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February 12, 2020

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
CHANCELLORS

Dear Regents and Chancellors:

I am writing to transmit the Systemwide Audit of Undergraduate Admissions – Phase 2 conducted by UC’s Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services (ECAS). Before outlining key points from the Phase 2 audit, I want to make unequivocally clear: the University of California’s values embody equity and fairness. We are steadfastly committed to a fair and transparent admissions process based on student merit and achievement in the context of their educational opportunities and provides a level playing field for every applicant, regardless of income, social status, or influence. Unethical and illegal means to gain admission will not be tolerated, and UC is committed to do everything possible to prevent fraudulent activity. UC’s self-initiated internal audits conducted by ECAS exemplify our commitment to fairness and equity and we are dedicated to making improvements to admissions procedures where needed as indicated by the audits. UC has accepted all of the recommendations in both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 ECAS audit reports and is taking comprehensive steps to strengthen our policies and practices.

Phase 1 of the ECAS audit was completed in June 2019 and involved a review of existing processes to quickly address potential issues and vulnerabilities. It examined the undergraduate admissions processes and controls throughout the UC system, including those covering admission of student athletes and non-standard admissions, and provided an initial list of observations and recommendations. In addition, UC campuses developed individualized plans to implement the recommendations identified in the report and began implementing these changes last summer.

Building off the Phase 1 audit, the goal of the second audit was to assess the effectiveness of controls for admissions at UC’s nine undergraduate campuses, including documentation procedures, application verification, Special Talent Admissions, Admissions by Exception (A by E), access to our admissions IT systems, student-athlete participation, and admissions appeals processes.

Both these audits and their recommendations reflect our efforts to bolster our system of controls against attempts to inappropriately, illegally, or unethically influence our admissions process. As you may note, one of the most troubling findings in the audit concerns the lack of documentation and oversight in the category that ECAS labels “Special Talent Admissions” (also known as “Special Admissions”). To be clear, Special Talent Admissions is a process to consider and select those applicants who may well be eligible (i.e., have completed the required UC-approved A-G courses and achieved a minimum GPA) but who seek admission to a program such as visual arts performance or an athletic program that requires applicants to supply supplemental information in

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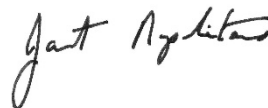
order to be considered for admission to the program. Both admissions offices and departments review the applicant's regular application (via the comprehensive review process) and supplemental information.

It is clear that greater consistency in the execution and documentation of how Special Talent Admissions decisions are made is needed. I am pleased to relay that, in responding to the recommendations of the Phase 1 admissions audit focused on the Special Talent Admissions category, all nine undergraduate campuses have either already implemented all relevant management corrective actions or will do so by March 15, 2020. I am also directing the UCOP Systemwide Undergraduate Admissions Office, in consultation with BOARS, to ensure campuses consistently identify and define Special Talent Admissions and specify the documentation and oversight is required by March 15, 2020.

Another category examined by the audits is Admissions by Exception. Enrollment of students admitted through this process is limited by Regents Policy 2105 (Policy on Undergraduate Admissions by Exception) to 6 percent of newly enrolled freshmen and 6 percent of newly enrolled transfer students. In reality, enrollment of students admitted by exception has historically been around 2 percent. Admissions by Exception are utilized to admit students who do not meet the UC eligibility requirements but demonstrate high potential for success at the University. Those admitted through this policy may come from schools that do not offer the full complement of required A-G courses (or their equivalents), may have been home-schooled, or may have other extenuating circumstances such as extreme disadvantages that prevent them from becoming UC-eligible. I ask the Chancellors to ensure campuses are fully adhering to the Regents Policy governing Admissions by Exception.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to address these matters with intention and alacrity. We will stay proactive, transparent and accountable – and continue to keep the public, the UC community, and others apprised of our steadfast efforts in this matter.

Yours very truly,



Janet Napolitano
President

Enclosure

cc: Provost Brown
Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff Nava
Senior Vice President Bustamante
Vice Provost Gullatt
Interim Associate Vice President Yoon-Wu
Chief Policy Advisor Kao
Academic Council Chair Bhavnani