RESOLUTION: UC Membership in the IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis and Support for Displaced Students, Including Syrians

Whereas, the number of Syrian refugees now exceeds four million individuals, of which 450,000 individuals are between the ages of 18 and 22;[1]

Whereas, based on prewar enrollment rates, 90,000 to 110,000 Syrian students were qualified for university admission;[2]

Whereas, Syrians face an “academic emergency” due to a breakdown of higher education in their country, resulting from frequent attacks on university campuses, destroyed facilities, closed campuses and dangerous roads leading to campuses;[3]

Whereas, the maintenance of a population of educated students and the prevention of a “lost generation” is necessary for the post-conflict development of Syria;

Whereas, the current national political climate is marked by rising anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment, contrary to the traditional core values of California and the United States;

Whereas, the Institute of International Education (IIE) is addressing this emergency by creating the Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis, which includes universities and colleges worldwide who offer scholarships to assist Syrian students;[4]

Whereas, dozens of institutions in the United States, including the University of Southern California, Tufts University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Bryn Mawr College, Michigan State University and others have joined the Consortium and are offering scholarships to Syrian students;[5]

Whereas, the University of California has a “compelling interest in making sure that people from all backgrounds perceive access to the University is possible for talented students … from all groups” and seeks to prepare students “to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society” and displaced Syrian students would provide a unique contribution to this academic mission;[6]

Whereas, several University of California campuses are already partners with the IIE, through Scholar Rescue Fund and other programs;[7]

Whereas, University of California students are seeking to assist Syrian refugees through campus-wide fundraisers, collection drives and other events, and hundreds of UC students have pledged support through the nationwide Books Not Bombs campaign;[8] and

Whereas, the Associated Students of the University of California, Berkeley and the Associated Students of the University of California, Irvine have already passed resolutions calling on their campuses to join the IIE Syria Consortium;
Now, therefore, let it be resolved that the UCSA calls on the Board of Regents of the UC System to join the IIE’s Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis and to commit to offer support to students displaced by conflict, notably Syrian students, in the form of partial or full scholarships by no later than the end of the 2016-17 academic year; and

Be it further resolved that UCSA recommends that the UC Regents release a statement detailing the funding for reserved scholarships and spaces that it will provide to educationally displaced students, including Syrians, by no later than the end of the 2016-2017 Academic Year.