

Introduced by Senator Migden

January 17, 2008

Senate Resolution No. 18—Relative to University of California study abroad programs.

1 WHEREAS, Study abroad programs are an important aspect of
2 a well-rounded college education because these programs expose
3 students to different cultures and provide them with the necessary
4 tools to understand the increasingly complex problems facing the
5 international community; and

6 WHEREAS, The University of California Education Abroad
7 Program (UC EAP) should not seek to limit study abroad
8 opportunities, but rather should expand them, especially in certain
9 regions of the world, including the Middle East; and

10 WHEREAS, In the 2004–05 school year, only one-half of 1
11 percent of United States education abroad participants studied in
12 the Middle East, while nearly two-thirds of United States education
13 abroad participants studied in Europe; and

14 WHEREAS, The UC EAP currently limits its study abroad
15 opportunities by excluding all programs in countries with a United
16 States Department of State travel advisory, forcing interested
17 students to travel abroad on non-UC EAP sponsored programs;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, This policy forces interested students to go through
20 unnecessary obstacles, including officially withdrawing from the
21 University of California if they study longer than one quarter,
22 forfeiting any potential financial aid, jeopardizing their readmission
23 to the university, and losing credits since there is no guarantee that
24 they will transfer; and

1 WHEREAS, The existence of a United States Department of
2 State travel advisory was not created as a gauge to determine the
3 suitability of UC EAP programs since many of these advisories
4 are not outright travel bans, but rather recommended warnings
5 with differing levels of severity; and

6 WHEREAS, The UC EAP policy does a disservice to interested
7 students by judging potential programs without weighing the
8 potential academic benefits against the potential nominal risks of
9 traveling in a country subject to a less severe travel warning; and

10 WHEREAS, The current UC EAP policy is outdated and is not
11 comparable to several study abroad programs of other public peer
12 institutions; and

13 WHEREAS, The University of North Carolina (UNC) has
14 enacted a more flexible, student friendly policy that independently
15 reviews programs in countries subject to travel advisories and
16 differentiates between less severe advisories that warn of
17 heightened risk and more dangerous advisories that restrict travel
18 altogether; and

19 WHEREAS, This policy prohibits programs in countries under
20 the restricted travel category and gives students the option of going
21 on UNC sponsored programs to countries under the “heightened
22 risk” category only if the interested students sign an additional
23 waiver that acknowledges the added risks incurred while traveling
24 to these countries and completely releases the UNC from all
25 liability resulting from injuries sustained while abroad; and

26 WHEREAS, As a result of the UNC policy, the UNC maintains
27 active study abroad programs in Israel and Kenya, two countries
28 subject to less severe travel advisories; and

29 WHEREAS, The University of Wisconsin (UW) has a similar
30 policy which requires students to sign additional liability waivers
31 that enables the UW to maintain study abroad programs in Kenya,
32 Israel, and Nepal, another country subject to a less severe travel
33 advisory; and

34 WHEREAS, The Associated Students of the University of
35 California, Berkeley and the Associated Students of the University
36 of California, San Diego have passed similar resolutions urging
37 the UC EAP to revise its study abroad policies and reinstate its
38 study abroad program to Israel; and

39 WHEREAS, An online petition in support of reinstating the UC
40 study abroad program to Israel, started by students at the University

1 of California, Santa Barbara, has over 700 signatures and a petition
2 to reinstate the program is currently circulating at the University
3 of California, Davis; and

4 WHEREAS, Failing to revise its study abroad policies would
5 negatively impact the University of California’s position as a
6 leading global institution committed to academic freedom; now,
7 therefore, be it

8 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California,* That the
9 Legislature of the State of California recommends that the UC
10 EAP revise its policies regarding study abroad programs in
11 countries with less severe United States Department of State travel
12 advisories; and be it further

13 *Resolved,* That the Legislature affirms that the UC EAP should
14 only infringe on a students decision to study abroad in a particular
15 country if the country is subject to a severe advisory restricting
16 travel altogether; and be it further

17 *Resolved,* That the Legislature acknowledges the concerns of
18 the UC EAP regarding students’ safety and the university’s
19 assumption of liability; and be it further

20 *Resolved,* That the Legislature recommends that the UC EAP
21 enact policies modeled after institutions including the University
22 of Wisconsin and the University of North Carolina, which
23 differentiate between severe and less severe advisories and require
24 students to sign additional documents waiving their right to take
25 legal action against the university in order to study abroad in
26 countries with less severe travel advisories; and be it further

27 *Resolved,* That the Legislature recognizes the recent efforts of
28 the Regents of the University of California to remove all real or
29 perceived barriers to studying abroad in non-UC EAP sponsored
30 countries, including attempting to transfer UC financial aid to
31 non-EAP host institutions, and creating new extended leaves of
32 absences from the university for students who study on non-EAP
33 programs; and be it further

34 *Resolved,* That the Legislature believes that this directive is only
35 a first step toward expanding study abroad opportunities for UC
36 students, and respectfully requests that the UC EAP fully reinstate
37 previously suspended programs that have less severe travel
38 warnings, including programs in Israel and the Philippines, and
39 investigate incorporating new locations, including Kenya and
40 Nepal, into the study abroad program; and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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