



August 03, 2021

Office of the President
1111 Franklin St.
Oakland, CA 94607

universityofcalifornia.edu

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

CAMPUSES

- Berkeley
- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- Merced
- Riverside
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- San Diego
- San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

- Lawrence Berkeley
- Lawrence Livermore
- Los Alamos

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Padilla:

Thank you for your efforts to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic spending bills Congress approved over the past 17 months have provided essential aid to our students and researchers and to provide lifesaving health care.

As the Senate continues work on the fiscal year (FY) 2022 budget and finalizes negotiations to invest in our nation’s infrastructure, the University of California asks that legislation continue to support pandemic-related economic recovery by providing additional investments in public higher education. The University of California urges you to include the following provisions in the FY 2022 budget proposal:

- **Doubling the Pell Grant:** In 1980, Pell Grants covered more than 75 percent of the cost to attend a 4-year public university. Today, the maximum Pell Grant award covers just 28 percent of the cost to attend a 4-year public university. At UC, 35 percent of all undergraduates receive Pell Grants, but few can fully finance a 4-year degree, resulting in the rise of student loan debt. The University of California and its students are calling on Congress to restore the purchasing power of Pell Grants by doubling the amount of the maximum award and then indexing the grants to inflation. In order to secure this type of investment, Congress would need to include this in mandatory spending. We ask you to make this critical investment in human infrastructure while growing a highly skilled workforce for California.
- **Investing in research infrastructure:** Universities are home to some of the brightest minds working to address the most challenging scientific and technological issues facing the nation and our globe, including COVID-19, but often the tools they are working with are aging or inadequate. To enable timely advances and maintain the U.S. global leadership, UC urges Congress to provide \$40 billion in funding for competitive research infrastructure and instrumentation programs across the major research agencies.
- **Providing access to low-cost capital** to allow universities, like UC, and academic health centers to make preparedness upgrades through a combination of tax-exempt financing, specifically re-instating Advance Refunding Bonds that would make available a critical economic tool to ensure that entities which issue Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds, including state and local governments, and certain public universities, including UC, are able to refinance existing bonds at certain points to

take advantage of lower interest rates. Advance Refunding Bonds would provide UC with an important debt management tool that would allow the University to realize significant cost savings over time on its current debt and make resources available sooner to address the system's outstanding capital and infrastructure needs.

UC's additional key priorities for infrastructure legislation are outlined below.

- **Seismic:** Natural disasters cause significant damage to the nation's infrastructure. In 2017, the Federal Emergency Management Agency determined that earthquakes are estimated to cost the nation \$6.1 billion annually in building stock losses. UC requests robust investments for seismic retrofits to ensure public safety, minimize economic loss, and academic disruption.
- **Cybersecurity:** With the increase in cyberattacks, universities are making substantial investments in cybersecurity to protect against intellectual property theft and other sensitive information. Unfortunately, cybersecurity is expensive and forces universities to prioritize against other needs. Therefore, UC requests robust funding for cybersecurity infrastructure to ensure the academic community can continue to advance American competitiveness while protecting against security threats.
- **Climate Change:** To accelerate the nationwide transition to sustainable energy infrastructure, additional support for climate change research and development is needed. UC supports providing at least \$35 billion for climate research to help achieve technology breakthroughs that address the climate crisis and position the nation as a global leader in clean energy technology and clean energy jobs.

Health Care: As Congress develops the FY22 budget it is critical that our nation makes the needed investments in our healthcare enterprise, including that allows for UC to continue to provide high-quality healthcare. To this end, as our country continues to respond to and recover from COVID-19, UC urges Congress to support investments in physical, workforce and research infrastructure that is need to ensure that we have leading healthcare providers and researchers pursuing researching and providing quality care in world-class facilities. UC urges Congress to:

- Provide 14,000 additional GME slots to train critically-needed physicians and meet a growing national shortage of doctors; support robust funding for Title VII and Title VIII health workforce development programs, especially funding for programs that help prepare health care professionals providing care in underserved communities.
- Strengthen the Strategic National Stockpile and public health infrastructure to ensure that health care workers are prepared for the next emergency; encourage more domestic manufacturing of medical supplies.
- Support Academic Health Centers in their unique role in the health care system by investing in life-saving research and by finding ways to harness and leverage their collective expertise during a national public health crisis.
- Expand digital and data infrastructure, including expanding access to high-speed internet across the country, to support telehealth access; invest in data security for health care providers and educational institutions, to protect sensitive information.
- Make permanent telehealth services that have been made available under the public health emergency.

The University of California urges Congress to pass an FY22 budget that makes strong and robust investments in our nation's education, research and healthcare infrastructure, including critical "human" infrastructure and allows us to maintain our global scientific and technological leadership.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Harrington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "H".

Chris Harrington
Associate Vice President for Federal Relations
UC Office of the President