

REMARKS TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
TO REVIEW THE MASTER PLAN

David P. Gardner, President
University of California

Los Angeles
October 19, 1987

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee: I very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you today the report of the Commission to Review the California Master Plan for Higher Education and the task you face in this, the second phase of the review process. The Commission's efforts represent an important first step in the review process, and should prove helpful to you in the next few months.

I considered offering testimony this afternoon that would move through the Commission's recommendations and offer comments about them from the University's perspective. But it seems to me more important, given the knowledge this Committee already has of the Commission's report--and of UC's position on its recommendations--that instead I briefly address five issues that, in my view, should command a very significant share of your attention and concern. These issues are, first, access for underrepresented students; second, the quality of undergraduate education; third, intersegmental coordination and cooperation; fourth, the transfer function; and fifth--a topic not adequately covered in the Commission's report--graduate education.

1) Educational access for underrepresented students: This Committee is well aware of California's changing demographic trends and the challenge and opportunity they represent. At UC, these changes are most evident in the significant upturn in the numbers of underrepresented minorities among our entering undergraduates. I wish to add, however, that progress has been uneven across the University's campuses, and we are doing all we can to learn from both our mistakes and our successes. Taken as a whole, however, over the last seven years the proportion of underrepresented minority students has increased one percent each year, so that they now constitute 16.5 percent of the freshman class. While we are encouraged by this progress, we recognize that we have a long way to go.

We are also redoubling our efforts to improve the retention and completion rates of underrepresented minority students. Steps have been taken to improve our data collection on retention trends, so that we can use this information to pinpoint and expand successful strategies, and student services have been increased in an effort to improve the retention rate and the success of these students.

Another step we have taken recently is to tie together our various affirmative action programs and fashion them into a more coherent whole. We have been encouraged by the results. We are also developing guidelines, based on a

recently conducted study by my office, to determine what additional strategies used at comparable institutions are likely to work for us as well. Your support during this academic year, as our campuses expand what they are doing in faculty and graduate student affirmative action, will be as welcome as it will be crucial.

2) Quality of undergraduate education: The Master Plan

Commission's discussion of undergraduate education reflects a national concern with this topic. At the University, we have focused principally on lower division education, and I know that several of you have followed UC's actions on this issue, beginning with the report of the committee chaired by University Professor Neil J. Smelser.

The Smelser report made more than a dozen recommendations for improvement, and we are following up on them in various ways. For example, more than half of the campuses will expand their freshman-sophomore seminar programs, bringing students together with the faculty members in small learning situations. And faculty senate committees on personnel and teaching on almost every campus are paralleling universitywide actions to improve criteria for evaluating the undergraduate teaching of tenure-track faculty, and to implement these criteria in the review process.

A recently appointed President's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Education will monitor progress on our campuses; identify innovative programs; expand information on undergraduate teaching and education; and advise me on University policies regarding undergraduate education. Let me also add that we are enthusiastically exploring ways to afford our students more opportunities to combine their studies with community service. Such service will afford our students the means of complementing their University work with a more practical exposure to the pluralism of our society and the nature and variety of its needs.

We are committed to improving the educational experience we offer our undergraduates, and will welcome your support and encouragement as these efforts unfold.

- 3) Intersegmental coordination and cooperation: The segments agree with the Master Plan Commission that the important issues of underrepresentation and undergraduate education require a greater level of intersegmental cooperation than has historically prevailed. We have concentrated on two areas in which we will need your ongoing assistance to succeed.

First, Chancellor Ann Reynolds and I appointed a Joint Budget Task Force last year and asked the members to develop proposals for collaborative intersegmental

approaches to student preparation and early outreach; and we invited the State Department of Education and the Community Colleges to join with us. We are very hopeful that this common budgetary and programmatic effort will help us strengthen our outreach and preparation programs.

Second, the California Education Round Table--comprised of the heads of the four segments of postsecondary education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Executive Director of CPEC--is working on a new Intersegmental Coordinating Council that will coordinate programs in the areas of transfer and articulation; curriculum and assessment; outreach and student preparation; and the improvement of teaching. We hope that you--like the Master Plan Commission--will conclude that this voluntary approach offers the greatest potential for effective intersegmental cooperation.

- 4) The transfer function: This subject occupied much of the Commission's attention, as well it should in light of its importance. I would like to address how I think the Legislature and the segments, together, can make it work.

We must seek approaches that accomplish several State goals simultaneously: we must strengthen the Community Colleges' transfer curriculum; we must convince students graduating from high school that the Community Colleges offer a real

and attractive alternative for lower division study, for those working towards the bachelor's degree; we must expand the affirmative action progress we are making in the four-year colleges and universities; we must accomplish this in the most cost-effective way for the State; and we must not break faith with California students who have historically been able to attend a UC or CSU campus as long as they qualified for admission and wished to enroll. I regard it as very important, therefore, that in the process of your review of the Master Plan we seek to attain all of these goals and not just some of them.

- 5) Graduate education: Beyond the issues I have already mentioned, the Joint Committee can make an additional contribution in an area the Commission did not discuss at much length. In any educational agenda for the next two decades, graduate education will occupy a crucial position. And we need to act now, not ten years hence.

Universities across the nation will face the challenge of replacing a record number of faculty who will soon be retiring. At UC, we estimate that we will have to hire approximately 6,000 new faculty between 1985 and the year 2000, at an average rate of more than 400 per year (a 25 percent increase over current rates) to replace persons retiring or resigning, and to hire persons needed to meet the enrollment increases that are projected. CSU expects

to hire some 8,000 new tenure-track faculty during those same years. Competition will be made more intense by business and industry in certain fields like engineering and computer science, and we foresee problems even in the arts and humanities.

Our new graduate enrollment plan for the years 1985-2000 projects enrollment growth in a range of 6,700 to 9,200 students (that is, a 27% to 37% increase) to help meet the needs of our society for trained, well educated people. As the Legislature's Joint Committee on Science and Technology noted in its 1986 report on the economic future of this state, "Universities and colleges are an important part of the solution to the competitiveness challenge as advanced technology and a skilled workforce are key elements of any competitiveness strategy." Indeed they are. We need your help in placing graduate education high on the State's agenda.

These, then, are five issues that I believe merit your thoughtful attention. Whatever opinions we may each have about the strengths and weaknesses of the University's work in these areas, we can agree that there is always room for improvement.

I welcome this opportunity to discuss the Master Plan with you today.

Thank you.