



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Michael V. Drake, MD
President

Office of the President
1111 Franklin St.
Oakland, CA 94607

universityofcalifornia.edu

CAMPUSES

Berkeley
Davis
Irvine
UCLA
Merced
Riverside
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

Davis
Irvine
UCLA
San Diego
San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Lawrence Berkeley
Lawrence Livermore
Los Alamos

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

May 1, 2025

CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the University of California (UC)—which includes 299,000 students, 266,000 faculty and staff, and 2.5 million alumni across ten campuses and six academic health centers—I write to share the University's fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations programmatic priorities. Strategic investments in key federal agencies and programs will help the University continue to serve as an economic and innovation engine for California and the nation and enable the University to successfully carry out its education, research, health care and public service missions.

As the FY 2026 appropriations cycle commences, the University of California submits its recommendations with the acknowledgment that the federal environment has dramatically changed. The budgetary landscape has been impacted by several executive and agency actions, resulting in cancellations of grants, funding freezes, reductions in the workforce, and operational uncertainty. These pressures, and in particular the grant cancellations and freezes, are disruptive and hinder scientists' ability to conduct critical research, limit access to health care for patients, and jeopardize the development of our future scientific workforce. As the state's second largest employer and major driver of economic and scientific innovation, education and health care in every congressional district in California, such actions hinder the University's ability to meet its public service mission. If the United States is to maintain its position as a world leader in innovation, it is essential that Congress direct the agencies to end these actions and ensure that the grant process, including funding for existing grants and new grants opportunities, reflects the agency's contractual obligations and terms and conditions of the awards.

Additionally, California continues to recover from devastating wildfires thanks to the partnership of the federal government. The University of California supports the supplemental request submitted by the State of California, as well as regular appropriations for the underlying federal programs highlighted in the request. The federal partnership has been essential in addressing natural disasters, and continued support for these efforts will ensure communities can rebuild and become more resilient.

Federal investments in these agencies and programs mean that institutions such as the University of California can continue to improve the lives of Californians and people around the world through world-class educational opportunities, groundbreaking research and top-rated health care.

The enclosed documents outline the University of California system's FY 2026 federal appropriations programmatic priorities, and below there are a few areas of specific importance I would like to draw your attention to:

Student Support: The University of California provides one of the most comprehensive financial aid programs in the nation, helping ensure that cost is not a barrier to higher education and enabling our students to graduate with the least amount of debt possible and with strong career prospects. Federal financial aid is a key part of this. The University urges Congress to continue its investments in federal student aid programs—including providing the highest funding level possible for the Pell Grant and indexing it to inflation. The University also urges Congress to invest in programs that support students' basic needs while also increasing investments in programs for Minority-Serving Institutions.

Research and Innovation: Strong investments in our federal research agencies—including the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Energy's Office of Science, Department of Defense, NASA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and others—enable the University of California to be an engine of economic innovation and a transformational part of California's economy. At a time when global competitors are significantly increasing their research investments, it is vital that the United States continue to lead. Recently, China announced an 8.3 percent increase in science and technology spending, placing that nation second behind the United States in terms of government expenditures on research and development. The University strongly encourages Congress to provide the science agencies with the critical funding necessary for the nation to remain a world leader in innovation. The University also encourages Congress to provide robust and sustained appropriations for our future scientific workforce, technology transfer initiatives and research infrastructure. Additionally, we urge Congress to call on the administration to follow the law and immediately rescind the NIH and DOE facilities and administrative cost notices.

Health Care and Biomedical Research: University of California Health is a critical safety net health care provider for patients with the most complex medical needs across the state, and last year, UC Health providers saw patients from 91 percent of California zip codes. The University urges Congress to eliminate scheduled cuts to the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital program, permanently address Medicare restrictions on telehealth, invest in programs like Health Resources and Services Administration's Title VII and Title VIII that address the nation's urgent health workforce shortages and preserve the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, which funds vital research that makes health care delivery safer and more effective.

Thank you for your continued support of the University of California. The priorities outlined in the attached document are listed by appropriations subcommittees for your consideration.

If you have questions, please contact me or UC Associate Vice President for Federal Governmental Relations Chris Harrington. He can be reached at (202) 997-3150 or Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael V. Drake" followed by a stylized flourish.

Michael V. Drake, MD
President

Enclosures

cc: UC Chancellors
UC Provost and Executive Vice President Katherine S. Newman
UC Senior Vice President for External Relations and Communications
Meredith Turner
UC Associate Vice President for Federal Governmental Relations
Chris Harrington