

Resolution that the PSC Oppose the TPP and All Other Trade Agreements That Threaten Public Higher Education and the Common Good

Submitted by the Environmental Justice Committee

1 WHEREAS, the TPP will create a new international framework that confers on powerful global
2 corporations new rights and powers that undermine the public interest, subvert democracy,
3 weaken regulatory oversight and workers' rights and promote the commercialization and
4 privatization of public services; and

5 WHEREAS, most trade is already conducted duty-free within the region without the
6 disadvantages within the TPP agreement, and

7 WHEREAS, education is a human right and a public good, and must not be treated as a tradable
8 commodity; and

9 WHEREAS, governments retain their "right to regulate" only to the extent that their laws and
10 regulations are fully consistent with the treaty, thus undermining domestic labor, environmental,
11 civil & privacy rights; and

12 WHEREAS, the TPP will give social and legal rights for foreign investors, such as multi-
13 national corporations, (known as "investor-to-state dispute settlement" ISDS), that will allow
14 them to bypass state and federal courts to sue state, local, or national governments over laws or
15 regulations they view as "unfair trade practices"; and

16 WHEREAS, while the TPP excludes national security measures, it deliberately does not
17 exclude public education, water systems, food safety, transportation or public health services
18 from the treaty's terms so regulations in these areas could be overridden by "investor to state
19 dispute settlement panels (ISDS) and cost millions in fines; and

20 WHEREAS, the dispute panel of ISDS, overwhelmingly composed of corporate interests, could
21 allow multinationals to sue governments for quality, performance and accreditation
22 requirements and standards that are crucial in ensuring high-quality education, on the basis that
23 such standards constitute either barriers to trade or are more trade burdensome than
24 necessary, and

25 WHEREAS, public higher education, receiving support from local governments, might be
26 viewed as unfair competition by private for profit organizations offering degree programs; and

27 WHEREAS, TPP calls for extending intellectual property rights from 50 to 70 years, that will
28 extend copyrights that will drive up educational costs, impair the free exchange of ideas as well
29 as delay the availability of lower cost generic drugs as it extends pharmaceutical patents; and

30 WHEREAS, local or national governments that lose at ISDS arbitration panels will face millions
31 of dollars in sanctions until they end their policies that promote the public interest and
32 environmentally sustainable conditions; and

33 WHEREAS, a good trade agreement would protect workers globally as well as the planet and
34 avoid nativist, parochial appeals that denigrate other workers or potential trade partners; and

35 WHEREAS, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO, the United Steelworkers, SEIU, and Change-to-Win are
36 all on record as opposed to the TPP in its present form; therefore be it

37 **RESOLVED, that the PSC oppose TPP because it undermines public education and fails to**
38 **protect labor rights, natural resources, or protect us from extra-legal lawsuits in**
39 **the corporate-dominated “private arbitration panels” of the ISDS; and be it further**

40 **RESOLVED, that PSC use its communications networks to inform members about the**
41 **impact of such trade agreements on accelerating the privatization of public services,**
42 **including education; and be it further**

43 **RESOLVED, that the PSC oppose any and all trade agreements, such as TPP, that are**
44 **developed and dominated by corporate interests; and that undermine workers’ rights,**
45 **public health and safety, public services and local and national laws and regulations that**
46 **are designed to protect the environment and insure the common good.**