

Council Resolution No. 2020/2021-008

## **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING PROJECT SPELL**

**WHEREAS**, Project Students for Progress in Employee Language Learning (Project SPELL) is a years-long program that partners undergraduate and graduate student volunteers with UCLA frontline service employees for personalized tutoring in English as a Second Language (ESL); and

**WHEREAS**, Project SPELL's mission exemplifies the core values of the True Bruin Code: Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, Respect, and Service; and

**WHEREAS**, over the past decade, Project SPELL has paired hundreds of student volunteers and employees, with participants finding this environment a home away from home in uplifting their communities in working class solidarity; and

**WHEREAS**, for many of Project SPELL student volunteers, this program has facilitated transformational and authentic experiences, built student-labor bonds, and provided valuable interpersonal skills and practical ESL teaching experience; and

**WHEREAS**, for many employee learners, this program has built confidence in English speaking skills used for navigating their daily lives, fostered genuine connections with students, and provided vital assistance with obtaining General Educational Development (GED) certification, passing citizenship exams, and advancing technology skills; and

**WHEREAS**, Due to budget shortfalls from the COVID-19 pandemic, UCLA administration made the decision in early June 2020 to defund Project SPELL; and

**WHEREAS**, This cut in funding has left the program unable to continue the employment of Project SPELL program director Stephanie Youngblood<sup>1</sup> and fund ongoing operational and material costs; and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dailybruin.com/2020/06/10/administrators-to-defund-project-spell-citing-budget-shortfalls-from-covid-19>

**WHEREAS** Program participants and tutors have confirmed that the program cannot successfully continue without Youngblood’s professional guidance, and will effectively stop operation on June 30 if adequate funding is not made available;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, The defunding of Project SPELL is antithetical to the values of the True Bruin Code and runs contrary to the embodied values of an institution dedicated to promoting social and economic mobility; and

**WHEREAS**, The Student Committee of Project SPELL, led by President Alexa Montes De Oca, launched a petition<sup>3</sup> which has gained over 5,000 signatures as of June 30, 2020 in support of a full restoration of funding for Project SPELL;

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association supports the efforts of the Student Committee of Project SPELL and their petition for Project SPELL program funding;

**LET IT BE FINALLY BE RESOLVED**, That the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association calls upon Chancellor Gene Block and Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck to reinstate funding for Project SPELL in order to save this vital program.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dailybruin.com/2020/06/10/administrators-to-defund-project-spell-citing-budget-shortfalls-from-covid-19>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/saveprojectspell>