

May 18, 2020

John A. Perez, Chair
Board of Regents, University of California
c/o Regent Secretariat
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Cecilia Estolano, Vice-Chair
Board of Regents, University of California
c/o Regent Secretariat
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

President Janet Napolitano
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

RE: Permanently Ending Reliance on the SAT and ACT to Accelerate Equity in UC Admissions

Dear Chair Perez, Vice Chair Estolano, and President Napolitano:

The undersigned education equity, civil rights, and K-12 organizations and leaders support President Janet Napolitano's historic recommendation to eliminate the University of California's (UC) reliance on standardized tests in eligibility and admission decisions.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated existing inequities in access and college preparation for Black, Latinx, Native American, and other underrepresented students. We applaud the UC for suspending the standardized testing requirement for Fall 2021 applicants given the limited access and preparation opportunities available to our most vulnerable student populations, amidst the pandemic. **We urge the Regents to vote yes on the President's recommendations that will make this accommodation a long-term solution to admissions.** Eliminating the SAT and ACT will support talented Latinx, Black, Asian American Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPI), and other historically underrepresented students in their applications to the UC.

For decades, eligibility and admissions policies requiring standardized tests have given affluent, overrepresented students preferential treatment in college access as they are more likely to purchase expensive test preparation, instruction and guidance for standardized tests. While those privileged students fill coveted, at-capacity seats across the UC, highly capable, low-income, Black, Latinx, Native American, and subgroups of Asian students are too often denied access to our state's premier research institutions.

Since our first letter, dated March 17, 2020, notable UC faculty have raised significant critiques regarding the recommendations from the Academic Senate Standardized Testing Task Force (Task Force) to continue to use the SAT and ACT tests in admissions for at least another nine years, and the lack of peer review research that informed the Task Force report. In regards to the Task Force's research methods, Saul Geiser of the Center for the Studies of Higher Education housed at UC Berkeley and former director of admissions research for the UC, challenges the findings on the tests' impacts on underrepresented students, arguing the analyses do not control for critical student variables such as race and income. The Task Force's choice to ignore these factors masks the effects of socioeconomic factors on scores and inflate the predictive value of the tests.

In regards to the Task Force's recommendations to keep the test for another nine years, Jesse Rothstein, Director of the California Policy Lab housed at UC Berkeley and former Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Labor, asserts that admissions policies that examine test scores result in a *less diverse student body*. The implications of maintaining testing requirements are antithetical to the UC's mission of creating a more representative student body. Rothstein and colleagues Sarah Reber and Michal Kurlaender of UCLA and

UC Davis, respectively, published these and other critiques in an [April 2020 analysis on the Policy Analysis for California Education website](#).

The undersigned 31 equity and community-based organizations urge the UC Regents to vote yes on the recommendation to permanently end the use of the SAT and ACT in admissions requirements.

Before this public health crisis, California was plagued by wide racial and ethnic gaps in admission, enrollment and success at public four-year universities. With its swift action to suspend the testing requirement for fall 2021 applicants and the President's recommendations to eliminate the use of the SAT and ACT, the UC has taken a bold step in demonstrating that it can build upon its holistic review to evaluate an applicant's potential *without* the use of tests.

As the UC consults with advocates, K-12 educators, test experts, faculty and other segments of higher education to consider building its own assessment tool, we urge careful attention to building an anti-racist, equitable admissions policy that does not replicate the historically harmful effects of the SAT and ACT. We look forward to the next four admissions cycles to evaluate how the use of new admission criteria impacts the composition and success of the entering class.

During this unprecedented moment, the UC has demonstrated tremendous leadership to put its current and future students at the heart of its decision making. This is the kind of equity-minded leadership our students need today. The flexibility and accommodations made in the last two months have shown that the UC can meet the moment of this pandemic. Yet, this flexibility and adaptability can be more than a response to a crisis; it can be an opportunity to act on the professed value of racial equity.

We are looking to you, the leaders of the University of California to take the bold step of defining a more equitable admissions process that does not rely on the use of standardized test and has the potential to change the landscape for college admissions across the country. Our students are counting on you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Thayer,
Board President
**African American Male
Education Network &
Development**



Vanessa Aramayo,
Executive Director
Alliance for a Better Community



Stewart Kwoh,
Founder
**Asian Americans Advancing
Justice, Los Angeles**



Dina Walker,
President & CEO
BLU Educational Foundation



Samantha Geary,
Director of College Access &
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**Breakthrough San Juan
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Yvonne Gonzalez-Duncan,
California State Director
California LULAC



Shelly Spiegel Coleman,
Executive Director
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Dr. Estela M. Bensimon,
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Reverend Samuel Casey,
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Varsha Sarveshwar,
President
UC Student Association



CC: Maria Anguiano, Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, UC Regents, University of California
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