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The Honorable Josh Newman
Chair, Senate Education Committee

**RE: *Assembly Bill 1749 (McCarty), as amended on May 18, 2023
Scheduled for hearing in the Senate Education Committee on June 28, 2023
Position: OPPOSE***

Dear Chair Newman:

The University of California (UC) Academic Senate respectfully opposes Assembly Bill 1749 by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty. In its current form, the bill would require UC to give priority undergraduate admission to Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) completers with a 3.0 GPA.

This approach to UC transfer is not ideal for California Community College (CCC) students given the history behind these degrees. ADTs were initially created as 60-semester-unit associate degrees that guarantee transfer into similar majors at the California State University (CSU) but do not guarantee admission to a particular CSU campus. With an ADT, a transfer student can expect to graduate from the CSU after finishing an additional 60 semester units.

ADTs will increase time to degree for many UC transfers. UC commonly advises potential transfer students to prioritize preparation for junior year of a given UC major over general education (GE) requirements, some of which can be taken after transfer. ADTs require students to complete their lower-division GE requirements prior to transfer and within a 60-unit cap. For many majors, completing these GE courses entails putting off courses needed for the intended UC major. While delaying some GE courses until after transfer does not slow overall UC degree completion, delaying major preparation often does impede timely progress in the major and, crucially, has a negative impact on student success.

This problem of appropriately balancing UC major preparation and GE coursework via ADTs is particularly acute in Science, Mathematics, Engineering, and Technology (STEM) fields where coursework for the major is sacrificed for lower-division GE completion. Transferring to UC with an ADT in a STEM major will likely mean that these students will need at least three years to complete their UC degrees because required course sequences are not and cannot all be included in ADTs. In contrast, a potential transfer student in these areas following a UC Transfer Pathway or other UC-based transfer requirements will complete coursework at a CCC that will allow them to finish their major at a UC in two years after transfer.

For other majors, ADTs are not student-centered for the opposite reason: CCC students will be directed to take courses they do not need for their UC major. For example, an anthropology ADT requires 18 lower-division units in the discipline, whereas UC San Diego's anthropology major does not require lower-division units in the discipline, UC Berkeley requires only 9 units, and UCLA requires 12. In these cases, ADT requirements are misaligned with UC requirements, which leaves students with **excess course credits**—an issue that the original ADT legislation attempted to resolve. Importantly, ADTs also have a high opportunity

cost for students: median time to complete an ADT at a CCC is 3.5 years; many students can be prepared to enter UC after just two years at a CCC. Again, UC Transfer Pathways, which are tailored to specific majors as taught in the UC, are more student-centered than the proposed ADT guarantee.

By UC Regental policy, the University uses comprehensive review to weigh several criteria in undergraduate admissions. In direct opposition to this policy, the proposed ADT admission guarantee uses only GPA and a checklist of courses. Student GPA strongly correlates with family income, which means this type of admission guarantee structure is likely to negatively impact the diversity of UC's transfer cohort and total student body. The proposed legislation will position the University for **outcomes that run counter to our inclusivity goals**.

The bill also requires granting "a student priority admission to the student's local University of California," as is currently the case with ADT admissions into the CSU. CSU campuses are much more numerous and located across the state; UC campuses are fewer and concentrated by and large in southern and central coastal regions and metropolitan areas. Whereas local prioritization in the case of the CSU might serve to increase diversity and inclusivity, for UC the impact will be the opposite of what is presumably intended.

ADTs reduce capacity for new admissions to UC because an ADT guarantee program will admit some students without sufficient UC preparation who will therefore take longer to graduate after transfer as they make up their missing courses. Requiring ADTs and selecting ADT earners preferentially will disadvantage CCC students who are better prepared because they followed UC Transfer Pathways. We would also note that students who complete an ADT are already eligible for transfer admission to UC, and those with sufficiently high GPAs and meet other UC admission criteria are admitted. This has been the case for over a decade (see [UC Academic Senate Regulation 476.C.2](#)).

Finally, UC faculty have developed UC Transfer Pathways that are carefully designed to prepare transfer students for specific majors at UC. Although some Transfer Pathways align well with current ADTs, many ADTs do not. If CCC students with ADTs are given priority over others who have completed Transfer Pathways, the UC will be compelled to admit students who are less prepared, less able to integrate seamlessly, and less likely to thrive and succeed.

Given these collective concerns, UC has proposed a systemwide guarantee of admission that will strengthen our partnerships with community colleges throughout the state, including those colleges with historically lower UC transfer rates. This guarantee is based on the UC Transfer Pathways and accomplishes the aim of the proposed legislation without forcing UC and CSU to adopt identical transfer requirements and without the negative impacts on student success and inclusivity. We offer this alternative proposal with the intent to achieve the shared goals of ensuring equitable access to UC, expanding the quality of students' preparation for UC, increasing undergraduate admissions, and supporting student success—pre-transfer through baccalaureate degree attainment.

Sincerely,



Susan Cochran, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council Members
President Michael Drake
Provost & Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Katherine Newman
Associate Vice President & Director of State Governmental Relations Kathleen Fullerton