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California State Senate

SENATOR
ROGER NIELLO
SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



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August 21, 2026

Ms. Maria Anguiano, Chair
University of California Board of Regents
Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Chair Anguiano and Board,

We are writing to formally request that the University of California (UC) Regents approve the reinstatement of the SAT or ACT as soon as possible.

As you know, in the fall of 2025 the UC, San Diego Senate-Administration Workgroup on Admissions issued a [report](#) examining academic preparation of its entering first-year students. The report showed UC San Diego (UCSD) has experienced a significant decline in the academic preparation of entering first-year students over the past five years, with the most severe deterioration occurring in mathematics preparation and notable challenges also present in writing and language skills. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of entering students at UCSD whose mathematics skills fell below high school standards increased nearly thirtyfold, with more than seventy percent of those students performing below middle school standards, representing approximately one in twelve members of the entering cohort. A substantial portion of underprepared students also require remedial instruction in writing, and recent data indicates an increasing overlap between deficiencies in mathematics and deficiencies in writing and literacy. A similar [report](#) done at UC Berkeley, has not been as easily accessible to the public, however had similar findings.

It is possible that the decline in academic preparation coincides with multiple systemic factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, extended periods of remote instruction, elevated rates of chronic absenteeism, grade inflation in secondary education, and the elimination of standardized testing from the UC admissions process. The removal of standardized admissions testing has increased reliance on high school coursework and grades, despite evidence that grades and course titles have become less reliable predictors of college readiness, particularly in mathematics. Math placement data at UCSD demonstrates a correlation between high school math grades and actual student preparedness, including cases in which students earning high grades in advanced high school math courses nonetheless require remediation at the elementary, middle school, or high school level upon entry.

As you are well aware, over 3,000 UC faculty banded together asking for testing to be reinstated. Their pleas need to be heard. In 2020, when the [decision](#) was made to suspend the testing, [several regents said](#) they knew there needed to be a test and work would be done to investigate a new one. Yet here we are in 2026, and nothing has been done since then to ensure there was a reliable way of measuring students. This is not in the best interests of our students, and the outcome has been disappointing. This must end with COVID long in the rear-view mirror.

We understand that expanding access to students from under-resourced backgrounds is consistent with the UC's mission as a public institution and engine of social mobility, admitting large numbers of students who are profoundly underprepared risks undermining student success, increasing course failure rates, lengthening time to degree, and placing unsustainable strain on faculty and instructional resources. The UC San Diego Senate-Administration Working Group on Admissions also demonstrates that current admissions and placement practices are insufficiently aligned with student readiness, institutional capacity, and long-term educational outcomes.

The UC system has long been the shining beacon of higher education throughout the world. We must do all we can to protect its integrity and high standards to be sure we are producing the highest quality students to help continue to lead California in a competitive and positive direction.

Please re-instate the SAT or ACT ASAP. Let us know if we can provide any further guidance on this request. Our offices can be reached at 916-651-4006 (Niello), 916-651-4019 (Ochoa Bogh) or 916-651-4037 (Choi). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



ROGER NIELLO
Senator, 6th District



ROSILICIE OCHOA BOGH
Senator, 19th District



STEVEN S. CHOI, PhD
Senator, 37th District

cc: James B. Milliken, UC President
Ahmet Palazoglu, UC Academic Senate Chair