

Senate Education Committee,
Assembly Higher Education Committee,
Senate Select Committee on College and University Admissions and Outreach

Re: Governor's Proposed and Actual Cuts to Outreach

Submitted by Jodi Anderson
University of California Student Regent-Designate

January 7, 2003

Mr. Chairman & Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jodi Anderson and I am the University of California Student Regent-designate. I have first-hand experience with UC Outreach Programs first as a high school student, later as UC outreach and admissions officer at UCSB, and most recently as a PhD student at UCLA.

I am a first-generation college student who grew up in the city of Fresno in the Central Valley. I was highly motivated to attend a four-year university – something that my parents had not done. I attended a good high school. Yet I received little assistance from high school counselors. When you are 17 years old filling out a college application can be overwhelming, particularly when college is a foreign place to your parents. I can remember the concern that my mother and I had about the fact that she nor my father attended a university – we wondered – would I be seen as a less qualified or less-able candidate? During this time, I knew that I needed assistance in understanding how to go about applying for the UC. And I was fortunate to find that the University of California had set up an office for admissions and outreach in Fresno. They provided the guidance and support that I, as a 17 year-old in unfamiliar territory needed. My mother and I

attended workshops that they provided which helped me understand that I was a legitimate candidate for the prestigious UC. They helped me understand processes related to filling out an application, writing a personal statement, and learning about and applying for financial aid. This office was my link to the University of California. I know that it provided knowledge that was crucial in turning my desire to go to a UC into a reality.

What I didn't know then, but know now is that over the past 15 years I was only one of the over 300,000 students from the Central Valley who have utilized the outreach services provided by the University of California in Fresno. In 1986 this office began working with 17 high schools in the Central Valley – today they work with over 146 high schools in the Valley. In the 2002-3 year alone, this office had contact with over 86,000 students, parents, educators and community members. These programs have a long history of serving the Central Valley – and over the past 17 years have built strong relationships with school districts, schools, counselors, and students and their families – to eliminate such programs – destroys the strong infrastructures that have been created over time.

After graduating from UCSB with honors, I completed a Masters in social policy and administration and then decided to pursue a career in higher education. I took a position as an outreach and admissions officer for UC Santa Barbara and saw the great disparities in educational opportunity first-hand through my visits to high schools throughout the state. I have visited schools that operate out of partially condemned buildings and others

that drove me in a shiny new golf cart to state of the art multimedia halls for presentations to their students. Professor Oakes, illustrated the nature of many education disparities (such as weaker college curriculums and less qualified teachers) and their influence on eligibility for the UC and the CSU systems. While we learn more about the causes and implications of such educational inequities everyday – outreach programs operated by the UC seek to apply much of what we know at present about these inequities at the K-12 level in an effort to identify and prepare talented young people who come from low-socio-economic status backgrounds. And as Professor Oakes also noted in her presentation – these students are disproportionately students of color.

As a public land grant institution, the UC has a special responsibility to serve the best interests of the state. As is stated in the 1988 University of California Policy on Undergraduate Admissions policy adopted by the UC Regents,

“Mindful of its mission as a public institution, the University of California...seeks to enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that beyond meeting the University’s eligibility requirements, demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses a broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds characteristic of California.”

Outreach programs are crucial in meeting this mission. They forge important partnerships between the K-12 system and our four-year public university systems and are an essential mechanism in ensuring that all Californians are provided equal

opportunities to attend an institution of higher education. At present, UC and CSU outreach programs collectively serve over 325,000 middle and high school students. Think for a moment about how powerful this number is – 325,000 with the hopes and aspirations to one day do what most in their families have not – to attend a four-year college. I want to emphasize that outreach programs are not just recruiting students for a University that is already more than filled to capacity – in fact, they work to prepare those students who have historically (and continue to be) underrepresented at the University of California, such as myself a first-generation student. Outreach programs (or if you prefer the term educational preparation programs) serve two important functions:

- (1) they embody the UC's commitment to serving talented students from the variety of economic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds that are manifest in the state of California;
- (2) and these programs recognize that all students are not provided with the same quality of K-12 educational opportunities and that this means that a number of highly capable and academically accomplished students need assistance in preparing to enter and succeed in a university. Outreach programs provide services to these ends.

The UC is one of the nation's, if not the world's, premier institutions of higher learning. The University of California trains the future leaders and work force of our state and our nation. By maintaining a commitment to outreach programs – we maintain a commitment to train future leaders and skilled professionals from all

socio-economic backgrounds. I stand before you today as a PhD student at UCLA and the University of California Student Regent-designate – I am here due to a great deal of hard work and dedication, to be sure – but also because the State of California has invested in me – by providing the tools necessary to access and succeed within the University of California. As stewards of the State of California, I urge you to continue to invest in outreach programs and in doing so to demonstrate your commitment to extend educational opportunity to all students. It's in the best interests of our students and of equal importance, it's in the best interests of our state.

Thank you.