



May 20, 2024

Chair Janet Reilly
University of California Board of Regents
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, California 94607

Dear Chair Reilly:

We write to you on behalf of a coalition of higher education, K-12, community, business, and student organizations regarding the Regents' recent discussion on Area C eligibility requirements. We are deeply appreciative of the thoughtful conversation the Regents engaged in on this issue and encourage you to continue collaborating with internal and external stakeholders as discussions evolve over the next few months. More specifically, we encourage the Regents to provide the BOARS with explicit guidance on the expectations for the next phase of decisions regarding Area C requirements and make a series of recommendations in this letter for your consideration.

Every California student should have access to advanced math courses, especially Black, Latinx, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (NHPI), American Indian, and Alaska Native (AIAN) students who have historically been denied such courses for a variety of reasons.

The completion of Algebra II under the Area C requirement provides valuable preparation for students, especially those who pursue science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. At the same time, California high schools should be expanding—not curtailing—the availability of a range of fourth-year math course options that meet Area C requirements, including rigorous statistics and data science courses that prepare students for the in-demand careers of today and the future.

It was clear in the UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) workgroup report and testimony at the March Regents meeting that courses, including data science and statistics, that do not have significant Algebra II/Math III content, cannot substitute or validate the Algebra II/Math III UC admission requirement. What remains unclear, however, is whether data science courses will continue to count toward a recommended 4th year math course for UC admission.

Conflicting messages regarding the status of data science courses abound, causing confusion for students and school leaders. The Area C workgroup report suggests that the three popular high school data science courses evaluated are not appropriate as recommended 4th year math courses. The report however, sets forth no criteria for how this determination was made. The determination seems incredibly misguided given a [recent analysis by Data Science 4 Everyone](#) illustrating that two of the three courses BOARS deemed “not appropriate” cover more AP Statistics topics than UC Berkeley’s primary undergraduate data science course. Surely, a course that is comparable to an undergraduate general education math course should be considered rigorous enough to count as a 4th year high school math course!

During the UC Regents meeting in March, Dr. Han Mi Yoon-Wu, however, stated that there is no recommended course for the 4th year of math and that data science courses remain within Area C for UC admission purposes. Assuming that is true, it needs to be communicated more widely and clearly to students and schools.

As the UC BOARS and UC Academic Council move forward with Phase 2 of their work regarding Area C requirements, we respectfully request that the Regents explicitly set expectations of them to:

1. Clarify in writing the criteria for 4th year math courses, and that approved data science courses remain within Area C and count as a 4th year math course for UC admission. Ensure this communication is distributed to all California high schools.
2. Stipulate that, for data science courses that remain in Area C and count toward the 4th year math course, no descriptive language about the courses should discourage students from taking them. Data science courses should be presented on par with other 4th year math course options, such as statistics and computer science, that don’t validate Algebra II.
3. Engage community stakeholders—including K-12 education leaders and teachers, especially those from districts with experience implementing high school data science and statistics courses at scale—before completing Phase 2.
4. Provide much-needed evidence on the success of UC admitted students who took the required Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II sequence and then took data science as their recommended 4th year of math. Key questions to address include:
 - What has been the impact of high school data science courses on college preparation since their adoption in 2013?
 - Is there any empirical evidence of a college preparation problem that changing the status of data science courses would solve?
 - How many students are applying to, being admitted to, and enrolling at the UC and CSU with the courses in question on their transcripts?

- Are there any disparities in college success between students who took data science or statistics courses in their fourth year of high school versus those who took another course, such as precalculus?

As the entity overseeing policy at the world class University of California, we look to the Regents to provide necessary clarity and guidance to those individuals making decisions that will impact thousands of students across the state and their opportunity to earn a college degree.

Thank you for your leadership,

Vanessa Aramayo

Executive Director
Alliance for a Better Community

Victoria Dominguez

Policy Director
Asian Americans Advancing
Justice - Southern California

Debra Watkins

Founder & Executive Director
A Black Education Network

Dina Walker

President & CEO
BLU Educational Foundation

Jessica Sawko

Director
California STEM Network

Mauro Sifuentes

Executive Director
Californians for Justice

Martha Hernandez

Executive Director
Californians Together

Michele Siqueiros

President
Campaign for College Opportunity

Vincent Stewart

Vice President, Policy & Programs
Children Now

Jeff DeGuia

Facilitator
College for All Coalition

Miguel Domingez

Director of Development
Community Coalition

Francisco J. Moreno

Executive Director
Consejo de Federaciones
Mexicanas (COFEM)

Dolores Huerta

President
Dolores Huerta Foundation

Dr. Christopher Nellum

Executive Director
The Education Trust–West

Helen Torres

Chief Executive Officer
Hispanas Organized for Political
Equality (HOPE)

Henry Perez

Executive Director
InnerCity Struggle

Michael Lynch

Chief Executive Officer
Improve Your Tomorrow

Pamela Burdman

Founder & Executive Director
Just Equations

Jose Calderon

President
Latino and Latina Roundtable of
the San Gabriel and Pomona
Valley

Anne B. Stanton

President & Chief Executive
Officer
Linked Learning Alliance

Anne Hawthorne

Executive Director
Los Angeles United Methodist
Urban Foundation
Kid City Hope Place

Meredith Curry Nuñez

Executive Director
Northern California College
Promise Coalition (NCCPC)

Azucena Hernandez

Director of Community
Transformation
Promesa Boyle Heights at
Proyecto Pastoral

Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton

Director of Higher Education
Public Advocates

Alison De Lucca

Executive Director
Southern California College
Attainment Network (SoCal CAN)

Katrina Stevens

President & Chief Executive
Officer
The Tech Interactive

Parshan Khosravi

California Policy Director
uAspire

Norma Rodriguez
Director, Education Programs & Policy
United Way of Greater Los Angeles

Celene Aridin
President
University of California Student Association (UCSA)

cc: Members, University of California Board of Regents
James Steintrager, Chair, University of California Academic Council
Barbara Knowlton, Chair, Board of Admissions and Relations With Schools
Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs
Yvette Gullatt, Vice President for Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs, Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer
Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Associate Vice Provost, Systemwide Undergraduate Admissions
Chase Fischerhall, Director of A–G & Transfer Articulation Policy
Monica Lin, Executive Director, University of California Academic Senate
Dr. Nathan Evans, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, California State University
Beth Steffel, Chair, Academic Senate, California State University
Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education
Linda Darling-Hammond, President, California State Board of Education
Senator Josh Newman, Chair, Senate Education Committee
Assemblymember Mike Fong, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Eleni Kounalakis, Lieutenant Governor
Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom