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HONORING CHANCELLOR ROBERT J. BIRGENEAU

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2013

MS. LEE – Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of Dr. Robert J. Birgeneau as he steps down from nearly a decade of service to the University of California, Berkeley as chancellor. Chancellor Birgeneau's transformative leadership at UC Berkeley has added tremendously to its role as the world's premier public research and teaching university. Therefore, I join our community in celebrating the many ways in which his tenure has contributed to the success, insight, and well-being of countless people throughout the Bay Area and beyond.

Tasked with the challenge of guiding UC Berkeley through one of the most challenging financial periods in its 145-year history, Chancellor Birgeneau worked to ensure that the school's hallmark qualities of inclusion and excellence continued to thrive. His tenure oversaw a breadth of achievement, including three Nobel Prizes and the dream of financial aid for undocumented California students.

An internationally distinguished physicist who was the first in his family to graduate from high school, Chancellor Birgeneau was appointed as UC Berkeley's ninth chancellor in 2004. Since then, he has launched the largest fundraising campaign in UC Berkeley's history—raising more than \$2.4 billion to date. He helped create one of academia's first 10-year strategic plans for a Division of Equity & Inclusion and fostered multidisciplinary campus connections to work on pressing social issues, resulting in the Berkeley Energy and Climate Institute; the Energy Biosciences Institute; the Li Ka Shing Center for Biomedical and Health Sciences; and the Richard C. Blum Center for Developing Economies.

Additionally, Chancellor Birgeneau's tireless advocacy played a leadership role in the successful passage of the California DREAM Act. A vocal proponent for fair access to public higher education amidst difficult state funding cuts and rising tuition, Chancellor Birgeneau championed Pell Grants and put in place a groundbreaking financial aid plan for middle-income families. He also took up the cause of students who are former foster children, and upon winning the 2008 Academic Leadership Award from the Carnegie Corporation, gave \$50,000 of his prize to seed an endowment fund for UC Berkeley students from the foster care system.

Chancellor Birgeneau's numerous accolades and associations include the 2009 Pathfinders to Peace Prize from the Shinnyo-en Foundation, White House recognition, and being one of six academic leaders tapped by President Obama to create the national Advanced Manufacturing Partnership. His plan to remain at UC Berkeley to teach and conduct research is certainly welcome news. Chancellor Birgeneau's wise guidance, influence, and example has set the course for UC Berkeley's continued status as one of the world's most celebrated public institutions.

On behalf of the residents of California's 13th Congressional District, Dr. Robert J. Birgeneau, I salute you for your outstanding service to higher education. I congratulate and thank you for your unparalleled legacy as a passionate and effective steward of the University of California, Berkeley. You have touched many lives in profound ways throughout your career, and we wish you and your loved ones continued success and happiness in this new chapter.