



# STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

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## **SEAOC statement regarding UC building safety**

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Recent articles in the *Los Angeles Times* regarding the vulnerability of University of California campus buildings (UCLA and UC Berkeley) are stark reminders of our state's vulnerability to earthquakes and the need for modern, engineered solutions. The results of studies recently released for UC, and the damage at the China Lake Naval Weapons Station following the Searles Valley Earthquake Sequence, highlight that no organization or agency is immune from seismic risk. These studies, reviewing campuses with buildings spanning decades of engineering and construction practices, represent a small microcosm of the communities which surround them. The next, and broader, question should be, "What is the damage expectation for the cities and communities of Berkeley, Oakland, Westwood and Los Angeles?"

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The reports highlight "Serious" to "Severe" risks, and the completion of these studies should be applauded as the proper way to investigate and understand risks, allowing appropriate next steps to be defined. Ken O'Dell, President of the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California (SEAOSC), speaks to this [here](#).

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The Structural Engineers Association of California (SEAOC) encourages building owners and policy makers throughout California to follow the example of the UC Regents and begin or continue discussions on how similar information may be gained for their communities.

Seismic risks are real, and few buildings, even those built to modern codes, are immune from damage during a major earthquake. Determining the severity of the risk is only the first step. With this information the UC Regents can set priorities and mitigation strategies can be investigated and funded. This is not the first time the UC system has undertaken these assessments. The UC Seismic Safety Policy dates to the mid-1970s and has resulted in better design criteria and strengthened buildings over the years. However, as pointed out in the articles, structural engineering practice, including enhanced knowledge of regional seismology, continually develops. A great lesson from recent studies highlights the need for continual diligence in assessing risk, including that posed to retrofitted buildings.

Whether as a resource to communities and policy makes or as a connection to individual members providing services, SEAOC is available to provide support and information to those seeking to understand their needs and determine a process for moving forward with mitigation. For further information, contact SEAOC Executive Director, Don Schinske at [dschinske@seaoc.org](mailto:dschinske@seaoc.org).