



October 21, 2009

CHAIR CHRISTOPHER KUTZ
Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: Admissions, Enrollment and Preparatory Education (AEPE) Response to the Enrollment Task Force Report on Increasing Nonresident Enrollment

Dear Chair Kutz:

AEPE opposes the recommendation of the Task Force on Enrollment in its report of July 31, 2009 that nonresident enrollments should increase at the undergraduate level in response to the budget crisis that the university is now facing. The committee stands by the principles articulated in its policy on nonresident enrollment adopted on February 13, 2009.

AEPE views the University of California as, first and foremost, a State institution whose primary responsibility at the undergraduate level is to educate California residents. This is consistent with the Organic Act of 1868, which founded the University of California and states "... it shall be the duty of the Regents, according to population, to so apportion the representation of students, when necessary, that all portions of the State shall enjoy equal privilege therein"; and with Article IX, Section 9 of the State Constitution which begins: "The University of California shall constitute a public trust, ...". Additionally, the Regent's Policy on Undergraduate Admissions states: "Mindful of its mission as a public institution, the University of California has an historic commitment to provide places within the University for all eligible applicants who are residents of California. The University 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 the broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds characteristic of California." AEPE is concerned by what it sees as a rapid move toward privatization that further separates the University from the people of California.

While acknowledging that the University is not being supported adequately by State resources, AEPE is not convinced that the revenue generated by increasing nonresident students is sufficient to justify the significant potential losses in public support and in student diversity. The proposed increase in nonresident students will entail additional costs associated with recruitment and yield, for example, and the increase in revenue will take some time to materialize. There are major political risks associated with a dramatic increase in nonresident enrollment and the associated decrease in California resident students, including the possibility that the State will find it easier to further defund the University if it appears that we can support ourselves on "external"

funds. The University also runs the risk of losing the support of the citizens of California if they no longer believe that it serves them or the State.

Additionally, as the Task Force report itself points out, the demographic profile of the nonresident undergraduates who come to UC Berkeley and pay nonresident tuition suggests that a significant increase in their numbers will almost certainly make the overall student body more affluent, on average, and less ethnically and socio-economically diverse. In relation to the displacement of relatively low income California residents by higher income nonresidents, most of the nonresident students who choose to enroll at UC Berkeley will have many options for higher education across the country, while many of the California residents who would not be admitted because of the proposed change are likely to have fewer options.

AEPE is also concerned that to effectively double the percentage of nonresident admissions, linked to higher tuition, would in the long run fundamentally change the way in which admission decisions are made at Berkeley. It would place us in a competitive relationship to private institutions with quite different admissions protocols from those Berkeley has traditionally practiced in the name of serving the diverse population of California. In its discussions, AEPE has repeatedly affirmed the philosophical position that admissions policy should not take finances into consideration, leading to need-blind admissions. AEPE believes that it would be wrong to change that position.

The Committee believes that the Task Force recommendations do not adequately address the continuing over-enrollment problem. The proposed decrease in California residents, coupled with the slightly smaller increase in nonresidents would eventually reduce the total number of undergraduates, but only marginally. It would take some time to reach a steady-state enrollment level that would nevertheless remain higher than is desirable, especially at the lower division.

AEPE discussed the longer-term implications of a substantial increase in nonresident enrollment and was concerned that any such increase would become permanent, regardless of whether the State returned to a more appropriate level of per-student funding, thereby fundamentally altering the character of the university that prides itself on excellence, affordability and public access. AEPE felt that it would be a mistake to introduce a change with such long-term consequences because of the current sense of urgency brought on by the budget crisis.

Sincerely,



George C. Johnson
Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment and Preparatory Education