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CRESST AND SMARTER BALANCED AGREE TO FORM PARTNERSHIP

Los Angeles, CA – On Wednesday, March 20th, the Chief State School Officers from the governing states of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) unanimously approved a motion to authorize Smarter Balanced leadership to begin negotiations toward establishing an affiliation with UCLA’s National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). The Center is part of UCLA’s Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. The vote came after comments by CRESST Co-Directors Eva Baker and Li Cai, who had been invited to the Smarter Balanced conference in Washington, DC.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Smarter Balanced is developing an innovative and rigorous assessment system for mathematics and English language arts/literacy aligned with the Common Core State Standards. When implemented in the 2014-15 school year, the new assessments will serve students in nearly half the states, including California.

The partnership with CRESST will provide Smarter Balanced with access to research and psychometric expertise and a full array of administrative services. It will also advance UCLA and GSE&IS goals of supporting K-12 education not only for every public school in California but on a national scale, from Maine to Hawaii.

“This new partnership is exciting for both organizations,” said long-time CRESST Co-Director Eva Baker, Distinguished Research Professor in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, who has conducted research on performance assessments, an integral part of the Smarter Balanced assessment system. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to contribute to continuing research and development to affect practice on this scale,” she added. Baker was former President of the American Educational Research Association, Chair of the National Research Council’s Board on Testing and Assessment, and Co-Chair of the 1999 Revision of Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.
“Our planned collaboration will build on the strengths of three leading organizations,” said CRESST Co-Director Li Cai, “the research and development expertise of a research center of national and international renown, combined with an ongoing, strong state-led consortium and its assessment system that supports better teaching and improved learning, and both engaged through a home at a world-class public research university – UCLA.” The Consortium will likely benefit from Professor Cai’s methodological expertise. He was honored last year with a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers for his psychometric and statistical research.

“The new affiliation with CRESST, recognized as one of the premier educational assessment and research centers in the nation, strengthens the work of our state-led consortium well into the future,” said Joseph Martineau, Smarter Balanced Executive Committee Co-Chair and Executive Director of the Bureau of Assessment & Accountability at the Michigan Department of Education.

About CRESST

CRESST conducts research and development on accountability systems, learning and assessment practices, and educational policies. The Center also designs technology-based systems and evaluates a broad number of educational programs and methods, with a central goal of improved achievement for all students and trainees and reductions of inequities and costs.