



March 18, 2024

Regent Richard Leib, Chair
University of California Board of Regents
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, California 94607

Dear Chair Leib:

We write to you on behalf of a coalition of higher education, K-12, community, business, and student organizations regarding a concerning admissions change that has the potential to disparately impact tens of thousands of students seeking a world-class education at the University of California (UC). Our organizations are deeply committed to ensuring all California students have access to the rigorous coursework required for a four-year university education and the tools needed to pursue whatever college or career path they desire. That is why **we feel compelled to raise concern and opposition to the recent UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and UC Academic Council decision to limit the eligibility of certain data science and potentially statistics courses under Area C requirements** and as recommended fourth-year math courses.

We believe every California student should have access to advanced math courses and see immense value in providing more Black, Latinx, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (NHPI), American Indian, and Alaska Native (AIAN) students access to advanced math opportunities. We acknowledge that 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.

However, we are concerned with the proposed narrowing of courses that qualify for UC's recommended fourth-year of Area C coursework for admission, particularly as over half of all California high school graduates are not supported to complete A-G coursework, and more than [8 percent of California high schools struggle to offer adequate A-G courses for students](#). **Students need more opportunities to take advanced math—not fewer.** Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is one of the many districts across California who may see a disparate impact due to this decision— [36 percent](#) of the district's graduates took a data science or statistics course as seniors between 2016 and 2018, a proportion that may be higher today. Limiting the UC's acceptance of these courses threatens to negatively impact minoritized and rural communities' ability to access a world-class UC education. Further, the unclear messages from BOARS' report about statistics and data science are already causing confusion for teachers and students alike at high schools across the state.

As the Board of Regents engages with the BOARS decision at the upcoming Regents meeting, we respectfully request the following concerns be addressed prior to moving forward with the proposal:

- **Address the lack of evidence.** In 2019, [the UC proposed](#) a change in science admissions requirements for first-time students, which was immediately met with an analysis of the potential unintended consequences of such a proposal. The analysis found Black and Latinx students stood to be the most negatively impacted by such a change and that it would perpetuate racial equity gaps. **We deeply appreciated the evidence-based approach the Regents took with this proposal and request a similar study be conducted prior to moving forward.** To our knowledge, there has been no assessment of how many low-income, minoritized, or rural communities could be impacted by the UC BOARS decision. We request an impact analysis be conducted and recommend that such an analysis address the following concerns, at the minimum:
 - 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 the proposed change is designed to 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 a course approved under the BOARS new proposal?

To date, the Academic Council has identified no preparation problem that the new policies would address. In fact, some [experts believe](#) that these innovative courses offer important opportunities to engage minoritized students in mathematical and STEM pursuits. Absent clear research, it is premature to curtail them.

- **Establish intersegmental consultation and collaboration.** To our knowledge, neither the California Department of Education nor any Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were consulted prior to moving forward with this proposal. A decision that can impact the way every single LEA offers math courses **MUST** include thoughtful discussion and collaboration with the agencies that will be tasked with implementing new A-G requirements.

- **Protect access to a diverse range of math pathways.** In 2020, the UC gave LEAs across the state the green light for a range of courses, including data science, to fulfill the Area C math requirement, prompting high schools across the state to launch and build up new courses to adapt to a changing technology landscape. UC researchers developed some of these courses, the [state invested resources](#), and high schools embraced them. During a time of fiscal uncertainty at the state level, we cannot afford to move backward in data science development, especially as we have made intentional investments over the years to strengthen this evolving sector.
- **Address existing regulations to align with the Regents' student-centered principles.** The Academic Senate Regulations 424 A.3.c (2009) and 428 (2013) reflect outdated admissions policies that no longer align with the real-time needs of the institution and community. **The Academic Council indicates the proposed Area C changes were developed to align with existing regulations.** This is an opportunity for the UC to address requirements established over a [decade ago](#), when technology and STEM advancement and needs were nowhere close to where they are today. California is the birthplace of personal computers, the iPhone, and now ChatGPT. Shouldn't our math requirements equip students with the foundational basics of data science, statistics and modeling to navigate the very world the Golden State helped create?

The UC boasts a reputation for innovation and forward-thinking in adapting to a changing world. Continuing to embrace data science and other alternative advanced math options will ensure the system continues to lead the way in developing a highly skilled and educated workforce that meets 21st-century needs. We urge the Regents to request that BOARS and the Academic Council immediately pause all communications and implementation of the proposed changes to admissions requirements and thoughtfully consider the concerns that more than 100 K-12 and higher education leaders continue to elevate. As we work to meet the Governor's 2030 degree attainment goals and the system's goals of closing racial equity gaps in college access, the US cannot afford to risk cutting out thousands of Black, Latinx, Asian American, AIAN, and NHPI students seeking a four-year education.

Thank you for your leadership,

Vanessa Aramayo
Executive Director
Alliance for a Better Community

Victoria Dominguez
Policy Director
Asian Americans Advancing
Justice - Southern California

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

Celene Aridin
President
University of California Student
Association (UCSA)

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

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