

May 7, 2020

Office of the President University of California
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear President Napolitano,

We write to implore you and the University of California Regents to provide future UC students fair and equitable standards for admission as a result of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 response efforts and school campus closures.

All school districts in California have been affected by Governor Newsom's shelter in place order. In response, schools have moved to a distance learning format. This has required teachers to learn new pedagogies and instructional approaches, explore new assessment and grading methods, while simultaneously caring for their own families. In addition, students who are furthest from opportunity are now even more disadvantaged due to inequitable home conditions and the inability to equitably access distance learning. These conditions have led many school districts to question the consistency, predictability and accuracy of assigning grades and the ability for grading to accurately reflect proficiency of standards and content knowledge.

For this reason, Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) and many other districts in the state have implemented a Pass/No-Pass grading system for the Spring Semester of 2020. While we strongly believe that this is the most equitable grading system for our students, we are concerned about the fact that some school districts are still assigning letter grades for Spring Semester 2020 and that the University of California plans to count these letter grades in the calculation of students' GPA for admission to the UC. Although grades assigned during Spring Semester of 2020 reflect students' achievement to some extent, the grades also reflect students' access to technology, their parents' status as essential workers, and economic hardships experienced as a result of the COVID-19 response. Those students who are able to achieve high grades during this time and choose to have those grades count toward UC admission per UC policy are likely to be those students with greater advantage.

Because of the wide disparities in grading systems implemented across the state of California and nationwide, we urge the UC to level the playing field by excluding both Spring 2020 Pass/No Pass and Spring 2020 letter grades from the calculation of students' GPA for UC admission.

Holding future UC applicants harmless requires the UC to recognize that existing inequities are exacerbated by the circumstances created by the current pandemic and to respond appropriately. We believe that the many challenges related to student assessment as a result of school closures should further encourage the UC system to continue to move towards a more holistic review of student achievement by considering all elements within an application. Excluding all Spring 2020 grades from GPA calculation ensures that applicants are not advantaged nor disadvantaged (relative to other students) by their personal circumstances or their school district's grading policy in response to COVID-19.

May 7, 2020

Page 2

Sincerely,

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| Cindy Pickett | Joe DiNunzio | Tom Adams | Alan Fernandes | Bob Poppenga |
| President | Vice-President | Trustee | Trustee | Trustee |

cc:

Carol T. Christ, Chancellor, UC Berkeley

Gary May, Chancellor, UC Davis

Howard Gillman, Chancellor, UC Irvine

Gene Block, Chancellor, UCLA

Nathan Brostrom, Chancellor, UC Merced

Kim Wilcox, Chancellor, UC Riverside

Pradeep Khosla, Chancellor, UC San Diego

Sam Hawgood, Chancellor, UCSF

Henry Yang, Chancellor, UC Santa Barbara

Cynthia Larive, Chancellor, UC Santa Cruz