

A Resolution in Support of the UCSA IGNITE (Invest in Graduations, Not Incarceration, Transform Education) Campaign and UC Higher Education Diversity Pipeline

WHEREAS, the state of California houses one of the largest prison populations in the nation and has the highest recidivism rate in the nation at 67.5%, leading to such overcrowding that the U.S. Supreme Court mandated steps be taken towards reducing the prison population in order to comply with Constitutional standards; and ¹

WHEREAS, California spends more on prisons than on education, spending \$47,102 per inmate compared to \$8,482 per student, ranking 49th in the nation in adjusted per pupil expenditures, and the funding for both components are inversely linked; and ^{2,3}

WHEREAS, the majority of inmates in California prisons are charged with nonviolent, low level offenses, with 31% being drug related; and⁴

WHEREAS, in 2012, Latinos made up 43.7% of the California inmate population and 38.2% of California's population, and African American males comprised 25.4% of the inmate population when African Americans only make up 6.6% of California's population; and

WHEREAS, young men of color are disproportionately represented in prisons, with 3 out of every 4 inmates being men of color, due to institutional barriers and the school to prison pipeline, preventing them from pursuing higher education; and⁵

WHEREAS, wrongful suspensions due to ambiguous suspension regulations and definitions for "willful defiance" often lead to a disproportionate number of queer youth and youth of color being filtered into the criminal justice system and out of education, and many barriers exist to reentry for previously incarcerated students; and

WHEREAS, the 1960 California Master Plan not only mandates an accessible and affordable education, but further states that the UC system will reflect the diversity of the state of California; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of Proposition 209 drastically decreased the number of historically underrepresented students enrolled in the UC system, with its most deep impacts at UCLA and UC Berkeley (UCLA's African American undergraduate admittance dropped by 60%, Latino undergraduate admittance dropped by 65%, and American Indian undergraduate admittance dropped by 57%; UC Berkeley's African American

undergraduate admittance dropped by 43%, Latino undergraduate admittance dropped by 50%, and American Indian undergraduate admittance dropped by 52%), and steps taken toward holistic admissions have done little to alleviate the effects of Proposition 209; and

WHEREAS, each UC campus has established student-initiated, student-run access programs, except for UC Merced, in response to Proposition 209 out of recognition of barriers to access, as well as the lack of educational support and guidance in underserved communities, and have been instrumental in empowering high school students to take ownership of and further their education; and

WHEREAS, each UC campus has established student-initiated, student-run campus retention programs, except for UC Merced, to target community specific needs to holistically develop and retain students and address high push out rates among underrepresented students; and

WHEREAS, both access and retention programs are necessary to institute a diversity pipeline to ensure diversity at all levels of education;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council recognizes the importance of dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, instituting a UC Higher Education Diversity Pipeline in order to prioritize education over incarceration; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council supports and will advocate for the goals of the UCSA IGNITE campaign as outlined:

- Passage of AB 420 which defines and limits the use of willful defiance for suspensions and encourages schools to prioritize other means of correction
- Passage of AB 218 which prohibits state and local agencies from reviewing any criminal convictions until it has been established that an applicant meets minimum employment standards
- Passage of SB 649 which makes possession of certain substances punishable as a felony or misdemeanor subject to imprisonment for no more than a year as opposed to a felony subject to imprisonment for up to three years
- Establishment of and institutionalized support for campus access and retention programs that provide academic support, peer counseling, and mentorship for historically underserved communities

- Establishment of resource centers for formerly incarcerated students as well as partnerships with local high schools heavily affected by the school to prison pipeline
- Passage of SCA 5 which allows for the consideration of race, sex, ethnicity, and national origin in higher education

and;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council will communicate this position to University and elected public officials; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council will formally support Student Regent Cinthia Flores in her request to attain the \$10 million of unallocated funds from the UC Office of the President to fund towards academic preparation programs, with some of the funds being used to establish an access and retention center at UC Merced and to explore potential collaboration with youth incarceration programs; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council will partner with Student Regent Cinthia Flores in her advocacy for the development and institution of Graduate Student Support Centers targeted at facilitating transitioning to graduate school for non-traditional, first-generation, underrepresented; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Undergraduate Students Association Council will support efforts to educate students on campus about the UCSA IGNITE campaign.