



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Bay Area Council Releases Statewide Poll Showing Strong Voter Support for a Ballot Initiative to Stabilize State Funding for UC, CSU Systems**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – The Bay Area Council today released results of a statewide poll that shows California voters want to put the brakes on decades of state funding cuts to higher education, with 63 percent of voters saying they would support a ballot initiative to guarantee stable funding for the University of California and California State University systems. The support far surpasses the simple majority that would be needed for passage.

Along with shoring up higher education funding from the state, voters also want guarantees on admissions and access to key courses. The poll found that 81 percent of voters want guaranteed admission to both UC and CSU schools for qualified California students. Support for increasing access to courses needed for graduation was even higher, coming in at 83 percent.

“Californians want more from their higher education system, but they also recognize our higher education system needs more support,” said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council, which sponsored the poll. “Our public higher education system is the headwater of our innovation economy, but the snowpack of state funding that feeds UC and CSU has been getting thinner and thinner. Guaranteeing a minimum level of state funding would provide some stability for our higher education systems and protect students and families against the constant threat of increasing tuition.”

[See summary of California higher education poll results>>](#)

The Bay Area Council commissioned the poll to gauge attitudes for a possible statewide ballot proposition that would put in place Constitutional protections related to UC and CSU funding, enrollment and programs.

The poll asked voters: *To guarantee admission for qualified California students, place strict limits on tuition increases, continue tuition-free education for low-income students, and increase access to courses needed to graduate at University of California and California State Universities, should the state constitution be amended to establish a minimum level of state funding with accountability and oversight?*

Support was highest among voters in the state’s biggest population centers, with 72 percent approval among Bay Area voters and 71 percent among voters in Los Angeles County. Sacramento was far less inclined to support the measure, with only 48 percent approval.

"Voters are clear - they understand the importance of California's jewel of a higher education system," said Lenny Mendonca, director emeritus of McKinsey and Company and a former Chair of the Bay Area Council. "They love the Master Plan; expect the UC, CSU and community colleges to provide access and deliver it; and the state to ensure we have the financial resources to do so."

Younger voters also were highly supportive of the measure, according to the poll, with 77 percent of those ages 18-49 casting their ballot in favor. Among ethnic groups, support spiked with Asian voters at 87 percent with Hispanic/Latino voters not far behind at 82 percent. The poll found 56 percent of white/Caucasian voters approving the measure.

Stable tuition also garnered strong support, with 72 percent of voters favoring a guarantee that the amount of tuition a student pays would remain the same for up to six years.

Higher education funding has been a contentious topic in recent state budget discussions, with UC President Janet Napolitano and Gov. Jerry Brown hammering out a deal earlier this year to provide additional state funding in exchange for halting planned tuition hikes. Tuition and fees for in-state students at UC have almost doubled over the past 10 years while state funding for the system has declined more than 30 percent since the late 1990s.

The poll results also reinforce a plan by President Napolitano and recently approved by the UC Board of Regents to increase in-state undergraduate enrollment by 10,000 over the next three years. That's because 62 percent of voters in the poll think UC could be doing a better job of admitting California students. According to some recent reports, in-state admissions in UC are at historic lows.

Despite concerns about enrollment and cost, 71 percent of voters said UC provides a high quality education and 50 percent agreed that the overall value of a UC education is good. The CSU system also received strong marks, with 57 percent of voters saying the overall value of CSU is good or excellent and 65 percent ranking the quality of education as good or excellent.

Other findings from the poll include:

- 41 percent of voters said they have personally have attended or currently attend a UC or CSU school
- 50 percent of voters say they have an immediate family member that attended or currently attend a UC or CSU school

The poll of 600 voters by Oakland-based EMC Research was conducted in mid-September and has a margin of error of 4 percent.

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### **About the Bay Area Council**

*The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, approximately 275 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide.*