



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

NELSON PEACOCK

Senior Vice President – Government Relations

Office of State Governmental Relations

1130 K Street, Suite 340

Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 445-9924

Steve Juarez, Associate Vice President and Director

April 13, 2016

The Honorable Carol Liu  
Chair, Senate Education Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2083  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SCA 12 (Runner), as introduced February 19, 2016**  
**Scheduled for hearing in the Senate Education Committee on April 20, 2016**  
**Position: OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Liu:

The University must respectfully oppose SCA 12 (Runner), which would seek to amend the California Constitution in two fundamental ways. It would require all University of California (UC) campuses to report no later than July 1, 2017 uniform application, admission, and freshman class profiles of California students, out-of-state students, and international students enrolled at each campus. Using this data, the bill would require that the average statistical profile of out-of-state and international freshman students enrolled at each campus not be lower than the average statistical profile of in-state freshman students at that campus.

At the outset, it is important to note that the University does not object to reporting on the relative qualifications of resident and nonresident applicants, admitted students, and enrolled students. The University also agrees - and it is current University policy - that out of state students must be as or more qualified as California students to gain admission to UC. However, the language that would be inserted into the constitution by the author is overly prescriptive related to the types of data used to compare the relative merits of students. The University does not rely solely on factors such as GPA and standardized test scores to compare the relative merits of students, and this allows us to factor in the various academic and socioeconomic backgrounds of all applying students. The language set forth in this proposed amendment undermines this type of comprehensive analysis, which has been key to UC's ability to identify well qualified first-generation college and low-income students. Finally, any policy change related to data collection, comparative metrics, and reporting would more appropriately be dealt with through discussions with the legislature, rather than an amendment to the State Constitution.

To be clear, the University shares the authors' belief that UC has an obligation to California students who aspire to attend the University of California. This is a responsibility we have consistently honored throughout our history in two key respects:

- First, the University continues to honor the Master Plan by guaranteeing admission to every California resident applicant whose achievements place him or her within the top 12.5% of California high school graduates. For the past four years UC has exceeded this goal as the number of admitted California freshmen has exceeded 14% of California high school graduates.
- Second, we enroll every California undergraduate for whom the state provides enrollment funding. Again, UC exceeds this goal and currently enrolls thousands of California residents for whom the state has never provided enrollment funding.

UC acknowledges concerns expressed regarding the enrollment of nonresident students, but it is simply not the case that the enrollment of these students displaces California graduates. This year, out-of-state students will contribute nearly \$800 million in additional revenue for the University. These funds allowed us to maintain California enrollment through the years of the great recession and have allowed UC to keep tuition flat for the past six years. More importantly, we are currently in the process of enrolling 5,000 additional California residents as a direct result of the \$25 million in enrollment growth funding provided by the State in the 2015-16 Budget Act. Preliminary data regarding our admissions of California freshmen indicates a 15% increase in California admissions for the coming year – 8,500 students more than the number admitted last year. This demonstrates that the key to enrollment for Californians is state enrollment growth funding, rather than the enactment of measures such as SCA 12.

SCA 12 would require campuses to report statistical information of in-state, out-of-state, and international student populations based on GPA and standardized test scores. We recognize and affirm the importance of transparency and public accountability, but we do have concerns that reducing the outcomes of UC's admission process to standardized processes is inconsistent with good public policy. The University's Comprehensive Review admissions policy ensures that all applicants receive a thorough review of their accomplishments on a variety of criteria that look well beyond GPA and standardized test scores. Through comprehensive review, the University measures student accomplishment on 12 other factors, in addition to GPA and standardized tests scores, and may not reject any student on the basis of a single factor. The proscriptive language of SCA 12 could roll back our ability to consider these other contributing factors.

In addition—and far more troubling from the University's perspective—is the requirement in SCA 12 that the “average statistical profile” of out-of-state and international freshman students *enrolled at each campus* not be lower than the average statistical profile of in-state freshman students at that campus. The Academic Senate's Compare Favorably policy is meant to ensure that nonresidents *admitted* to a UC campus present qualifications that are at least as high or higher than Californians *admitted* to the same campus. (And, in fact, across the board, UC admitted freshmen from out of state earn higher standardized test scores than their California peers.) But the University does not control which students accept offers of admission and therefore enroll—in any year the overall profile of those residents or nonresidents who *choose to enroll* may vary randomly or systematically in ways that have nothing to do with the admission process. For this reason, we cannot predict or guarantee how the relative profiles of *enrolled* students will compare.

Finally, we believe that the scope and operational nature of the practices addressed in this proposal are inappropriate as a change to the State Constitution. Factors such as GPA are inconsistent across different states and can trend up or down over time. Moreover, standardized tests are not,

in and of themselves, accurate indicators of a student's qualifications. If SCA 12 were to amend the constitution with this type of narrow, prescriptive language, UC officials and future legislators may not be able to adjust to changes over time. A better approach is for the University to continue to partner with the state to grow enrollment of California students. This partnership has established the University of California as the top rated public research university in the world. UC continues to provide our students - nearly 40% of which are first generation college students - with a world class education right here at home. We need to continue to work with the State to build upon this track record of success rather than amend the constitution in ways that may prove harmful to the University, the State and to future California students.

As always, the University appreciates your consideration of our views. Should you have any questions about the University's opposition to SCA 12, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-9924.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadia Leal-Carrillo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nadia" being the most prominent part.

Nadia Leal-Carrillo  
Legislative Director

cc: Senator Sharon Runner  
Vice Chair and Members, Senate Education Committee  
President Janet Napolitano  
Executive Vice President and CFO Nathan Brostrom  
Senior Vice President Nelson Peacock  
Associate Vice President and Director Steve Juarez