

Resolution in Support of International Students and in Recognition of Their Struggles Highlighted by COVID-19

WHEREAS, international students represent 12% of the total student population according to the numbers from 2018-2019¹; and

WHEREAS, the current US government has taken a negative stance towards foreign nationals both in the educational sector and in general, with the recent proclamation as a clear evidence²; and

WHEREAS, international students pay 3 times the tuition that in-state students pay with no financial aid due to federal regulations; and

WHEREAS, while in normal times this difference in tuition is already a stress factor for international students, the potential loss of income and the economical shifts in their respective countries have amplified this issue; and

WHEREAS, international students are facing increased levels of stress from both the situation in the US and back in their home countries as loss and uncertainties increase; and

WHEREAS, as UCLA Housing has reduced its capacity in accordance with the state public health regulations, thus canceling thousands of contracts without offering an alternative option and not explicitly stating that international students are a priority group; and

WHEREAS, even for international students who received housing offers from the first round with the triple housing options being off the table³, on-campus housing has become less affordable amidst an economical crisis; and

¹<http://www.admission.ucla.edu/campusprofile.htm>

²https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-putting-american-workers-first-restore-economy-greatness/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=wh

³<https://portal.housing.ucla.edu/my-housing/rates-contracts-rules/2020-2021-contract-housing-rates-and-payment-plans>

WHEREAS, finding off-campus housing options is extremely difficult for international students, especially for those who currently have returned back to their countries or are incoming students; and

WHEREAS, as consular services at US embassies around the globe are continuously canceling and delaying appointments and/or not offering appointments in the near future, in addition to the existence of international travel bans and/or lack of travel options; and

WHEREAS, the visa status for the fall quarter remains uncertain for international students who left the US and cannot return back due to said travel bans with no evidence that this issue will be resolved even during the subsequent quarters; and

WHEREAS, some junior and senior international students might need to take a required class for graduation that is only offered in-person and in specific quarters or years thus resulting in the possible delay in graduation if the student is not present in the US; and

WHEREAS, international students face increased difficulties in balancing all of these additional stress factors in conjunction with their academic performance, which is further exacerbated if they live in a very different time zone that requires them to attend classes and/or take exams at late hours especially when not all instructors and departments have been considerate of this fact throughout the past quarter;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to firmly state its support for international students and to denounce hateful messaging or actions towards international students whether they are made by individuals or large entities, including the US government, at all levels.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to advocate on behalf of international students when it comes to visa and immigration issues for both incoming students who must acquire a visa and continuing students who are outside the US and unable to return back, not only for fall but also for subsequent quarters until the public health crisis is resolved, international travel is fully back, and visa issuance is back to pre-COVID-19 capacity.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to urge the US government to release guidance regarding the visa status of international students during fall, ideally extending the current ones, and if not then to advocate for an exemption for UCLA students.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to regularly update student leaders about current and future measures or actions in support of international students.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA Housing to consider international students with junior and senior standing as a priority group for 2020-2021 housing offers and to extend the current emergency housing choice from 14 days to 30 days.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to provide supplemental sources of funding to international students in need for financial support, including housing, from university institutional and philanthropic aid pools, similar to how COVID-19 universal aid grants were disbursed.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to actively push against any tuition increases, especially for out-of-state and international students.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to uphold its commitment that remote learning will be offered for the entire academic year for international students who are unable to physically return to campus due to visa, international travel, or housing issues.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to establish a clear mechanism for international students to waive a required class that would delay their graduation in the event that it is only offered in-person while the student can not be present on-campus due to visa or international travel issues.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to ensure that instructors avoid timed or proctored assignments and exams that would require a live internet connection, or at the minimum offer multiple time slots or acknowledge internet disconnection as an acceptable excuse for missing an exam or assignment.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to encourage professors to utilize online textbooks due to complications in the ability of international students to acquire physical materials in a timely manner.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to encourage instructors to set their office hours at different times to accommodate possible time zone differences.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to further encourage instructors to not require live participation and resort to other methods of evaluation instead.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on the Academic Senate and departments to encourage instructors to record and upload their lectures in a timely manner.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on individual academic departments to allow pass/no pass grading for classes toward pre-major and major requirements until the public health crisis is resolved, international travel is fully back, and visa issuance is back to pre-COVID-19 capacity.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to include leaders from the international student community in any working group, committee, or taskforce that discusses issues that will directly or indirectly affect international students.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA Student Affairs Administration and CAPS to provide additional resources for mental and emotional health support to international students while taking into account the difference in time zone for live sessions and booked appointments.

FINALLY LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC reaffirms its support for international students and asks other entities and departments at UCLA to do so as well.