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14	RICHARD SANDER and ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY				
15	SERVICES CENTER				
16					
17	SUPERIOR COURT OF TH	IE STATE OF CALIFORNIA			
18					
19					
20	RICHARD SANDER, an individual; and	CASE NO.:			
21	ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY	VERIFIED PETITION FOR WRIT OF			
22	SERVICES CENTER, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation,	MANDATE ORDERING COMPLIANCE			
23	Petitioners,	WITH THE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RECORDS ACT; COMPLAINT FOR			
24		DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; EXHIBITS 1-11			
25	VS.				
26	THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, a public corporation; and				
	DOES 1-10,				
27   28	Respondents.				
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Petitioners Richard Sander, an individual ("Sander"), and Asian American Community Services Center ("AACSC"), a nonprofit public benefit corporation (together referred to as "Petitioners"), petition the Court through this Verified Petition to command Respondents the Regents of the University of California (the "Regents") and Does 1-10 (sometimes referred to collectively herein as the "Respondents") to comply with the California Public Records Act ("CPRA"), Government Code §§ 6250, et seq.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1. Nearly 200,000 people applied for undergraduate admission as freshmen to University of California ("UC") schools for Fall 2018, a number that has nearly doubled in the last decade. Over 45,000 students enrolled as freshmen in UC schools for Fall 2017, up from approximately 35,000 a decade ago.<sup>2</sup>
- 2. In 1996, California voters approved Proposition 209 which prohibits public agencies, such as the Regents, from "discriminat[ing] against, or grant[ing] preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of ... public education." Cal. Const., art. 1, § 31. Concern has grown, particularly in the past decade, that UC schools are not abiding by Proposition 209. In order to evaluate, research and address these concerns, Petitioners submitted requests for information about applicants to, and enrollees at, UC undergraduate schools.
- 3. The CPRA gives the people a right to see the records of California's public agencies and officials. James Madison explained over 200 years ago that public access to information about our government and the activities of our public officials is fundamental to our democracy: "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or both."

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm l}$  http://www.latimes.com/local/education/higher-ed/la-me-edu-ucla-applicants-20171214-story.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/freshman-admissions-summary

San Gabriel Tribune v. Superior Court, 143 Cal. App. 3d 762, 772 (1986). Consistent with this principle, the California Legislature declared in the CPRA that "access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in this state." Gov't Code § 6250. In 2001, the California Legislature amended the CPRA to impose a duty on public agencies to assist members of the public in their public records requests. Gov't Code § 6253.1. In 2004, California voters added a provision to California's Constitution, Proposition 59, reinforcing the "right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, ... the writings of public officials and agencies shall be open to public scrutiny. A statute, court rule, or other authority ... shall be broadly construed if it furthers the people's right of access, and narrowly construed if it limits the right of access." Cal. Const., art. 1, § 3(b).

- 4. For more than a year, the leaders of the UC system have failed to comply with their duties under the CPRA. Petitioners requested, and were denied by the Regents, **de-identified**, individual-level data (i.e., data that is at the individual as opposed to the aggregate level, but without directly identifying information, e.g., names, addresses or Social Security numbers) in two basic categories: (1) Applicant Data; and (2) Enrollee Data. As described in more detail below and in the attached exhibits, Petitioners' requests for Applicant Data include de-identified information about applicants to UC undergraduate schools, such as SAT scores, high school grade point averages ("GPAs"), ethnicity/race and socio-economic data, all of which information is gathered and maintained by the Regents. Also, as described in more detail below, Petitioners' requests for Enrollee Data include information about enrollees at UC undergraduate schools such as their majors, college GPAs, and whether they graduated, all of which information is gathered and maintained by the Regents.
- 5. As Petitioners explained previously to the Regents, and for the avoidance of any doubt reiterate here, they seek de-identified, individual-level data that: can be compiled from existing databases; and/or can be extracted from existing databases; and/or is in existing databases containing responsive information, but with directly identifying information redacted, omitted,

deleted and/or segregated. See Gov. C. § 6253.9(b).<sup>3</sup> At a minimum, the Regents should be required to provide non-exempt fields of data that can be redacted or segregated.

- 6. As Petitioners have also explained previously to the Regents, and for the avoidance of any doubt reiterate here, Petitioners are willing to pay reasonable costs, consistent with the law, for: producing the data, including the cost to construct a record; data compilation; extraction; and/or computer programming and computer services necessary to provide the requested information. *See* Gov. C. § 6253.9(b).
- 7. Petitioner Sander has received Applicant Data and Enrollee Data from the Regents before. In 2008, he received an initial dataset, which the Regents updated in 2010. Sander asked in August of 2017 that the Regents bring the dataset current, adding a few new related variables to each type of data sought. AACSC, a newly-formed citizens' group, requested a similar dataset in October of 2018. AACSC's request was strictly limited to the same types of data disclosed to Sander a decade earlier.
- 8. The Regents have flatly rejected both Petitioners' data requests, stating alternatively that the production of data would be too burdensome or costly, and then rejecting offers to pay for production and data programming, stating that it has no duty to produce this kind of data at all. The Regents even refused to provide AACSC with the *exact* data fields that it had previously provided to Sander. Petitioners' requests are not complex. Particularly in light of the Regents' prior provision of substantially the same types of information, there is no legitimate basis for withholding an updated dataset on similar information now.
- 9. The stonewalling, misdirection, filibustering, and ultimate refusal to provide information demonstrates the Regents' deep and pervasive lack of transparency. Petitioners request the Court's assistance in providing Petitioners with the data they have a right to obtain.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Petitioners also welcome, but do not demand or require, other potential techniques for deidentification, including replacing certain data fields with random information (e.g., replacing real names with fictional names or numbers like "1111111"), see ACLU v. Superior Court, 3 Cal. 5th 1032, 1046-47 (2017), and/or banding data (e.g., putting GPAs into quarter point ranges (such as 3.0 to 3.24, 3.25 to 3.49, etc.), which the Regents have done in the past in response to smaller but substantially similar records requests from Sander).

#### VENUE AND JURISDICTION

- 10. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure §§ 410.10, 410.50, 525, 526 and 1060, and Government Code § 6259.
- 11. The relief Petitioners seek is authorized under Government Code §§ 6250, et seq... Venue is proper under Civil Procedure Code §§ 395 and 395.5, and under Government Code § 6259(a). Petitioners are informed and believe that some or all of the records they seek are situated in Alameda County. Petitioners are further informed and believe that the denial of the access they seek to certain materials has been undertaken, directed, commanded, and/or orchestrated by officers and/or employees of the Regents of the University of California, a public corporation. The Regents' headquarters are located in Alameda County at 1111 Franklin Street, Oakland, California 94607.

#### THE PARTIES

- 12. Petitioner Richard Sander is an economist and professor of law at the University of California, Los Angeles ("UCLA") School of Law.
- 13. Petitioner AACSC is a recently-formed nonprofit citizens' group interested in better understanding undergraduate admissions practices and outcomes at the University of California.
- 14. Respondent the Regents is a public corporation and a public agency subject to, and obligated to comply with, the CPRA. <sup>4</sup> The Regents is subject to, and obligated to comply with, the CPRA. Petitioners are informed and believe that a writ of mandate, injunction and/or declaration directed to the Regents will lead to the disclosure of the materials at issue that Petitioners seek as The Regents has control and authority over UC schools' disclosures of the requested materials.
  - 15. The true names of Respondents named herein as Does 1 through 10, inclusive, are

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This Verified Petition refers to the Regents in the singular as Petitioners understand that to be the Regents' preferred nomenclature.

sued in their official capacities and are presently unknown to Petitioners, who therefore sue such Respondents by fictitious names. Petitioners will amend this Petition to show the true names and identities of these Respondents when they have been ascertained. Does 1 through 10 are responsible for the denial of access to the requested records as alleged herein.

16. Petitioners are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that each Respondent herein was the agent of each of the other co-Respondents and, in doing the things hereinafter alleged, was acting within the course and scope of such agency and with the permission and consent of their co-Respondents.

#### GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

- 17. Professor Sander and AACSC share goals of working toward transparency in admissions to UC schools to ensure fairness and equal opportunity based on race, ethnicity, and other demographics.
- 18. Professor Sander has for several years worked to gather statistical information about prospective students who apply to UC schools, and part of his mission is to compare that information with admissions practices and statistics, as well as performance in college and post-graduation outcomes.
- 19. AACSC is a recently-formed organization dedicated to promoting the welfare of Asian-Americans, including in the context of access to higher education.

## A. Sander's CPRA Requests.

20. In furtherance of his research, in 2007, Professor Sander sought records from the Regents containing de-identified public universities' admissions data, including applicants' SAT scores, AP scores, class rank, grade point average, race/ethnicity, intended college major, California residency status, and other criteria. After negotiations, in 2008 Sander received from the University of California Office of the President ("UCOP") a de-identified dataset of information based on his request, which included the majority of the information and criteria he sought ("the 2008 Dataset"). A true and correct copy of UCOP's 2008 proposal of data it would provide to Sander is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 1**. The data ultimately provided

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in 2008 has since been used by over a dozen scholars in important research on higher education, published in such journals as the *American Economic Review*, the *Journal of Labor Economics*, and the *American Law and Economics Review*.

- 21. In 2010, UCOP updated many of the fields in the 2008 dataset with two additional years' information and figures.
- 22. In August of 2017, Sander again requested Applicant Data and Enrollee Data from the Regents, writing to Stella Ngai in the Public Records arm of UCOP. For Applicant Data (which he termed "admissions data"), Sander asked for de-identified individual-level data, to the extent such data was gathered, similar to what he sought in 2008 and 2010, including: the year cohort of the applicant; to which UC campus(es) the applicant applied; the UC campus(es) to which the applicant was admitted; the applicant's SAT I and II score(s); the applicant's raw and adjusted high school GPAs; the applicant's intended field of study; whether the applicant is a California resident; the number of the applicant's Advanced Placement ("AP") semester courses and AP scores; the Academic Performance Index ("API") rank of the applicant's (for California residents attending public high schools); whether the applicant was admitted to the fall quarter or the winter/spring quarters; the applicant's race and ethnicity; the applicant's parent(s)' education and income levels; whether the applicant participated in UC-sponsored outreach/education programs; whether the applicant received special consideration as an athlete; the specific undergraduate program(s) for which the applicant was considered at a particular campus; and any ratings or scores assigned to the applicant in the course of the admissions process. For Enrollee Data (which he termed "outcome data"), Sander asked for de-identified individual-level data, to the extent such data was gathered, similar to what he sought in 2008 and 2010, including: the year cohort of the student; at which UC campus the student enrolled; whether the student transferred to another UC campus at some point (or transferred out of the UC system); the student's cumulative college GPA and first-year GPA; the student's GPA in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math ("STEM") courses; the student's initial major or academic area of concentration; the student's eventual major or area of concentration; whether the student graduated; the number of terms required to graduate; enrollment in graduate or professional school; post-graduate earnings;

and scores on graduate examinations such as the GRE, MCAT and LSAT. Although Sander's 2017 request included small additions compared with his 2008 data request, his letter to Ms. Ngai made clear that the primary purpose of the 2017 request was simply to bring the 2008 Dataset—which Sander had already received—current. In addition to the data requests, Sander's 2017 request also asked for written reports concerning the admissions process at the UC campuses. A true and correct copy of Sander's August 15, 2017, public records request to Stella Ngai of UCOP is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 2**.

- 23. On August 25, 2017, Dan Scannell of the UCOP CPRA office responded to Sander's request to Stella Ngai. Scannell extended the time in which to provide a determination on Sander's request, noting that he expected to be able to provide a written determination by September 8, 2017. A true and correct copy of the August 25, 2017, email correspondence between Sander and Scannell is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 3**.
- 24. On September 1, 2017, Scannell emailed Sander with reference to Sander's request for reports from the UC campuses on the admissions process, but did not address Sander's data requests. A true and correct copy of the September 1, 2017, email correspondence between Sander and Scannell is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 4**.
- 25. On September 8, 2017, Scannell emailed Sander to inform him that the University "determined that existing records responsive to [Sander's] request are disclosable," but cited the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act ("FERPA"), the Information Practices Act ("IPA"), and Government Code § 6254(c). Scannell also stated that his office was "continuing to review your request for student-level (non-aggregate) data, and [would] provide an update to you when that process is complete." A true and correct copy of the September 8, 2017, email correspondence from Scannell to Sander is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 5**.
- 26. Over five months later, on February 21, 2018, Scannell again emailed Sander. He indicated to Sander that UCOP would not be providing any update to the admissions dataset it had given Sander in 2008. Scannell stated that providing the individual-level data requested by Sander would be burdensome and was not required by law. Scannell also explained that the Regents would not provide the requested data even after acknowledging that it had provided similar data in

the past. Scannell's email pointed Sander to aggregate level information, which was not what Sander requested. Finally, Scannell noted that Sander was "free to pursue a Research Agreement with the University related to admissions data," with a limitation of eight hours of staff time to compile records. A true and correct copy of the February 21, 2018, email correspondence between from Scannell to Sander is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 6**.

- 27. Sander responded to Scannell's February 21, 2018 email via a letter on March 14, 2018. Sander expressed concern and disappointment with UCOP's about-face on the issue of providing data. As Sander explained in his letter, UCOP had previously provided hundreds of thousands of datapoints, but now, in 2018, concluded that it could provide no follow-up data whatsoever. Through his March 14, 2018 letter Sander attempted to open negotiations over UCOP's provision of data. Among other questions posed, Sander asked whether "[i]f [he] paid for a programmer (who already has clearance to work for The Regents) to do the work [of extracting the requested data], would The Regents permit that programmer to create a customized extract?" A true and correct copy of Sander's March 14, 2018, letter to Scannell is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 7**.
- 28. Over a month later, on April 23, 2018, Scannell responded to Sander's March 14, 2018 letter via email. In it, Scannell directed the questions in Sander's March 14, 2018 letter to the University's "Institutional Research Department". A true and correct copy of Scannell's April 23, 2018, email to Sander is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 8**.
- 29. After additional correspondence with UCOP on his requests, on June 28, 2018, Sander contacted Dr. Charles Masten, the Executive Director of Institutional Research & Academic Planning for the UC system. In his letter, Sander described his purpose of bringing the requested dataset up to date and expressed the ability to cover the cost of compiling such a dataset. He asked for Dr. Masten's help in understanding the feasibility of the request and moving forward, and requested a conference call to achieve those ends. A true and correct copy of Sander's June 28, 2018, letter to Dr. Masten is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 9**.
- 30. After Sander's initial letter to Dr. Masten, Sander attempted to set up a time to discuss his request with Dr. Masten via telephone. On July 27, 2018, Dr. Masten's assistant

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contacted Sander in an effort to arrange a phone call for later that same day. Stella Ngai and Dan Scannell were copied on the communication from Dr. Masten's. Sander indicated his availability, but then received no response from Dr. Masten, and ultimately was told the call could not be scheduled that day.

31. Sander continued attempting to reach Dr. Masten. On August 17, 2018, Sander reached Dr. Masten by phone directly. Dr. Masten acknowledged the slowness in responding to Sander's request, but indicated he would prefer to provide a response in writing rather than over the phone. On the call, Sander again indicated his ability and willingness to pay the cost of a programmer's time in assembling the requested dataset. Dr. Masten told Sander that cost was not the true barrier to disclosure of the records. Sander's understanding of this statement was that the Regents simply did not want Sander to receive the information at issue, regardless of the cost or time it would take to compile the data. Despite Dr. Masten's representation that he would be providing a written response to Sander, Dr. Masten never did.

## **B.** AACSC's CPRA Request.

32. On October 15, 2018, George Shen, on behalf of AACSC, submitted a public records request to the Regents (via Dan Scannell) asking for Applicant Data and Enrollee Data from the years 2004 to 2018. For Applicant Data, AACSC asked for de-identified individual-level data, including: the year for which the applicant was seeking admission; the applicant's SAT I math score(s); the applicant's SAT I writing score(s); the applicant's SAT II score(s); the applicant's raw high school GPA, unadjusted for course difficulty; the applicant's "UC-adjusted" high school GPA adjusted for honors and AP classes; an "academic index" based on a weighted combination of SAT I scores and high school GPA; the number of AP courses taken in high school; the ethnicity/race of the applicant; the UC campus(es) that the applicant applied to; the applicant's parent(s)' highest education level; the applicant's parent(s)' income; the API of the applicant's high school for students attending California public schools; the Eligibility in the Local Context ("ELC") status of the applicant; the applicant's intended major; whether the applicant was admitted or denied for each campus to which the applicant applied; and whether the applicant enrolled. For Enrollee Data, AACSC asked for de-identified individual-level data, including: the

UC campus at which the student enrolled; the student's first-year college GPA; the student's cumulative college GPA; whether the student graduated with a bachelor's degree; and for those students who graduated, the number of terms to graduation, reported in either quarters or semesters. For many of the fields of Applicant Data and Enrollee Data, AACSC explained that the requested data could be banded and/or reported in groupings, closely following UCOP's own offer of data production from 2008. A true and correct copy of AACSC's October 15, 2018, public records request to the Regents is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 10**.

- AACSC's data requests. The response appeared to be copied and pasted in large measure from the response denying Sander's data requests. Scannell gave no explanation for the Regents' refusal to disclose data for admissions cycles from 2004 to 2006 information that was part of the 2008 Dataset UCOP had *already provided* to Sander. Scannell's email pointed AACSC to aggregate level information, which was not what AACSC requested. A true and correct copy of Scannell's October 24, 2018 email to Shen is attached to this Verified Petition as **Exhibit 11**.
- 34. On information and belief, the Regents' true motive for withholding the requested records and data is to censor Petitioners' purpose of promoting fairness and nondiscrimination in California public university admissions, and exposing any lack of consistency across ethnicities, races, and other demographics.
- 35. The Regents' delay, lack of assistance, and failure to produce records responsive to Sander's and AACSC's requests are unlawful.

## **CAUSE OF ACTION**

# (Violation of the California Public Records Act (California Government Code §§ 6250, et seq.), against all Respondents)

- 36. Petitioners reallege Paragraphs 1 through 35 above as though fully incorporated herein.
- 37. In 2017 and 2018, Sander and AACSC respectively requested public records and data from a public agency as defined by the CPRA.

- 38. Respondents violated the CPRA by refusing to produce materials in response to Sander's and AACSC's requests.
- 39. There are no exemptions or exceptions to the CPRA, or other controlling law, that warrant withholding materials Sander and AACSC seek, in whole or in part, and, even if there were—which Petitioners do not concede such exemptions and exceptions have been waived.
- 40. An actual controversy exists as to whether the materials sought in this action must be disclosed, and whether those materials, or any part thereof, are exempt from disclosure. Petitioners are entitled to an order declaring that they are entitled to the materials they seek, and that such materials must be made available to Petitioners and the public immediately.
- 41. Under Government Code § 6258, Petitioners are entitled to institute proceedings for a writ of mandate to enforce their rights and the public's right to obtain materials responsive to Sander's and AACSC's requests. Furthermore, under Government Code § 6258, Petitioners are entitled to have the proceedings resolved on an expedited basis consistent "with the object of securing a decision as to these matters at the earliest possible time." Gov't Code § 6258.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Therefore, Petitioners pray for relief and judgment as follows:

- 1. That this Court issue a peremptory writ of mandate or other order directing Respondents to immediately disclose to Petitioners the requested materials at issue currently being withheld; or, alternatively, that this Court immediately issue an alternative writ of mandate or order to show cause, setting a hearing on this matter as early as possible, preceded by an *in camera* review of the withheld materials at issue or a representative sample thereof, and directing Respondents to show cause why they should not immediately provide the requested materials, and thereafter issue a writ of mandate or other order directing Respondents to immediately disclose to Petitioners the requested materials at issue currently being withheld. *See* Gov't Code §§ 6258, 6259(a); *Haynie v. Superior Court*, 26 Cal. 4th 1061, 1073 (2001).
- 2. That this Court issue a declaration that the withheld materials are public records as defined by California Government Code § 6252(e) in that they contain information relating to the

1	conduct of the people's business, prepared, owned, used, gathered and/or retained by Respondents			
2	and that Respondents violated the Public Records Act by failing to promptly make the materials			
3	available to Petitioners and the public.			
4	3. That this Court issue a declaration that Respondents violated the letter and spirit of	f		
5	the CPRA by:			
6	(a) Failing in the duty to timely provide the requested records. Gov't Code §			
7	6253;			
8	(b) Obstructing the inspection and copying of the requested records. Gov't			
9	Code § 6253(d);			
10	(c) Failing in the duty to promptly make available reasonably segregable non-			
11	exempt portions of the requested records. Gov't Code § 6253(a);			
12	(d) Failing in the duty to assist in obtaining the records at issue. Gov't Code	}		
13	6253.1(a);			
14	(e) Failing in the duty to assist in identifying the records and information that			
15	are responsive to the requests. Gov't Code § 6253.1(a)(1);			
16	(f) Failing in the duty to describe the information technology and physical			
17	location in which the requested records exist. Gov't Code § 6253.1(a)(2); and			
18	(g) Failing in the duty to provide suggestions for overcoming any practical			
19	basis for denying access to the records and information sought. Gov't Code § 6253.1(a)(3).			
20	4. That the Court enter an order awarding costs and attorneys' fees incurred in this			
21	action pursuant, inter alia, to California Government Code § 6259 and/or any other applicable			
22	law, in addition to any other relief granted.			
23	5. The Court award Petitioners such other and further relief as is just and proper.			
24	DATED: November 15, 2018			
25	JASSY VICK CAROLAN LLP			
26				
27				
28	Jean-Paul Jassy Attorneys for Petitioners			

#### VERIFICATION

- I, Richard Sander, do hereby certify and declare as follows:
- I am a professor of law and economics at UCLA law school and a resident of
   California. I made requests for records and materials at issue in this matter as reflected in Exhibits
   1 through 9.
- 2. I have read the VERIFIED PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDATE

  ORDERING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RECORDS ACT AND

  ARTICLE 1, SECTION 3(b) OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION; COMPLAINT

  FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; EXHIBITS 1-11 and know the

  contents thereof, and I verify that the same is true of my own personal knowledge as to all matters relating to my requests, except as to those matters therein stated upon information and belief and as to those matters I believe them to be true.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in	, California on November, 2018.	
	Richard Sander	

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