



(Sent via e-mail to twhite@calstate.edu)

March 27, 2020

Timothy P. White, Chancellor
California State University
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Chancellor White:

With schools likely closed through the end of the school year due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a number of California's public high school seniors will face potential barriers for high school graduation and acceptance into a four-year post-secondary institution, in particular UC and CSU. I am writing to share with you directly several possible options we are asking key education policymakers to consider, and it is our hope that the California State University will demonstrate its leadership in meeting these challenges faced by the future of our great state.

There are approximately 470,000 high school seniors currently in California. As of this writing, virtually none of these students are in school, as a result of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that the school closings will last at least until the summer recess, when high school seniors would typically be moving on to the next phase of their lives. As the closures came in the last semester of the school year, a significant number of graduating seniors were in their final courses required to earn a diploma under CA Ed Code Section 51224.3.

According to a [2018 PACE report](#), 63 percent of all California public high school students enroll in college following high school graduation: 26 percent in a four-year college or university, and 37 percent in a two-year college. Among the 63 percent of California public high school students who enroll in college, 28 percent enroll in public four-year campuses in-state (18 percent

at CSU, 10 percent at UC), 57 percent enroll in public two-year in-state community colleges, and an additional 4 percent enroll in private in-state colleges (the vast majority of in-state private institutions are four-year). However, many of these students will face potential barriers to starting on their life's journey – whether college-bound or not – because of the pandemic-related school closures. Some closure-related impacts to graduating seniors include:

- Inability to complete A-G requirements for entrance into a CSU/UC institution.
- Inability to complete courses required for graduation, including American government, English, mathematics, social science, etc.
- Inability to meet credit requirements.

Students typically meet the A-G requirements by completing high school coursework, taking college-level courses (usually through a community college), or taking AP or IB examinations. However, these options are not currently available due to COVID-19 restrictions closing schools. Requiring these students to complete their education at their home district or at a local community college after schools reopen would delay them from enrolling at UC or CSU campuses and places an undue burden on their families, on the already limited K-12 and community college instructional resources, and the economy. Without any changes to these existing requirements, students would be forced to postpone graduation and complete their education at their home district or at a local community college, which would further impact already limited classroom space.

Delaying graduation is also relevant for students who, while not seeking admission to UC/CSU, are nonetheless seeking to matriculate from high school in California to attend other 2- or 4-year institutions or enter the workforce. As a result of their inability to complete their graduation requirement, these students would likewise be unable to attend a four-year college, community college and their future ability to advance beyond high

school will be hampered through no fault of their own. Action should be taken to remove these barriers to advancement.

Potential Solutions:

In light of school closures and interrupted instruction, students will need flexibility if they are to meet both high school graduation requirements and the A-G requirements for UC/CSU admission. To address these challenges and create more flexibility, potential solutions include the following:

- **Credit for All Graduation-related Courses.** Give full credit to students for graduation-related courses in which they were enrolled in at the time of school closure for COVID-19 (e.g. American government, English, mathematics, social science, etc.).
- **Credit for A-G Courses.** Give full credit to students for A-G courses they were enrolled in at the time of school closure for COVID-19.
- **AP waivers.** Also waive or extend the AP testing/portfolio submission requirements (it is our understanding there is currently some discussion of extending submission deadlines and testing dates).
- **Grading Flexibility.** Provide flexibility in grading and the recording of grades (e.g. Allowing credit/no credit transcripts for coursework).
- **Raise Cap on Dual Enrollment.** Currently, there is a 5 percent cap on the number of HS students who can take classes during the summer. Participation also requires principal approval. If make up credits are to be required, Community Colleges are better equipped to offer on-line and in person courses that will enable high school seniors to make up credit. More flexibility in the dual enrollment program would enable students at any grade level to catch-up.
- **UC/CSU Systemwide policy.** Currently many of the admission policy exceptions are granted on either a case-by-case basis or campus-by-campus basis. For times like this, a systemwide exemption policy for college applications from the high school class of 2020 is needed.

We would also urge key education leaders to explore additional options for addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 closures on students in grades 9-11.

In particular, high school juniors who will miss instruction due to the COVID-19 closures face additional pressure to take an increased course load in their senior year, which could have a negative impact on their academic performance.

In closing, we believe that it is critically important to recognize the social-emotional impact this particular issue may be having on high school seniors. The stress and anxiety of simply waiting to hear from CSU and UC on whether they have been accepted into a university for the fall semester is unbearable enough under normal circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic adds a level of complexity to this wait that is unprecedented in our lifetime, and it will have impacts far beyond the physical and financial toll it is exacting today. We take these matters seriously, and it is our hope that you will give our proposals your thoughtful consideration.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at (916) 669-3299, or via email at vbilly@csba.org.

Sincerely,



Vernon M. Billy
CEO & Executive Director

CC: Adam Day, Chair
Lillian Kimbell, Vice Chair
Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Anthony Williams, Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director, State Board of Education