



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

September 23, 2026

The Honorable Richard Lucas
Acting Chief Operating Officer
Office of Federal Student Aid
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C.. 20202

Dear Acting Chief Operating Officer Lucas:

On behalf of the University of California (UC) financial aid community thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid's (FSA's) draft Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

UC is the nation's leading public research university system – comprised of ten campuses, six academic health centers, three affiliated national laboratories, and a Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources – educating more than 300,000 students and employing more than 280,000 faculty and staff. During the 2024-25 academic year, 44 percent of UC students benefited from \$1.9 billion in federally funded financial support, including grants, loans, and work-study. This federal support complements significant state and institutional investments in student financial aid.

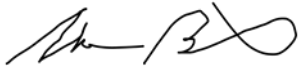
The University appreciates that FSA's draft strategic plan's top priority is serving students and their families as they complete their education and repay their federal student loans. UC fully supports the strategic goals to deliver quality tools for institutions of higher education and develop a talented federal workforce. UC's financial aid administrators take seriously their role in protecting the interests of taxpayer dollars while distributing federal financial aid accurately and efficiently.

With these factors in mind and given that FSA has a statutory designation as a performance-based organization (PBO) UC recommends that the final strategic plan add clear and concise metrics for FSA and there be regular public reporting on these metrics. Targets should be created for student-facing support services, such as call wait times and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, as well as institutional support, such as timely regulatory and sub-regulatory guidance, timely technical specifications, and responsiveness to questions.

UC encourages FSA to continue engaging institutions of higher education as partners in achieving our shared goals: helping students and families complete their education, regardless of income, and understanding their financial aid obligations. The University recognizes FSA's

important role in ensuring compliance with the *Higher Education Act* and stands ready to support FSA when opportunities arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Brick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shawn Brick
Associate Vice Provost, Student Financial Support
University of California, Office of the President

CC: Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Ralph J. Hexter
Senior Vice President for External Relations and Communications Meredith Turner
Associate Vice President for Federal Government Relations Chris Harrington