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Steve Juarez, Associate Vice President and Director

June 23, 2016

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

RE: AB 1711 (McCarty and Medina), as amended June 22, 2016
Set for hearing on June 29 in Senate Education Committee
Position: OPPOSE

The University of California (UC) has reviewed the language in AB 1711 and, in light of the recently adopted language in the State Budget Act of 2016 providing direction on the issue of nonresident enrollment policy, we must respectfully oppose AB 1711. UC is strongly committed to California students and has continually met and exceeded its responsibilities to these students under the Master Plan. Moreover, UC has already taken steps to limit nonresident enrollment over the last two years and will, in response to the recent language adopted by the legislature, adopt a systemwide policy. However, the restrictions contained in AB 1711 would significantly interfere with UC's admission policies, which evaluate students on many important factors beyond just grades and test scores in order to obtain an accurate and holistic view of a student's qualifications. Furthermore, admissions policies fall within the purview of the Academic Senate, which will begin its own review of the application of these policies to nonresidents imminently. Because this legislation proposes substantially higher admission standards for nonresidents than apply to residents, it would, if implemented, significantly reduce nonresident enrollment on several campuses that are less well known outside the state and therefore attract fewer nonresident applicants. The resulting financial burden would fall most heavily on UC's smaller and less well known campuses and negatively impact their overall financial position.

Specifically, the bill proposes the following:

- Requires that as a condition for UC to receive state funding, UC must establish a policy regarding admission of nonresident undergraduate students, by July 1, 2017, mandating that each UC campus admit only nonresident undergraduate students who stand in the upper one-half of the resident undergraduate students admitted at that specific campus; and,
- Includes an annual reporting requirement regarding nonresident tuition and admission.

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. First, the University continues to apply the Master Plan by guaranteeing admission to every California resident applicant whose achievements place him or her within the top 12.5 percent of California high school graduates. For the past four years, UC has exceeded this goal as the number of admitted California freshmen has surpassed 14 percent of California high school graduates. Second, we enroll every California undergraduate for whom the state provides enrollment funding.

The University is mindful that as state funding has begun to rebound, thoughtful and realistic limits can be placed on the level of nonresident students. As such, for the most recent admissions cycle, UC extended the limit on nonresidents imposed at the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses for a second year and imposed a cap on nonresidents at the San Diego campus for the first time. These are the campuses with the highest levels of nonresident enrollment and represent the campuses with the most demand from nonresident students. In addition, the recent budget control language adopted by both houses of the Legislature requesting the UC Board of Regents to establish an overall policy on the enrollment of nonresident students will ensure that guidance is in place that applies to all UC campuses.

By contrast, AB 1711 would attempt to reframe UC's approach to admissions in ways that are overly reliant on test scores and grade point averages (GPAs), in violation of UC's admissions policies. The University does not rely solely on factors such as GPA and standardized test scores to compare the relative merits of students. It is well known, for example, that the academic rigor associated with any given GPA varies greatly within California and between California and other states. Moreover, standardized tests are not, in and of themselves, accurate indicators of a student's qualifications. For this reason, UC has adopted comprehensive review as the central tenet of its admissions policy. Comprehensive review requests campuses to consider multiple measures of achievement and potential when making undergraduate admissions decisions, thus allowing campuses to take account of the various academic and socioeconomic backgrounds of all students who apply for admission to UC. The fact that the University's graduation rates exceed national averages as well as the rates for our comparable public institutions attests to the effectiveness of UC's comprehensive review policy in admitting students who are prepared for and successful at our campuses.

The approach that would be imposed by AB 1711 is also inconsistent with the California Master Plan. The University's current admissions policy regarding nonresident students includes the following provisions:

- A) Nonresidents must achieve a higher GPA than resident applicants;
- B) Unlike for California resident students, there is no guarantee of admission for any nonresident student, even if they meet eligibility requirements; and,
- C) Consistent with the 1988 revisions to the Master Plan, nonresident students must be at least as qualified, on average, as admitted California students across the system.

This existing policy already holds nonresidents to a higher academic standard and ensures that no Californian is denied a place on a UC campus in order to admit a less qualified out-of-state student. The proposed requirement in AB 1711 departs from the approach of the Master Plan, which focuses on how admitted nonresidents compare to admitted residents across the system, and

instead adopts an approach that is focused on the individual campuses. Not only would AB 1711's approach entail a significant departure from the Master Plan, it would do so while not achieving the goal of increasing access for California residents.

UC, like the Legislature, is fully committed to ensuring that nonresidents are meeting the academic admission standards established in our policies and in the Master Plan. As such, President Napolitano will ask the Academic Senate to review current Senate policy with respect to nonresident admission, focusing on compliance with the Master Plan and consistency with the University's overall undergraduate admission goals, comprehensive review admission policy, and the holistic review process in place on most UC campuses. In addition, UC has committed to reporting annually on the relative qualifications of admitted residents and nonresidents, providing full transparency on our compliance with policy.

In closing, we believe that the admission policy changes requested in the bill are inappropriate because revisions to our admission practices fall within the purview of our Academic Senate. And, as noted above, our Academic Senate will begin reviewing our policies governing the absolute and relative qualification of nonresident applicants imminently. Also, the State Budget Act of 2016 already includes language that will help address the issue of nonresident enrollment by requesting the Regents to adopt a policy on the enrollment of nonresident students. We are asking the Committee to allow our Academic Senate and the Board of Regents to be responsive to the language in the Budget Act and let that process take its course. For these reasons, the University strongly opposes AB 1711.

As always, thank you for your consideration of our views and your commitment to higher education. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 445-9924 if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,



Nadia Leal-Carrillo
Legislative Director

cc: Assembly Member Kevin McCarty
Assembly Member Jose Medina
Vice Chair and Members, Senate Education Committee
President Janet Napolitano
Executive Vice President and CFO Nathan Brostrom
Senior Vice President Nelson Peacock
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