Resolution # 1409C
Resolution in Support of First College Level Competitive Sports Program in California for Students with Disabilities

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WHEREAS UC institutionalized the first Disabled Students Program to welcome students with disabilities into higher education, consequently, serving as a model for the world; UC Berkeley’s legacy for promoting inclusion attracts students with disabilities from around the world and is a source of campus pride; and

WHEREAS Our university’s Disabled Students’ Program (DSP) serves 1,579 students with disabilities. There are an another 2,500 (estimated) UCB students with disabilities on campus who are not enrolled in DSP – for a grand total of 4,079 Cal students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS The UC Berkeley Campus Climate Survey found that 39% of respondents with disabilities felt excluded within the past year;¹ and

WHEREAS California has an extremely diverse population, with a rapidly increasing population of people of color. Given this, it’s important that all UC campuses reflect the diversity of our state. UC needs a President who understands the challenges and benefits of a multicultural State and University system, and is willing to make diversity a top priority; and

WHEREAS Students with disabilities at UC Berkeley are excluded from competitive college sport opportunities which unfortunately is the norm across the majority of universities nationwide;² and

¹ UC Berkeley Campus Climate Survey, Brief Summary Results. Equity & Inclusion Advisory Board. Liz Halimah, Chief of Staff for Equity & Inclusion. 14 May 2014. (Slide 4).
² American Collegiate Society for Adapted Athletics (ACSAA) (2014)
WHEREAS UC Berkeley has 580 intramural, 33 club, and 28 varsity sport teams - none are designed for students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS Numerous Cal student athletes represent their countries in the Olympics, while not a single one has represented their country in the Paralympics; and

WHEREAS the need to develop college sport opportunities for students with disabilities is a campus need which reflects a nationwide phenomenon that UC Berkeley can lead in solving; and

WHEREAS The “United States Government Accountability Office report found that students with disabilities participated in athletics at consistently lower rates than students without disabilities”:3 and

WHEREAS The “President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest reported that physical activity is 4.5 times lower for American children and youth with disabilities than their peers without disabilities”:4 and

WHEREAS The lack of physical activity and athletic participation for the population with a disability is directly linked to the lack of opportunity in educational institutions;5 and

WHEREAS citing the lack of sport opportunities in educational institutions, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) released a memo last year reinforcing that all educational institutions have a duty to provide and improve access to sport opportunities for students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS there are 4,599 colleges in the United States: 24 offer a sport opportunity (of any kind) for athletes with disabilities;6 and

WHEREAS college sport opportunities for athletes with disabilities are absent in 70% of states in the United States;7 and

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7 American Collegiate Society for Adapted Athletics (ACSAA) (2014) & Wheelchair and Ambulatory Sports, USA (2014)
WHEREAS the NCAA does not recognize student athletes with disabilities; and

WHEREAS the NCAA has 1,281 member institutions, only 10 colleges provide “unofficial” inter-college competitive sports programs for student athletes with disabilities that mirror the non-disabled NCAA experience: none are located in California; and

WHEREAS children with disabilities have no available pathway to participate in competitive sports while attending college in California; and

WHEREAS 60,000 students under the age of 21 are classified as blind nationwide; only 2 colleges in the U.S. offer some variation of a sport opportunity for the blind. No scholarships or inter-college competitive opportunities exists in the United States for blind athletes; and

WHEREAS 500,000 individuals under the age of 18 have Cerebral Palsy and 40,000 boys and young men have Muscular Dystrophy, of which, both disabilities usually require a power-chair for mobility; only 1 college has an athletic opportunity for power-chair users; and

WHEREAS college competitive sport opportunities for athletes with disabilities that mirror the non-disabled NCAA experience are only available in 8 states nationwide; and

WHEREAS 126,000 full tuition scholarships worth over 2 billion dollars are awarded to NCAA student athletes every year: it is estimate that less than a hundred thousand is awarded to student athletes with disabilities; and

WHEREAS disability activist and scholars view the struggle to include athletes with disabilities into college sports fully as one that mirrors the Title IX challenge to include women; and

WHEREAS UC Berkeley in collaboration with several campus partners and philanthropy have demonstrated success with innovating pilot-level sport and fitness solutions for the disability community; and

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10 Figure roughly estimated by the known 10 competitive disabled sports program (ACSA, 2014), of which, the majority are partial scholarship.
WHEREAS with support from the Robert and Colleen Haas Scholars Program, students from the Disabled Students Union at Cal were able to research best practices and advocate for UC Berkeley to improve access to fitness and sport programs for the disability community; and

WHEREAS with support from an Innovation Grant from the Office of Equity & Inclusion, UC Berkeley was able to substantially improve fitness services and explore developing inclusive sport opportunities for the disability community; and

WHEREAS with support from the American Cultures Engaged Scholarship (ACES) program, UC Berkeley created the first pilot academic course that teaches blind and non-blind students how to play the game of goalball (similar to soccer, yet designed for the visually impaired) while learning about the intersection of sports and disability studies; and

WHEREAS with support from the Chancellor’s Community Partnership Fund, UC Berkeley in partnership with the Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP) are developing a pilot competitive goalball and powerchair soccer team for students and community members with disabilities; and

WHEREAS with support from the Office of Public Affairs, the aforementioned pilot programs have illuminated UC Berkeley into the television spotlight with ABC Local News, Comcast Sports Network, PAC 12 Network, CBS National News, International Sky News Network, and in print with a front page article in the San Francisco Chronicle article; and

WHEREAS with support from the Graduate School of Education’s Cultural Studies of Sport in Education (C.S.S.E.) concentration, the department has prioritized scholarly research and developing tangible sport opportunities for individuals with disabilities at Cal to serve as a national example of athletic inclusion; and

WHEREAS the overall need to develop inclusive college sport opportunities is paramount: 56.7 million people have a disability in the United States (19% of the population); 2.3 million college students nationwide have a disability (11% of all students). 4,079 students with disabilities attend UC Berkeley - all of which- could substantially improve their health, inclusion, and general well-being through access to sports; therefore be it

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12 2010 U.S. Census
13 The American Council on Education (ACE) Freshman Survey
RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly is advocating for UC Berkeley to increase sport opportunities for individuals with disabilities; and be it further.

RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly is advocating for UC Berkeley to develop a long term vision to become the first college in California to offer a competitive sports program with varsity privileges for students with disabilities; and be it further.

RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly is encouraging the Chancellor in breaking down the NCAA barrier by prioritize the inclusion of athletes with disabilities into the future direction of the Cal Athletics; and be it further.

RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly is encouraging the Chancellor to become an advocate on the national stage for leading the NCAA to a more fair and inclusive model; and be it further.

RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly President will write letter to the Chancellor requesting a meeting with student leaders to allow them to advocate on the need; and be it further.

RESOLVED the Graduate Assembly will arrange a meeting with administrative stakeholders to raise awareness with including: Chris Treadwell (Assistant Chancellor), Dan Moguluf (Public Affairs / Communications), Michael Williams (Interim A.D.), Claude Steele (Executive VC & Provost), Scott Biddy (VC Relations), and Gibor Basri (VC Equity & Inclusion), Bob Lalanee (VC Real Estate), Paul Hippolitus (DSP Director), and Derek Van Rheenen (Director, Graduate School of Education Cultural Studies of Sport in Education program); and be it

RESOLVED if approved by the Graduate Assembly this resolution will be forwarded as an identical Senate Bill to the ASUC for approval with the terms “Graduate Assembly” in the resolved section being supplanted by “ASUC.”