

## **A RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE THE UC COHORT-BASED TUITION HIKE**

**WHEREAS**, the University of California (UC) Board of Regents will be voting upon a proposal at its upcoming Regents meeting<sup>1</sup> on July 21, 2021, to enact a multi-year, cohort-based tuition plan that will increase systemwide fees for each incoming class of students across all nine campuses beginning the fall of 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed cohort-based tuition model would increase resident tuition, student services fees, and non-resident supplemental tuition for every incoming class of students by 5% starting in Fall 2022 and decreasing the tuition increase rate until it stabilizes to the rate of inflation overestimated by the UC at 3.1% in the 2026-2027 Academic Year, by which non-resident tuition will have increased by approximately \$8,700 and California resident tuition will have increased by approximately \$2,500<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regents elected to reopen discussion on the tuition increase despite stark student opposition, as voiced by both undergraduate and graduate student representatives serving on the designated Regents working group in addition to concerns expressed by community members during public comment<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regents have inaccurately framed the model as a return-to-aid (RIA) financial package while refusing to reduce the University's expectation that students provide a "self-help contribution" of \$10,000 through work and loans and thus the tuition increase does not provide a net-positive financial impact for low-income students without an explicit reduction in that expectation, even if more financial aid funds are generated by an increase in overall tuition revenue; and

**WHEREAS**, some students who will require financial assistance to cover the additional tuition burden will be left out of the current financial aid system, especially due to antiquated Cal Grant eligibility rules and thus will not benefit from the RIA program; and

**WHEREAS**, the cohort-based tuition model does not take into account the fact that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) that the increase rate of tuition is based on will also continue to increase in addition to the cohort-based tuition increase—creating even an even higher tuition bracket for future students; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regents themselves admitted the plan's extensive shortcomings during initial discussions in June 2019, such as how state-wide budget instability and cuts to state funding

<sup>1</sup><https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/meetings/>

<sup>2</sup><https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/minutes/2019/board-9.19.pdf>,  
<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/minutes/2019/board7.18.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/incoming-inequality-and-economic-opportunity-in-california-december-2020.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/number-of-californians-living-in-poverty-has-been-declining-but-more-than-1-in-6-residents-still-struggle-to-afford-basic-necessities/>

“could result in disproportionately burdensome tuition rates” and that differences between undergraduate, graduate, and non-traditional student groups could “become convoluted and would be difficult to explain,” which “raise[s] concern about how this model would affect the UC’s equity goals, particularly those of affordability and accessibility”<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, many California families’ income remains largely stagnant despite inflation increasing<sup>3</sup> and thus an annual, inflation-based tuition increase presents a difficult challenge to students and their families to keep up; and

**WHEREAS**, 1 in 6 Californians struggle to afford basic necessities and California has the highest poverty rate in the United States at 18.1% using the Supplemental Poverty Measure which factors in the state’s higher average cost of living; and

**WHEREAS**, the cohort-based tuition model only guarantees that a student’s tuition will not increase for six years, which discriminates against non-traditional students who choose not to or are unable to complete their degree in the standard four-year model; and

**WHEREAS**, non-resident students will be forced to bear the brunt of the tuition increases with minimal support, given that the increase is percentage-based and will result in non-resident students paying significantly more in increased fees than resident students; and

**WHEREAS**, the UC has already increased non-resident tuition six times by a total of \$8,000 in just the past decade alone; and

**WHEREAS**, increases in resident tuition may create a price-tag shock that drives students away from the UC and into other institutions with lower tuition rates, which will disproportionately impact students of color and low-income students; and”

**WHEREAS**, the plan has a dangerous lack of accountability because annual increases are assumed without an anticipated date of termination—hence why the plan is referred to as a “forever hike” or the “tuition hike to end all tuition hikes”— and no future plans to evaluate whether the cohort-based model is more effective than the standard have been mandated by the proposal; and

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, that the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC) firmly believes that the proposed cohort-based tuition increase will only serve to further exacerbate the socioeconomic inequities between UC students and place unnecessary

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financial burden on students, especially low-income students who ultimately will not benefit from the proposed “return-to-aid” package; and

**LET FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED**, that the USAC believes that the Regents’ proposal to increase reliance on the return-to-aid financial model—raising tuition in order to earmark funds from the increase to serve students in need—is an ineffective, circular approach to addressing student need and that efforts should instead be made to double the maximum award of the federal Pell Grant via the passage of the 2021 Pell Grant Preservation & Expansion Act; and

**FINALLY LET IT BE RESOLVED**, that the USAC strongly opposes the cohort-based tuition increase model as proposed by the UC Regents and resolutely urges the UC Regents to vote against the discussion item containing the proposal to implement aforementioned cohort-based tuition model at the upcoming Board of Regents meeting on July 21, 2021.

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