

March 6, 2019

California State Legislature

1315 10th St

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: UCSA Stance on Non Resident Enrollment Cap



To members of the California State Legislature,

We, the University of California Student Association, would like to express our emphatic and unequivocal opposition to placing a cap on the nonresident student enrollment at 10 percent per UC campus. As students of the University of California, we have come to deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions of nonresidents to the UC. It is particularly the hospitable environment of California's education system that lends to the state's international reputation of championing diversity in thought and narratives. It is our unique ability to embrace those who may look different from us, those who have been raised in other parts of the country and the world that makes our educational system, our state's economy, and our political climate not only accommodating but appreciative and supportive of nonresidents, including those who become permanent immigrants of California upon their degree attainment. Our stance on this issue is multifactorial.

As we discuss the importance of an affordable UC education, we cannot neglect that non-residents contribute a total of \$120 million towards need-based financial aid through the UC grant and therefore support approximately 100,000 California residents. Every nonresident¹ pays three times the amount of resident tuition, which is used to offer financial aid support to two other California residents in order to offset the total cost of attendance at the UC. It has become abundantly clear that our financial model would collapse without nonresident funds, rendering a UC education for many California residents vastly unaffordable. Though we are making progress towards making attending the UC more affordable, especially in giving more low-income and middle-class residents to have access to our educational system and upward mobility, capping nonresident admission to 10-percent would render these efforts futile.

Equally important to financial elements is the academic component: The in-class experience of all students is exponentially elevated and enriched with a student population that comes from every corner of the country and the world. Just as we emphasize the importance of having a resident population that reflects the narratives of Californians, we've seen first-hand how international students can offer other greatly underrepresented perspectives.

This multicultural, global atmosphere built over the years in the UC makes the UC envied across the country and world, garnering hundreds of thousands of applications from nonresidents who are willing to leave the comfort of their homes for the sake of the UC experience. Our melting pot also makes UC education particularly appealing to California residents who yearn for exposure to unique perspectives on social, political, and economic developments occurring around the world.

Finally, though the UC is a public institution with the majority of its constituents coming from California, non resident students are essential and valuable parts of the higher education ecosystem. It is critical that our state remains a beacon for championing the immigrant narrative, which is in many cases rooted in an international experience. The world has a great deal of talent to

¹ Excluding AB540 students

offer. The leaders of tomorrow will come from California and outside of it. We must learn how to nurture and facilitate the growth of those who can uplift our world at-large from the great crises that inflict it. We must be committed to a greater purpose that necessitates courage and compassion, extending beyond our borders. As the state of California grapples with the notion of providing an affordable education for as many California residents, we respectfully assert that targeting nonresidents is simply not the way to go. If there's one thing that our recent national political discourse has proven, it is that the easiest way to voice our greatest fears, concerns, and pain is to scapegoat those who look a little less like us.

“International and nonresident students are my peers and my friends. They bring such rich perspectives and friendships that I cannot imagine being without them. If the university would limit their ability to come and get an education with me, then I would lose out on a core part of my experience here, both academically and personally.” - Joshua Avila, UCLA Class of 2021

“As a transfer student from a small and less diverse community, coming to a diverse campus that represented out of state, international, and undocumented students was vital to my awareness expanding. I come from a largely Hispanic community where I grew up; I understood the undocumented demographic personally from a young age. Being able to share these experiences with others who understand and can relate is important to making me feel comfortable in a new environment. It is also important for students to share experiences that I am not familiar with. For me, it was only possible through exposure to a variety of students at my university. UCLA has given me the opportunity to learn from so many students who come from different backgrounds. I can only reap the benefits of this diversity if the UC system embraces this population and not by reducing it.” - Karina Arzate-Arenivaz, UCLA Class of 2020.

Let us be clear: we stand with you in the noble pursuit of educating every Californian. As our newest campus, UC Merced, continues to grow in size and capacity, and as the CSU explores the possibility of building a new campus, we would like to underscore the vital partnerships that we must build across the state in order to comprehensively address access to higher education. We must invest in our students' education rather than prisons. We must have a budget that reflects our true priorities while not demonizing our out-of-state, international, and undocumented peers.

Our moral character isn't defined by how we act in our times of prosperity, but rather during our greatest challenges. It is then that the true values of California will come to light.

As an organization which serves as the official voice of UC students in the Capitol, we implore you to reconsider the proposed changes in non-resident enrollment.

Sincerely,



Caroline Siegel-Singh
President
University of California Student Association