

As delivered

**Chair Janet Reilly Opening Remarks
Board of Regents Special Meeting
UCSF Millberry Union Conference Center
500 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco
Friday, May 2, 2025
3:00 PM**

Today marks a significant and a meaningful moment for the University of California as we consider the appointment of the University's 22nd President. Before we do, I want to take a moment to expend my sincere thanks to the members of the Presidential Search Committee: Regent Elliot, who served as Vice Chair and to Regents Anguiano, Hernandez, Matosantos, Robinson, Salazar, and Beharry. Each of you dedicated countless hours in meetings, reviewing materials, and engaging in thoughtful deliberation, helping to define the qualities essential to the next leader. I especially want to thank Regent Chu who chaired the committee. She did it with such grace and focus and attention.

Carmen, you are exactly the right person – I knew it from the very beginning – to lead this committee, you have such a thoughtful and clear way of thinking, ensuring that this process was inclusive, that it was thorough, and that it was ultimately very, very successful. So my sincere, sincere gratitude to you. Thank you very much.

I think it deserves a round of applause.

I also want to take a moment to express my deep appreciation to President Drake. And while we still have some time before your official departure, President Drake, it is only fitting to acknowledge you at every opportunity. You have given five years of leadership at UC but you have given decades of service to higher education, and your years of service have been extraordinary.

You have led this institution through times of great challenge and change, always with thoughtfulness, dignity, and a deep commitment to the values and the principles of UC's mission. You have been a steadfast advocate for our students, our faculty, our staff, and to the vital role that this University plays in California, in the nation, and really in the world.

And so on behalf of the Board, again, there will be many more thank yous, but it has been my absolute pleasure, my absolute delight to work with you. I have learned so much. Your unwavering dedication to this university is extraordinary, and I thank you so much.

That brings us to the important business before us today. It is my great honor to present for the region's approval, the appointment of James B. Milliken as the 22nd President of the University of California. As we all know, this is a pivotal moment, not only for UC, but for higher education nationwide.

We sought a leader who brings steadfast and experience, someone who understands the transformative power of a public university system – and who can build on UC's legacy as a global leader in research, in academics, and in public service. These times call for a president who is an effective advocate, a clear communicator, and a collaborative partner to our many constituents, someone who can lead with vision and humility.

And after an extensive national search, I am proud to say I think we have found that leader in JB Milliken. JB exemplifies the values and qualities we sought; someone who will build upon the work and the legacy of President Drake; someone who brings decades of leadership experience at major public research universities, and a deep understanding of UC's vital role in advancing opportunity, innovation, and progress.

Simply put, JB is the right leader for UC at this time. His commitment to public higher education and the student experience set him apart. He has a demonstrated track record of expanding access, improving affordability, and driving student success, especially for low-income and historically underserved communities.

He is also deeply committed to shared governance and to engaging meaningfully with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners. That spirit of collaboration will be essential as we face both the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. Mr. Milliken has a long and distinguished career as a higher education leader, including serving as chancellor of two of the nation's largest public education systems. The University of Texas, where he has served since 2018, and the City University of New York, where he served from 2014 to 2018.

Mr. Milliken's career has been guided by a personal commitment to expanding opportunity and student success. And he has championed numerous efforts to increase access and create affordable educational opportunities for low-income students.

And just one of the many examples of this, he doubled graduation rates for low-income students of color at CUNY, an institution that serves more than 200,000 students. I have every confidence in the world that he will be an exceptional steward of the University of California's world-renowned system.

With that, I would like to open it up to my colleagues for any comments or any questions. And I'd also like to note that we do have Executive Vice President Nava and Vice President Lloyd. They are seated here at the board table if you have any questions.

So any questions or comments, colleagues?