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The Honorable Dede Alpert  
Chair, Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan  
for Education - Kindergarten through University  
State Capitol, Room 5114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Alpert:

I have followed with interest California State University Chancellor Charles Reed's proposal that CSU be granted independent authority to offer the Ed.D. degree. Chancellor Reed's proposal has direct implications for the future of the Master Plan, which is why I should like to offer some comments on it to you and your colleagues.

Those of us involved in developing the 1960 Master Plan envisioned joint degree programs offered by the University of California and the California State University as a cost-effective way of meeting the state's needs for doctoral training, particularly in education and professional disciplines. As I mentioned in my August 1999 testimony to your committee, I have been disappointed that less use has been made of the joint degree option than we anticipated in 1960. Yet I also noted that there were a variety of reasons for this situation-- a national Ph.D. surplus in many fields over the ensuing decades, for example.

The question now facing you and your colleagues in the Legislature is how best to meet the state's needs for educational leaders in the K-12 schools and the community colleges. Chancellor Reed's proposal assumes that these needs can only be met by giving CSU independent authority to offer the Ed.D. I disagree for two reasons.

First, doctoral programs are the most expensive offered throughout higher education, and it is clear that instituting such programs at CSU in addition to those at UC will involve substantially higher costs. Moreover, UC President Richard Atkinson has made it clear that, to the extent a problem exists, the University of California is prepared to address it. I have discussed this issue with him and seen copies of his February 7th letters to you and to Chancellor Reed, which committed the University of California to a series of initiatives to expand public higher education's ability

to produce education doctorates over the next five to ten years in ways that are accessible to working professionals and that focus on integrating theory and practice. The approach reflected in President Atkinson's initiatives offers the following advantages:

- . It capitalizes on California's existing capacity for addressing doctoral training issues by calling on UC campus chancellors to enlarge or modify their graduate education programs to make them more accessible for working professionals in K-12 and the community colleges.
- . It proposes new joint doctoral programs with CSU and commits UC to accelerating approval of four UC/CSU joint degree education programs currently under review. President Atkinson has also asked each UC chancellor to explore with CSU campuses in its region opportunities for joint degree collaborations, not only in education but in all disciplines;
- . It goes beyond the narrow question of degree programs. There are many other ways besides such programs to give professional training to K-12 and community college administrators. President Atkinson has announced that by the end of this year the University of California will establish the UC Institute of Educational Leadership, which will take a comprehensive look at the training now being offered to current and future leaders in K-12 and the community colleges and produce policy perspectives, information, and research relevant to making informed decisions about educational leadership. UC, for example, already sponsors doctoral-level programs that prepare graduates for K-14 leadership positions, individual campus programs for principals already on the job, and the Governor's Principal Leadership Institutes. All of these programs contribute to meeting the need for effective K-12 and community college administrators. The task given to the Institute by President Atkinson is to coordinate these and other activities and focus on developing educational leadership and policy research for California.

These steps would be more than sufficient to ensure California's supply of highly trained administrators for the K-12 schools and the community colleges. It is clear that UC is prepared to do what is required to meet current and future needs for education doctorates entirely on its own, if necessary.

The CSU proposal raises an even larger issue, however, which brings me to my second point. Chancellor Reed has said that he is interested only in authorization for CSU to offer the doctorate in education, not an independent CSU doctorate in other disciplines.

Whatever the Chancellor's or CSU's intentions, once doctoral degree-granting authority is given to CSU in one discipline, the principle of differentiation of missions among California's three public segments of higher education would be breached. Pressure will inevitably mount to extend this authority to other fields as well. Approval of an independent CSU doctorate would be a major example of "mission creep"--a well-known phenomenon in American higher education in which one segment of higher education redefines its mission to include responsibilities already being performed by another. Once set in motion, mission creep is nearly impossible to reverse. It has cost taxpayers in most states millions of dollars because it has generated unproductive competition, overbuilding, and duplication of effort in public higher education systems around the country.

But not in California. Thanks to the Master Plan's differentiation of function, the Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California have distinctive missions and pools of students. As a result, each has achieved a degree of excellence in its sphere unmatched by higher education in other states. This three-way division of labor, about which the framers of the Master Plan thought long and hard, has been so successful over the past 40 years that it is respected and admired not only across our country but around the world.

In arguing against an independent doctorate for CSU, I am not arguing against any change in the Master Plan. The California of 2001 is not the California of 1960, and the task of your committee is to judge the extent to which the Master Plan should be modified to reflect current realities. I am suggesting, however, that it would be bad public policy to compromise an essential Master Plan principle to solve a problem that can be addressed and indeed is being addressed--without a change in State policy.

The California State University is one of the great assets of this state. As a former president of the University of California, I take pride in the longstanding partnership between UC and CSU. It would be a major misstep to approve the CSU proposal which in the long run will not best serve the State of California. I strongly favor the position of President Atkinson.

Sincerely,



Clark Kerr

cc: Members, Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan - Kindergarten  
through University  
Chancellor Reed  
President Atkinson