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Steve Juarez, Associate Vice President and Director

September 25, 2015

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

Re: SB 359 (Mitchell) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

The University of California respectfully requests your signature on SB 359 (Mitchell), the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015. Under SB 359, governing boards of local educational agencies that serve pupils entering grade 9 and that have not adopted a fair, objective, and transparent mathematics placement policy as specified in the bill shall do so before the beginning of the 2016–17 school year.

UC agrees with SB 359's assertion that a pupil's 9th grade math course placement is a crucial crossroads for his or her future educational success. SB 359 would require that the adopted mathematics placement policy systematically take multiple academic objective measures into consideration, such as statewide assessments, pupil grades, and placement tests. These considerations would also include a placement checkpoint within the first month of the school year to ensure accurate placement and permit reevaluation of individual pupil's progress. Furthermore, pupil placement data would be reviewed annually to ensure that pupils who are qualified to progress based upon their performance on selected objective academic measures are not held back in a disproportionate manner on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background.

UC believes this bill will strengthen the mathematics placement function for students, and is happy to support SB 359. This is an important issue for schools and the state to address.

Thank you for your consideration of the University's views. Should you have any questions on the University's position on SB 359, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-9924.

Sincerely,

Steve Juarez
Associate Vice President and Director

cc: Senator Holly Mitchell
President Janet Napolitano
Senior Vice President Nelson Peacock