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May 8, 2002

The Honorable Dede Alpert
Chair, Joint Committee to Develop
a Master Plan for Education
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Alpert:

As part of the ongoing discussion on creating a new Master Plan for Education, I enclose a document designed to express a University of California view on the University's role in such a plan. "A Perspective on Developing a New Master Plan" is a broad statement of University principles that would underlie our commitment to serving the state under a new framework designed to encompass all levels of education, pre-kindergarten through university. It highlights elements from the current Master Plan for Higher Education that we see as vital to the continued success of California postsecondary endeavors, and calls on the University to become a more active partner in K-12 improvement.

In particular, this document makes the case that collaboration with K-12 is an essential part of the University's mission given our land grant origins. The large disparity in educational achievement among different California demographic groups is as compelling a dilemma today as were scarce food supply and the inability to access natural resources at the time of UC's founding. In the late 19th century, the University's land grant mission resulted in a UC focus on agriculture and mining—addressing the critical issues of the time. At the outset of the 21st century, providing all Californians with access to a quality education is one of the most pressing social problems UC can help the State confront.

The University, accordingly, would like to be a partner in K-12 educational improvement. UC must take part in this effort in ways that are consistent with its teaching, research, and public service missions and that utilize the expertise and experience of our faculty and experienced K-12 professionals. Building on college preparation and outreach programs that seek to make UC accessible to underrepresented students, the University can offer supplemental programs to encourage college attendance and can work with K-12 educators to align high school curricula with faculty expectations of competency in the various disciplines. UC can enhance research into effective student learning and consider ways to better translate this research so as to be of use to elementary and secondary schools.

Moreover, new and expanded initiatives in educational leadership and teacher training constitute effective avenues for UC involvement in K-12 improvement. The University can contribute by providing high quality credential programs on a par with other UC professional schools, increasing enrollment in these credential programs, offering creative professional development alternatives for teachers and principals, and partnering with K-12 to share subject matter expertise for both curriculum and assessment. School-University partnerships that have grown over the past five years provide new foundations for ongoing collaboration—foundations that can endure given the commitment of the individuals involved, the personal relationships formed, and the respect engendered for educators at all levels. Integrated into core UC missions, such enterprises collectively represent the University's commitment to help improve education for all students.

While the K-12 challenges are significant, California does have the precedent of a successful higher education system that is a direct result of adherence to the core principles of the original Master Plan for Higher Education. Significant elements of the landmark agreement, including differentiation of segmental missions and functions, are fundamental to the strength of California's postsecondary system as a whole, as well as the achievements of the respective segments.

The University strongly believes the State should reaffirm the overarching goals of access, affordability, and quality initially outlined in 1960. These commitments should be the basis for contemplating difficult issues such as how to accommodate postsecondary enrollment growth of "Tidal Wave II" and how to ensure equitable educational opportunities to the increasingly diverse population of the state while maintaining high quality academic programs. In addition, the University believes a new Master Plan should explicitly recognize economic development as a State goal for higher education, including the key roles research and graduate education play in economic development and workforce preparation.

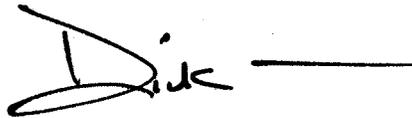
Finally, it is clear that a new framework must include mechanisms of accountability. We strongly believe the Master Plan should build on the existing Compact/Partnership model of accountability in use for UC and the California State University. This model establishes a *two-way* partnership between the State and higher education institutions in which the state commits to an adequate and stable level of funding for higher education in exchange for institutional commitments to achieve specific outcomes that further State goals. This linkage of achievement of well-articulated goals to explicit resource commitments is crucial. It establishes a baseline for State support, as well as the opportunity for a discussion on the proper goals and the best strategies to achieve them.

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The perspective outlined in the enclosed paper represents the best thinking of a group of University faculty and administrators who have met over the past year in parallel with the early deliberations of your Joint Committee and the activities of the seven working groups. Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef of UC Davis chaired this effort. I hope you will find the document helpful in crafting the new Master Plan and in defining an appropriate role for the University in contributing to educational improvement at all levels in California.

As always, I appreciate your considering our views. I look forward to further discussions with you and other members of the Joint Committee as you move forward on developing a new Master Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard C. Atkinson
President

Enclosure

cc: Members of the Joint Committee
Chancellor Vanderhoef
Provost King
Senior Vice President Darling
Vice Provost Zelmanowitz
Assistant Vice President Arditti