

April 3, 2020

To: Janet Napolitano, University of California, President
Timothy White, California State University, Chancellor
John Perez, University of California Board of Regents, Chair
Cecilia Estolano, University of California Board of Regents, Vice-Chair
Maria Anguiano, University of California Board of Regents, Academic Affairs Chair
Adam Day, California State University Board of Trustees, Chair
Lillian Kimbell, California State University Board of Trustees, Vice-Chair
Peter Taylor, California State University Board of Trustees, Education Policy Chair

From: Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
1055 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1850
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear University of California and California State University Leaders,

Amidst the many challenges facing our students during this time, we are deeply concerned about our high school juniors and seniors who are planning to go to college. Students in our communities already face many challenges on the path to a college degree, but we fear that the COVID-19 health crisis will further exacerbate equity gaps in who goes to college.

We commend the actions taken by the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems to temporarily modify its admissions requirements, including grades and testing requirements. These changes will help ensure that the students most impacted by the current crisis do not lose access to our public universities. We applaud the strong and proactive action that will provide greater certainty for students and the family members and educators who support them in the college admission process in this time.

At the same time, we are disappointed that no similar action was taken to extend the deadlines for registration, housing and deposits. While the UC's are urging "maximum flexibility" for students who request extensions, and some individual CSU campuses have made shifts, we know that relying on proactive student requests will mean that many students – particularly our most vulnerable students – will miss out on their college dreams because of the particular challenges at this time.

Low income students, students of color, undocumented students and English Learners from high-need schools — whose experience with college matriculation is more complex — need more time and support at this juncture to navigate the complex application process. With schools closed and many students hard to reach, we know that the support students are receiving is often insufficient. For example, at one LA Unified high school in Watts, counselors were able to reach less than 15% of students despite extensive outreach via phone and text. We see in these numbers that the potential missed opportunities are grave.

To meet these needs and ensure our students have what they need to go to college, we are calling on leaders of the UC and CSU systems to extend the Statement of Intent to Register (SIR), housing and deposit deadlines to at least June 1 to give our students and schools more time and support.

We applaud the over 300 colleges and universities across the nation who have already extended enrollment commitment and deposit deadlines, including the following CSU campuses: Channel Islands, Chico, Dominguez Hills, Humboldt, Pomona, San Bernardino, San Francisco, and San Marcos. We also again applaud the announcement from the UC's that it will ease some admission requirements. This flexibility is commendable, and yet we ask that you take it a step further and join the growing list of colleges and universities who have officially extended SIR, housing, and deposit deadlines to support seniors matriculating this fall. Your leadership in issuing a system-wide extension will not only serve incoming students in California, but will also send a powerful signal to colleges and universities across the country to do the same.

California is working hard to lead the nation in supporting families through this time period and we thank you for your leadership. We urge the entirety of the UC and CSU systems to continue to put student needs first and elevate equitable access to higher education. We must work in unison to equitably support high school seniors in California as they pursue their path to college.

Sincerely,

