Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of March 29, 2012

REPORT ON ADVOCACY

Senior Vice President Dooley will provide highlights of stakeholder advocacy activities at the University over the last year and in the coming year. This report to the Board was recommended by the UC Commission on the Future.

BACKGROUND

Advocacy by stakeholders and grassroots supporters is important in helping advance the University of California’s legislative and budgetary objectives. While President Yudof, Regents, chancellors, and other University leaders are engaged with elected officials on an ongoing basis, the voices of constituents are critical in educating state and federal leaders about the value of public higher education and the importance of re-investment in it. Alumni, students, faculty, staff, retirees, parents, business leaders, and community members all play a role in these efforts.

UC advocacy efforts are a partnership among the campuses, the Office of the President, the Alumni Associations of the University of California, campus foundations, student organizations, and individual supporters of UC. These entities work collectively and individually on a range of advocacy activities, summarized in the material below.

A primary focus of advocacy activities in recent years has been on urging the Governor and Legislature to make higher education funding a State priority. While the State has been facing a historic budget problem that has reduced State appropriations to the university substantially, advocacy activities have been essential in minimizing the damage and educating elected officials about the importance of re-investment. UC advocates have helped position higher education strongly for the coming year and will be important to the outcome of the 2012-13 budget debate.

The number of participants in advocacy activities has been growing, and in addition to increasing their numbers further, the University is working to encourage those already involved at a “mid-tier” level to increase their participation and engage in new forms of advocacy. At the state level, a Strategic Advocacy Plan has been created to guide overall advocacy efforts for 2012.
Below is a summary of activities undertaken in the last year and/or planned for the coming year.

E-advocacy and social media

Currently, 530,000 supporters of UC are part of the online “UC for California” network and related campus electronic advocacy systems. These systems give advocates periodic informational updates about critical issues facing the University and opportunities to email their elected officials with their views. In calendar year 2011, nearly 80,000 emails were sent from UC advocates to elected officials through this system, up from nearly 40,000 the prior year. The University also continues working to expand its communications with advocates through YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other online platforms.

Direct, personal advocacy

Personal, face-to-face discussions are often the most effective form of advocacy, and the University works to create these opportunities in multiple ways.

On March 1, 2011, more than 200 alumni and other constituents from across the system converged on the State Capitol to meet with legislators and staff as part of “UC Day in Sacramento.” A series of related systemwide lobby days occurred in 2011 and are planned for 2012, as noted below. Meanwhile, campuses engage in a range of additional activities. UCLA and UC Irvine, for instance, held specific advocacy days in 2011 focused on promoting understanding of the linkage between UC and the business community. UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and UC Merced all have plans in 2012 to expand their outreach to Sacramento-area alumni to participate in Capitol advocacy. All ten campuses are working on plans to have their campus leadership, led by the chancellors, visit Sacramento in 2012 and engage their legislative delegations on issues of importance to the University and their campuses.

In addition, advocates of the University often find opportunities to directly tell the story of public higher education in legislative hearings and other settings. As just one example in 2011, UC Berkeley alumna Kim Polese testified to the Senate Budget Committee hearing in Mountain View on State cuts to higher education. She spoke from her perspective as a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and participated on a business panel that followed a panel comprised of university and college leaders, including President Yudof. Other advocates appeared before the Legislature on other issues of high priority to the University, and this kind of activity remains a high priority for advocacy efforts in 2012.

Collaboration with partners

The University also works to forge common cause with other entities in promoting the value of higher education to the life of California.

“Joint Higher Education Advocacy Day” has become an annual event bringing together supporters of UC, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges in Sacramento for meetings with legislators and staff. More than 200 advocates from the three
segments participated in the event this last April, which included a meeting of President Yudof and the other segment leaders with Governor Brown. In 2012, Joint Higher Education Advocacy Day has been scheduled for May 1. The University also supports and participates in the advocacy efforts of other organizations with common interests, such as the California Healthcare Institute, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, youth leadership development programs, and others.

**Collaboration with students and parents**

Students and parents are among the most compelling advocates for the cause of public higher education. Students, in particular, have been active on many fronts in the last year.

Several activities from 2011 will occur again in 2012. The UC Student Association plans an annual lobby day in Sacramento, scheduled to occur this year on March 5. Advocates for the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) academic preparation program also will hold an advocacy day in March. The University is planning a third annual Graduate Research Day, also in March, focusing on the research contributions of UC graduate students and the value of graduate education overall. Finally, Chair Lansing has offered to work with student leaders on additional advocacy activities in Sacramento, presenting a united front regarding the need for investment in higher education.

In addition to these events, with the UC San Diego campus as a lead, early planning is underway to create a “Parent Advocacy Day” for this year. The focus will be on issues of particular importance to parents of UC students and alumni.

**Federal advocacy**

The University also pursues a range of advocacy activities at the federal level, where UC has a significant interest in federal funding of research, student financial aid, and health care. UC receives more than $8 billion in federal support for research grants, student financial aid, Medicare and Medicaid payments for patient medical care, as well as management fees and operation costs associated with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Chancellors, faculty, senior UC leadership, and campus and laboratory governmental relations staff visit Washington on a regular basis to provide input on policy issues, testify before committees, and share information with members of the legislative and executive branches about the ways in which federal funding for universities makes a critical contribution to national priorities. The University often works in collaboration with a variety of coalitions and national associations to advance issues in Washington.

This past year, the UC Federal Governmental Relations office coordinated the inaugural “UC Day in DC.” More than 100 UC delegates visited every office of the California delegation and met as a group with Senators Feinstein and Boxer as well as Minority Leader Pelosi and other members of the delegation, urging them to protect funding for education, research and healthcare. Planning for UC Day in DC 2012 is now underway.
UC also is a fierce advocate for student financial aid. The federal relations office works closely with university leadership, campuses, national associations, and UC students in support of strong funding. This past year, the office coordinated a number of student advocacy days, including both graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, President Yudof partnered with the UC Student Association on a number of communications to Capitol Hill in support of financial aid. This partnership with our students in support of financial aid will continue in 2012.

Telling the story

A range of communications activities support the University’s advocacy efforts. In 2011, as one example, the University launched a series of 24 advocacy videos highlighting Regents, alumni, faculty, staff, and other UC supporters encouraging UC advocates to share their own stories and “Stand Up for UC.” These videos were distributed through a variety of channels and can still be seen on YouTube at http://goo.gl/1LVgm.

The University has also used its new economic impact report, presented to the Regents in September, in advocacy demonstrating the critical role of higher education in creating jobs and new economic opportunity for California. Brochures and related advocacy materials are online at www.universityofcalifornia.edu/economicimpact.

More recently, President Yudof has launched a series of speeches and visits built around his piece, “A Baker’s Dozen Myths About Higher Education,” seeking to improve public understanding of often-misconstrued issues in higher education. The speech can be found online at www.universityofcalifornia.edu/president/yudof_higher_ed_myths.pdf.

While not the direct subject of this item, the University also has a great deal of additional work underway to enhance its broad communications presence – including websites, use of social media, visual identity, and public outreach strategies – that will benefit the University’s advocacy activities in 2012 as they are implemented.