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Steve Juarez, Associate Vice President and Director

October 6, 2015

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 42 (Liu), as Amended September 2, 2015
Position: CONCERN

Dear Governor Brown:

I write in regard to SB 42 (Liu), which would establish the Office of Higher Education Performance and Accountability (OHEPA) to provide statewide postsecondary education planning and coordination. Senator Liu has been a leader in the effort to establish an independent coordinating body, and while we appreciate the hard work that has gone into crafting SB 42; we are concerned that it does not provide the independent guidance needed to inform the state's decisions regarding higher education—present and future.

SB 42 focuses on two primary issues: research and analysis and planning and coordination. On the first issue, the state currently has the ability to commission studies and research as needed. We have worked extensively with the Legislative Analyst's Office at the request of the Administration and Legislature in the past, and we will continue these efforts going forward. In relation to statewide coordination and planning, we concur that this is an important function, and each segment head is committed to strengthening coordination efforts. However, we are concerned that the structure in SB 42 does very little to facilitate meaningful coordination and collaboration that we all support to advance higher education in California beyond the efforts already taking place.

Structures and processes that allow for research, analysis, and coordination on statewide higher education issues could be important for the State. We would like to work with you and the Legislature on how to best achieve these goals; however, we remain concerned that pending these discussions, SB 42 may not be the most effective response to achieving these important objectives. California has the finest public higher education system in the nation and should have a coordinating body that understands the challenges we face and can sustain and enhance it in the future.

Sincerely,


Steve Juarez
Associate Vice President and Director

cc: Senator Carol Liu
President Janet Napolitano
Senior Vice President Nelson Peacock