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Department of Energy Agency Review Team
Office of the President-Elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Members of the Transition Team:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and several of my University of California (UC) colleagues to discuss how UC can support the incoming Biden-Harris Administration. The Department of Energy (DOE) ensures America's security and prosperity by addressing energy, environmental and national security challenges through transformative science and technology solutions. Through financial support from DOE, University of California's researchers have developed important scientific and technological innovations necessary to address our nation's most pressing challenges. UC's partnership with DOE for over 230 combined years has been particularly important to achieving this goal through UC's successful management and leadership of three major national laboratories —Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos— as public service for the nation. Additionally, as the main R&D engine for the government, DOE's science and engineering training programs have equipped the next generation of innovators with necessary skills to address some of these major national challenges.

Following up on our conversation, I would like to re-iterate some of UC's goals, in relation to supporting the new administration's priorities at DOE.

PRIORITIZE RESEARCH

- **Increase funding and support for early career programs.** We appreciate the role that DOE's Office of Science has played in training our nation's science and engineering workforce. However, the realities of today's climate in research, education, and the economy, require additional funding and support for the next generation. Therefore, we urge the new administration to triple or quadruple the amount allocated to supporting graduate, postdoctoral and other early career programs to ensure the continuity of this pipeline.
- **Invest in basic research.** The U.S. higher education community has long faced barriers preventing our most promising talent from achieving equal access to a high-quality education, sufficient financial support for conducting basic research studies, as well as an eroding infrastructure for non-health related research. Given that other countries such as China have made substantial investments in science and

engineering, failure to support our national efforts in this regard will cause the U.S. economy to lose its place as a global leader in these areas.

- **Support inter-sector collaborations.** In addition to basic research, our nation would benefit from supporting the maturation and commercialization of basic science discoveries into practical tools advancing society, enabling the growth and development of our nation's science and engineering pipeline. To this end, we encourage the new administration to support multiple levels of collaborations, including between:
 - DOE's Office of Science and applied research programs to highlight the societal relevance of basic research.
 - DOE and the higher education community, improving connections between campuses within the UC system and the National Labs.
 - DOE and other agencies on topics of common interest that could help move our common priorities forward.
- **Prioritize research recovery.** In the light of the pandemic's effects on the research enterprise, we urge DOE to:
 - Include research recovery funding in their FY2022 budget requests to Congress.
 - Provide cost extensions while minimizing administrative burden for researchers.
 - Develop new programs for researchers whose careers have been disrupted due to the pandemic. This includes graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, as well as women in science and engineering whose discoveries fuel this nation's technological innovations.
 - Extend, or ideally make permanent, the 20% cost share waiver for universities and non-profit institutions. Unfortunately, this waiver has expired and Congress has yet to renew. The requirement stifles innovation.

CLIMATE CHANGE & INDUSTRIES OF THE FUTURE

- **Invest in climate change model systems.** As a system, UC pledges to be carbon neutral by 2025, and has deep scientific expertise in climate-change research. We applaud the incoming administration's support for addressing climate change, and believe that increased and sustained investment in energy hubs, research platforms and the national lab user facilities would be beneficial for developing a comprehensive model-system to understand and utilize the interdependence between energy and climate to address our nation's environmental issues.
- **Focus on industries of the future.** We encourage the new administration to consider recommendations from Industries of the Future, and include other areas such as the bioeconomy, as well as increased research efforts for agencies such as DOE. These efforts can also encourage upskilling and reskilling programs, and a stronger investment in the future of infrastructure.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION & POST-PANDEMIC GUIDANCE

- **International collaborations.** While we must maintain America's leadership on these issues, collaborations with other countries who share our vision of the research enterprise would be beneficial in order to advance global science and engineering. Therefore, we encourage the new administration to focus on strengthening the research and engineering enterprise within the US, as well as the relationships with our international partners.
- **Post-pandemic guidance.** While we are currently in the middle of a global pandemic, it has become readily apparent that COVID-19 has significantly changed the landscape of research and education. Therefore, we urge the administration to think ahead to the future of higher education and federal agencies including DOE post-pandemic, and provide top-level guidance on potential changes to research initiatives supported by DOE and other federal agencies. This includes clarifying guidelines related to the access of foreign nationals to DOE information, in order to foster innovation in the national labs and other entities carrying out similar research relevant to the agency's mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you our ideas and priorities for California and the nation. If you have any questions about the University's federal recommendations and priorities, please contact me. UC has a tremendous amount of expertise that I believe would be invaluable to the new administration, and I am happy to engage with your team in bringing this expertise to the important work before you.

Sincerely,



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Vice President for Research & Innovation



Craig S. Leasure, Ph.D.
Vice President for UC National
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cc: Associate Vice President for Federal Governmental Relations, Chris Harrington