

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 27, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
LBJ Education Building, 7W311  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

The U.S. Department of Education has invited competitive proposals to be considered for funding through the new First in the World (FITW) program, which is an exciting opportunity to promote the best innovations to help students. The University of California, Riverside (UCR) is part of the University Innovation Alliance (UIA)—a newly formed consortium of large public research universities committed to improving the educational attainment and economic prospects of low-income students—which is putting forth an exciting proposal.

We believe the UIA's proposal deserves your consideration, not just because of its transformational nature, but also because of the unprecedented nature of the group itself. The UIA draws from every region in the country and spans the spectrum of American public research universities, from emergent institutions to land-grant universities and state flagships. This is the first time a group of large, public research universities has self-organized across state and conference lines specifically to test and to scale solutions to problems of access and graduation in higher education.

The vision of these universities is to pilot new interventions, share insights about their relative costs and effectiveness, and scale those interventions that are successful in order to significantly increase the number of low-income Americans graduating with quality college degrees. We are hopeful that, over time, the UIA's collaborative work will catalyze systemic changes in the entire higher education sector.

The UIA proposal reflects the shared commitment to improve outcomes for low-income students using innovative and groundbreaking strategies and techniques. The proposal will leverage the size and scope of these institutions to test the use of predictive analytics coupled with a variety of interventions to reduce time-to-degree and, hence, college costs.

We are very excited about UCR's participation in the University Innovation Alliance and their proposal being submitted for the FITW competition. We hope you will give it every consideration.

Sincerely,



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Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



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Col. Paul Cook (Ret.)  
Member of Congress



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Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress