

The Regents of the University of California

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

March 17, 2004

The Committee on Educational Policy met on the above date at UCSF-Laurel Heights, San Francisco.

Members present: Regents Bodine, Dynes, Hopkinson, Johnson, Kozberg, Lozano, Moores, Murray, O'Connell, and Sayles; Advisory members Novack, Ornellas, and Blumenthal

In attendance: Regents Montoya, Preuss, and Seigler, Regent-designate Anderson, Faculty Representative Pitts, Secretary Trivette, General Counsel Holst, Treasurer Russ, Provost King, Senior Vice Presidents Darling and Mullinix, Vice Presidents Doby and Drake, Chancellors Bishop, Carnesale, Cicerone, Córdova, Greenwood, Tomlinson-Keasey, Vanderhoef, and Yang, Acting Chancellor Chandler, Executive Vice Chancellor Gray representing Chancellor Berdahl, and Recording Secretary Nietfeld

The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m. with Committee Chair Kozberg presiding.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of January 15, 2004 were approved.

2. **PRESENTATION BY STATE SUPERINTENDENT JACK O'CONNELL CONCERNING THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA**

President Dynes observed that Superintendent O'Connell had been a friend to the University of California during his service in the Legislature. As Superintendent, he is seen as an effective advocate for the state's children and for the restoration of the luster of California's public schools.

Superintendent O'Connell recalled that in February he had presented the State of California Education Address, which was focused primarily on grades K-12. The speech acknowledged that the state's public high schools have not received the same attention as have the primary grades. As a result, many of California's 1.7 million high school students are not prepared to enter the university and college system, nor are they adequately prepared to enter the work force. A number of bipartisan bills have been introduced in the Legislature to address these issues.

Mr. O'Connell explained that he had identified the following five priorities aimed at improving the state's high schools:

- Raise expectations for high school student achievement

- Help students meet higher expectations by developing world-class teachers and school leaders
- Improve high school instructional materials to align with California's standards
- Work with higher education institutions and middle schools to effect smooth transitions to and from high school
- Create a community of support for high-achieving high schools.

The Superintendent stated his interest in forming an unprecedented partnership between the K-12 community and all of higher education in California. While he recognized the fact that not every child would be expected to enroll in a four-year university, he stressed the need for every student to learn the same skills, including algebra, geometry, foreign languages, and English composition. Cooperation with the University of California and the California State University will be required to achieve this goal, particularly with respect to identifying additional high school courses that meet the (a) - (g) requirements for admission to UC and to CSU. He acknowledged that such improvements would not be made overnight, particularly in light of California's budget difficulties, but he also pointed out that quality educational opportunities must be provided to all students. He stated his commitment to seek adequate funding for the entire K-University system. In closing his remarks, Superintendent O'Connell expressed his concern about the Governor's proposal to increase fees for graduate students by 40 percent, particularly with respect to teacher preparation programs.

President Dynes voiced his support for the proposals advanced by Superintendent O'Connell while acknowledging the many problems that the institutions will face in preparing each student in California's public schools to enter society.

Regent Montoya raised the issue of charter schools, referring in particular to the highly successful Preuss School on the San Diego campus. She noted that there is a bill before the Legislature that would permit universities to sponsor charter schools on their campuses. The Superintendent saw the proposal as an example of the collaboration he was interested in pursuing.

Faculty Representative Pitts observed that as many as two-thirds of the state's high school students fail to complete the University's required (a) - (g) course work. He was concerned that requiring all students to complete these courses would increase the number of students who fail to graduate from high school. He stressed the need to ensure that all teachers were fully qualified to teach the curriculum. Professor Pitts also noted the necessity of maintaining quality as more courses qualify to fulfill the (a) - (g) requirements.

Regent Moores shared the concern expressed by Faculty Representative Pitts that the Superintendent's proposals could produce unintended consequences, including an erosion in the quality of the high school curriculum. He was hopeful that the proposals would result in fewer students' requiring remedial work when they enroll in a college or university.

Superintendent O'Connell stressed that one intention would be to remove the historical disconnection between the universities' expectations of high schools and the high schools' ability to produce students who are fully qualified when they enroll. He shared Regent

Moore's concerns about remedial education, noting that a recent report had found that more than half of the students at CSU are enrolled in remedial classes.

Regent Murray suggested that the synergy between the high schools and the University of California be put in writing as part of UC's core mission. He noted that many programs are threatened as a result of the budget crisis, including outreach and teacher training. Superintendent O'Connell agreed that outreach is an important element in assisting underrepresented minority students to become eligible to attend an institution of higher education.

Regent Johnson observed that schools should be given some flexibility in designing the (a) - (g) curriculum. She believed that students would respond positively to increased expectations.

Regent Lozano recalled that when she served on the California State Board of Education she had been involved in the adoption of standards for the K-12 system. One topic of controversy had been whether the standards were too rigorous. The Board concluded that it should expect students to perform to world-class standards while recognizing that not all students have the same opportunities to learn. She supported the proposal that the University enter into a partnership with the K-12 system in order to increase the success rate of all students.

In response to a question from Regent Kozberg regarding technical academies, Mr. O'Connell referred to a new high school in Ventura County with an emphasis on careers in technology. The school recently received a score of ten out of a potential of ten, based upon 14 characteristics.

Regent Marcus believed that there should be alternative curricula offered for students who were not interested in pursuing higher education. Superintendent O'Connell stressed that all students would benefit from taking the (a) - (g) courses, regardless of their career goals.

Regent-designate Anderson expressed her belief that a majority of California's high school students have the ability to complete rigorous course work. She noted that it would be important to look closely at teacher preparation programs and to work with both teachers and counselors to hold them accountable for creating the appropriate expectations for their students.

Committee Chair Kozberg expressed the Regents' appreciation to Superintendent O'Connell for his presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attest:

Secretary