarmed by Denton's listless state—"I had to work to even get her to speak"—that she asked her if she owned a gun or was having suicidal thoughts.

diversity programs as "rhetoric." The group, some with strips of green cloth covering their mouths, made her watch a skit about racism. When she tried to leave, some of the demonstrators sat on her car. A few days later, one of Denton's closest friends, who had called to check in, was so alarmed by Denton's listless state—"I had to work to even get her to speak"—that she asked her if she owned a gun or was having suicidal thoughts. Within days, Denton left campus on a brief medical leave. On June 18, she checked into the Langley Porter psychiatric hospital at UCSF.

"Here's someone who is known internationally as a champion of diversity, and on her home territory she was being portrayed as a racist," says Johns Hopkins professor and former dean of engineering Ilene Busch-Vishniac, who read about the incident online. "That must have cut to the quick." After following much of the coverage of Denton's career at Santa Cruz, her friend Ana Marie Cauce, a professor at UW, sees a similar discrepancy. "It's hard to have been a friend reading the media accounts in the Santa Cruz paper and the *Chronicle*. You're going, 'Who is this person they're talking about?' It's not the woman I knew."

On June 23, Denton checked out of Langley Porter, where she had been for six days. Her mother had flown in from Texas to pick her up and assumed a round-the-clock watch. Denton had been suffering from insomnia for several days now. She was taking Ambien to help her sleep, Zoloft for her depression, and, according to Mabee, some other psychiatric drugs as well.

CHASED THROUGH THE NIGHT

The day Denton left UCSF, Kalonji boarded a plane to Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C. She was scheduled to speak at a conference in Boston and struggled over the decision to go. But with Denton's mother in town, Kalonji felt her partner was in good hands. Kalonji arrived in Washington, but then had to spend the night in Dulles waiting out the storm that had grounded her connecting flight. Since she couldn't make her engagement, she booked a flight home in the morning. As she was waiting to board, Kalonji called to check on Denton. "It's the worst of all possible news," Mabee blurted out.

The previous night, Denton had spent hours aimlessly driving her mother around San Francisco. When Mabee asked where she was going, Denton would only say that she thought police were chasing her. At 2 a.m., she pulled up to the Paramount, the building on Mission Street where Kalonji lived. She said she wanted to retrieve a purse she had left there. She and her mother went upstairs, and after getting the bag, they returned to the elevator. Denton began pushing the up button again and again while Mabee was pushing to go down. Mabee asked her what she was doing, and, thinking Denton was trying to get away from her, posed the poignant question, "Do you dislike me?" Denton just said she didn't want to go home and the two talked for some time. Suddenly, though, Denton stormed off down

the hall. Mabee chased after her, but she got away. For the next three hours, Mabee frantically searched the building for her daughter but eventually returned to the car to wait, hoping Denton would return.

Only she didn't. Sometime after she left her mother at the elevator, Denton climbed onto the ledge of the roof on the 43rd floor of her partner's apartment building, the tallest in San Francisco. At 8:17 a.m. a guest at the Argent Hotel called the police to report a body lying on the roof of the parking structure across the street.

Kalonji arrived in San Francisco that afternoon. No one from UC was there to meet her plane, but Greenwood, by sheer coincidence, was only a few minutes away. She had just returned from a trip to France, switched on her BlackBerry, and received the devastating news. At that point she called Tomlinson-Keasey to see if there was anything she could do for Kalonji, and Tomlinson-Keasey told her to go immediately to the airport's Red Carpet Club, where Kalonji was waiting for her brother's flight to arrive. When Greenwood found her, Kalonji was sobbing and calling out Denton's name. Greenwood decided to take her to a hotel to wait, and while she was helping her into the car, Kalonji passed out.

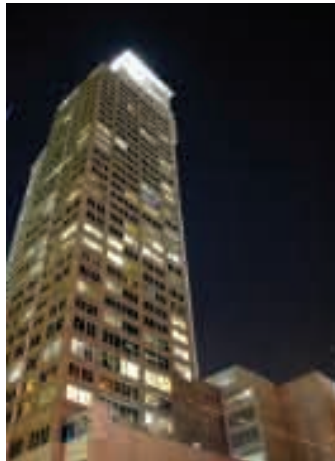
Five days later, June 29, a thousand people gathered for Denton's memorial inside Recital Hall on the Santa Cruz campus. Denton's sister Derri painted a poignant portrait of her sister. "[She] ran with scissors, drew outside the lines..." She described her as a gregarious and precocious child who was "reading the funny papers by age 3." Berkeley engineering professor Alice Agogino recited a long list of Denton's achievements. Angela Davis referred to "the swirling controversies" and "unrelenting homophobic attacks" Denton had endured. France Córdova, one of UC's three remaining female chancellors spoke, along with Dynes.

The *New York Times* had a reporter and a photographer cover the service. The *Chronicle* did not send anyone. Ken Connor, the paper's metro editor, who oversaw the compensation series, said the paper typically doesn't cover memorials. But managing editor Rosenthal admitted that when the *New York Times* piece on Denton's memorial and life came out, he and others at the paper noticed. "There were a number of people who saw that and said, 'We should have been there.'"

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

No one who knew Denice Denton claims to understand what led her to the Paramount roof that day. And no one is anything but utterly shocked.

Kalonji, who still works for Dynes, is no exception. Until our conversation, she had dodged the press, and even now she seemed uncomfortable talking about Denton's suicide. "Denice was so strong. It was hard for anyone to really imagine the degree of pain she was in," she said. She seemed to be including herself among those who misjudged the situation. She believes Denton's thyroid imbalance played some role and—perhaps in response to Mabee's published comment that Denton's severe stress was related to both job and relationship problems—insisted she and Denton had not broken up. Kalonji is sure, though, that homophobia directed against Denton was a key factor in the tragedy. ■



Denice Denton jumped to her death from the roof of the 43-story Paramount apartment building on Mission Street.

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Indeed, within a week of Denton's death, Kalonji saw a blog posting that she recalls said something like: "The irresponsible dyke chose to celebrate gay pride [weekend] in SF. I would have loved to have heard the bulldog scream on her way down." Kalonji sent a copy of the blog to Greenwood with the comment, "In case you didn't believe Denice was subject to real homophobic hate mail."

Greenwood was stunned by the blog. It was only in the suicide's aftermath that she learned how vicious the attacks against Denton had been. She was still mainly inclined to blame sexism for both Denton's fate and her own, but when a woman at the UCSF symposium asked her, "Should a lesbian in a significant position at UC be publicly out, in the name of leadership?" she paused long before offering this advice: "Think long and hard."

Some of Denton's friends specifically fault the *Chronicle* for using her as a symbol of university-wide excess and setting a negative tone that caused so many people to view her with suspicion. But neither Schevitz nor Connor regret any part of their coverage. Mabee thinks the drug cocktail Denton was taking was a huge factor in her suicide. "She wasn't in her right mind that day," she says. Other friends blame Dynes, and the university in general, for failing to defend her. "Why wasn't UC more supportive?" asks Amy Wendt, a professor of engineering at the University of Wisconsin. "Was she set up to be a scapegoat for the system?"

When I spoke to Dynes about the scandal that has rocked his administration, there was a real heaviness about him; he looked like he would need a winter in hibernation to get his energy back. He still holds himself responsible for not doing more to help her, for failing to read the signals correctly. He talked about the difficulty of knowing when to respect someone's space and when to intervene out of concern. At one point in our interview he teared up.

"There's a woman dead," he said with a heavy sigh. "One can't forget, there's a real bright, incisive woman who is dead."

While Dynes's remorse was striking, it is hard not to question why he remains in his job. Several legislators have called for his resignation, and there's evidence that he is significantly weakened and continues to be stripped of power. But Greenwood and Denton were the ones who got sacrificed, not him.

For different reasons, perhaps, both Denton and Greenwood were vulnerable within UC. Greenwood's evasiveness about her sexuality invited inquiry and suspicion; some of Dynes's close advisers said that because of her private ways, they never felt confident she was giving them the whole story about her and Goff. Now, a year after the incident, Dynes himself no longer seems as certain. "The stories about the relationship between M.R.C. and Lynda that came out after that—I don't know whether they're true or not," he says. "I mean the innuendo was incredible."

Denton's vulnerabilities were many—inexperience, sensitivity, a private nature—but ultimately her Achilles'

heel was the opposite of Greenwood's: she was out, and her rough-hewn manner somehow brought out the worst kind of gay baiting. Would the polished Greenwood have been pilloried in similar circumstances? There appears to be no way for either woman to have survived in her position at UC, given the combustible mix of crusading media, a defensive public university, and the easy target of women in powerful positions. Denton was also a victim of today's cynical climate, in which a single headline can turn an embittered public against almost any executive pay package, however justified.

Reflecting on the whole experience, Greenwood finds one reality impossible to ignore: "It's that three white men are left standing." (She's referring to Dynes, Darling, and Rory Hume, who replaced her as provost.) Janie Fouke, provost of the University of Florida and former dean of the college of engineering at Michigan State, goes one step further. She recently got a call from a headhunter representing one of the UC campuses for a job she declined to pursue. "Are you kidding me?" she asks. "Until that system learns civil behavior, I wouldn't recommend any woman go to UC." ■

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