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STATEMENT OF

DAVID PIERPONT GARDNER
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ON

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1985

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 1, 1985

Chairman Ford, members of the Subcommittee, I am David Gardner, President of the University of California. Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The Higher Education Act represents the Federal Government's fundamental commitment to the idea that our nation's citizens must be well-educated and well-trained to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and competitive world. Since its inception, the Act has assisted higher education in its goal of educating our young people by providing financial assistance for students, campus libraries, teacher training programs, and research facilities, to name only a few areas of federal support. The Higher Education Act, however, is more than just the sum of its various provisions. This legislation is symbolic of the Federal Government's necessary and unique involvement in the life and future of our nation's colleges and universities.

Those of us who served on the National Commission on Excellence in Education believed it was appropriate to distinguish the various responsibilities of the Federal Government, the states, and local jurisdictions in the effort to improve schooling in America. The Commission members were a diverse group of individuals drawn from education, government, the corporate and foundation worlds, and private life. But they were unanimous in supporting the idea that most decisions about education should be made by state and local governments and school boards. That is the nature of our highly decentralized school system, in which 92 cents of every dollar spent on education come from non-federal sources.

At the same time, however, the Commission also believed there are broad responsibilities in education that the Federal Government must assume because of their scope and national consequence. As discussed in our report, A Nation at Risk, these consist of such functions as, for example, protecting constitutional and civil rights for students and school personnel; supporting teacher training in areas of critical shortage or key national needs; collecting and disseminating data, statistics, and information about education generally; providing student financial assistance; meeting the needs of special students, such as gifted and the handicapped; supporting research conducted at universities and colleges; and providing assistance for graduate education and training. In the most general terms, we concluded, the Federal Government has "the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education" and to provide national leadership in that domain. I believe that these broad responsibilities are important for you to consider as you discuss reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The Act is symbolic of a government-university partnership in education, and especially in research, that helped our country prevail in World War II and that has enabled us to maintain international economic, military, agricultural, and technical position in the decades since. Whatever our past successes, however, this partnership must be reaffirmed if our place is to be secured in the future. It is demonstrably in the national interest that we do so. Thus, this reauthorization process is an important procedure that encourages

both the Federal Government and the higher education community to change with the times by improving or replacing those provisions of the Higher Education Act that require alteration, all in the best interests of the nation.

To strengthen the Act, the various higher education associations have carefully reviewed the existing programs, and under the umbrella of the American Council on Education, have proposed some changes in the Act. The University of California essentially supports the ACE proposal.

When considering the array of programs contained in the Act and in the proposal, however, I believe there are three specific areas of crucial importance to higher education that deserve emphasis: 1) the need to mount programs that will assure the nation of a continuing flow of educated and trained people capable of meeting the country's strategic needs; 2) the need to replace the enormous backlog of obsolete scientific equipment and related facilities that presently frustrates efforts to teach young people about science and to retain bright young scientists on our faculties; and 3) the need to design a more efficient and effective national network for information exchange among our universities, private industry, and the general public.

Development of Talent and Expertise

Universities are the source not only of new ideas but of educated and well-trained people. For more than three decades, the Federal Government has recognized that it is in the national interest to

encourage the development of talent and expertise, especially by helping to support financially needy students and by providing funds for the nation's basic research efforts. Yet the partnership between universities and the Federal Government in this area is not what it might be. For example, despite the increasing cost of graduate education, the number of federally-funded graduate fellowships fell 83 percent from 1969 to 1983. This is a non-partisan observation. As a substitute for these awards, the proportion of the Federal Government's assistance for graduate and professional education provided as loans rose from 26 percent in 1976 to 73 percent in 1984. This is a disturbing trend. The higher education community is a vast and diverse mosaic of public and private institutions, and differences exist over what formula comprises the ideal mix of student aid. But this community is united in its apprehension that our graduate and undergraduate students are increasingly burdened by large cumulative loans.

We have watched this trend with concern at the University of California, particularly as it affects minority graduate students and those students from lower-income families. The growing student dependency on loans is suggested by our figures indicating that the average loan per borrower more than doubled at both the graduate and undergraduate levels between 1978-79 and 1984-85. This increase was due to the fact that during this period, the dollar value of Title IV grants at the University of California increased by only 1.8 percent, while Title IV loans grew by 60

percent. Thus, although the availability of federal student assistance increased, the growth resulted from an increase in the loan burdens students assumed, not from an increase in grant support.

We are deeply troubled by data indicating that the increase in the debt burden has been disproportionately assumed by our lowest-income and our minority students. As family income decreases, the reliance on loans to cover educational and living expenses increases. Borrowing among University of California students from families with incomes of less than \$18,000 increased 153 percent between 1979-80 and 1983-83, compared to an increase of only 11 percent among families with incomes over \$30,000. Our data also reveal that at the graduate level, in both professional and academic programs, minority students borrowed on the average from 5 to 11 percent more funds than did non-minority students. The University of California makes every financial effort possible to ensure that all of our students complete their course of study. Yet we find that it is the lower-income and minority students--those who have the most to gain from an education to improve their social and economic standing in life--who are now the most financially burdened. This financial burden often keeps them from completing their education or from completing it in a timely way.

This is a problem not only for individual students, but also for the nation because student debt influences choices and careers. Many individuals in our society come from low-income families that lack experience with borrowing large sums and are hesitant to accumulate

debt for seemingly intangible purposes, education being perceived by them as one such purpose. Those low-income students who are resolved to accept this burden often supplement these funds by relying on part-time work that greatly extends the time required to finish their degrees, particularly at the graduate level. Finally, when these students emerge from their course of study heavily in debt, many of them--especially minorities and women, who on average tend to work in lower paying jobs--find repaying their large debt exceedingly difficult. As a result, students may be discouraged from entering college, from completing graduate studies, and from entering fields of study at both the graduate and undergraduate level that are of crucial importance to our nation's well-being and responsive to their own career aspirations and personal hopes for the future because they fear they are mortgaging their future.

What we need is a carefully crafted and adequately funded Federal initiative to help create the financial incentives and means by which the nation's most promising young people can be encouraged to continue their education at the undergraduate level and, when it is appropriate, at the graduate and professional level as well. This is important not just for the sake of individual aspirations but for the sake of the nation's strategic needs and general well-being. It is true not only in the scientific, engineering, and technological disciplines, but also in the social and behavioral sciences, the humanities, the fine arts, and in such essential fields as foreign languages, area studies, and teaching as well. To achieve this purpose, the University of California supports ACE's suggested

"National Interest Grants," (Title IX, Part D), which would award grants to graduate programs based on merit and national needs, and the proposal to replace the current language in Title IX, Part A, with institutional grants to encourage minority graduate participation. In addition, the University endorses the continuation of Title IX, Part C, which provides competitive awards to students through the National Graduate Fellows program, as well as the continuation of Title VI (International Education), which seeks to promote international cooperation and understanding. The Federal Government's support for international education would be particularly welcome at this time, as our nation's economic relations with other countries, especially those of the Pacific Rim, grow ever more significant. In addition to the current provisions of Title VI that provide for foreign language and area studies, this section could be expanded to promote the study of language, culture, and trade. Even modest support--aimed at quality rather than at numbers--of these programs, including undergraduate programs, could move us toward the worthy goals of serving educational opportunity and the national interest.

Scientific Equipment and Instrumentation

As centers of basic research, our nation's universities have played a critical role in helping to create the knowledge that is the technological foundation of our economy, our security, and our way of life. Universities account for more than half of the nation's basic research, about \$5 billion worth in 1983, as well as for some

\$2.5 billion in applied research and development. Yet one-third of higher education's physical plant was built before 1950, and university research equipment is at present estimated to be twice the median age of industry's. Twenty-five percent of all research equipment in the leading universities is, for all practical purposes, obsolete, while only 16 percent is estimated to be state-of-the-art. At the University of California, our inventories indicate that we need to spend \$520 million to replace obsolete equipment in addition to \$4 billion for the construction and renovation of our facilities.

As you know, the major agencies of the Federal Government that sponsor university research have accepted partial responsibility for addressing the instrumentation problem. In recent years, for example, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy have each provided for instrumentation in their research programs. Congress also appropriated \$31.9 million for an instrumentation program in the National Institutes of Health. We are also encouraged by other federal initiatives that seek to assist higher education in this important area. Congressman J.J. Pickle recently introduced legislation (H.R. 1188) that would make permanent the three-year research and experimentation tax credit established in 1981, and would add provisions that should stimulate corporate equipment donations to universities and colleges. The University of California also supports legislation sponsored by Congressman Don Fuqua, the University Research Facilities Revitalization Act (H.R. 2823), that would provide funds for research facilities construction sponsored by the various federal research agencies. In addition, for

the first time in 14 years, Congress employed Title VII of the Higher Education Act to appropriate \$28 million for facilities funding. Finally, the University of California strongly endorses the ACE recommendations for Title VII that, among other things, call for merit-based peer review for the distribution of funds, and an increase in the authorization level for this title from \$200 million to \$300 million.

These current and new proposals will help, but they touch the problem only at the margins. The facilities and instrumentation problem is measured in the billions of dollars, and thus these proposals should not be confused with the solution the country still desperately needs to discover. The private sector, the states, and the universities themselves must all make this a priority. The federal role is particularly critical because the task of refitting our nation's laboratories is both national in scope and central to the country's long-term economic, scientific and technological well-being. This effort should be undertaken promptly.

Information Technologies

Our nation is experiencing a revolution in information technologies comparable in its significance and its implications to the invention of the printing press. The speed and ease with which people may now create, replicate, and share information is truly astonishing, and already these new information capabilities play a significant role in our country's cooperative and competitive activities with other countries of the world. The challenge we face is providing for the preservation and maintenance of traditional

sources of information, such as books, journals, and periodicals, while summoning the foresight to develop and benefit from more advanced information devices that include video discs, computers, micro-wave, video terminals, satellites, and cable among others. Furthermore, we need to employ these technologies more effectively in order to share information and transfer the results of basic research not only within the academic community itself, but between that community on the one hand, and the marketplace and the rest of society on the other.

We encourage federal legislation that would aid higher education's development of these new technologies. Chairman Ford, for example, first proposed in 1984 to replace an unused provision in Title II with a new program of College Library and Cooperation Grants. These grants will assist our libraries' use of computers, improve information sharing among institutions, and provide funds for promising demonstration projects.

Working with the higher education community, the Federal Government can provide the leadership necessary to apply these information technologies on a truly national scale. We might ultimately envision a totally new kind of national "library," accessible to the average citizen or business person by phone or home computer, one which incorporates traditional information sources as well as different forms like data bases. It would be appropriate for the Federal Government to initiate and support such efforts as they develop because they will quite naturally involve people and organizations without regard to geographical or domestic governmental boundaries.

Concluding Statement

It is appropriate and timely for the Federal Government to take initiatives in the three areas I have mentioned, in order to ensure the continuing flow of well-educated and well-trained young people, to invigorate the nation's research effort, and to increase public access to the ideas and knowledge produced in our laboratories and the intellectual riches found in our libraries. Such initiatives would help to remind the country that the Federal Government remains capable of seizing promising opportunities and making progress that both benefits the nation and helps sustain the vitality and usefulness of our colleges and universities, and to do so when confronted elsewhere with major fiscal problems and conflicting and competing priorities.