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Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council  
University of California  
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Oakland, California 94607-5200

June 27, 2005

**PRESIDENT ROBERT C. DYNES**  
**PROVOST M.R.C. GREENWOOD**

**Re: Academic Council Resolution on *The Failure of The National Merit Scholarship Program to Meet the Requirements of UC's Definition of Academic Merit***

Dear Bob and MRC:

At its meeting on June 22, 2005, the Academic Council unanimously approved the enclosed resolution on *The Failure of the National Merit Scholarship Program to Meet the Requirements of UC's Definition of Academic Merit*. I also enclose some background material on the resolution as well as a fact sheet, which we prepared in collaboration with Brad Hayward.

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) drafted this resolution as a result of its recent review of how the National Merit Scholarship Program (NMSP) selects its scholarship winners. The three major findings were:

- The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) has never been validated for use to select "Meritorious" students in the manner employed by the NMSP.
- The National Merit Scholarship Program uses selection procedures that violate other fundamental principles governing responsible use of standardized tests.
- National Merit Scholarship Program selection procedures exacerbate rather than minimize the adverse impact on under-represented and disadvantaged students.

Because of these concerns, the Academic Council has endorsed the BOARS recommendation that UC should provide neither extra weight in admissions nor scholarship awards simply because a student has been designated a National Merit Scholar.

On behalf of the Academic Council, I request that you distribute this resolution and the additional material to the chancellors for their active consideration of this recommendation and that you forward it to The Regents as an information item.

Best regards,



George Blumenthal, Chair  
Academic Council

- Encls.: 1) [Academic Council “Resolution on the Failure of the National Merit Scholarship Program to Meet the Requirements of UC’s Definition of Academic Merit”](#)  
2) [Background on the NMSP](#)  
3) [Fact Sheet on the NMSP](#)

Copy: Academic Council  
Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)  
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Kimberly Peterson, BOARS Analyst

GB<sup>bm</sup>