

VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING OF ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

December 7, 2023

MINUTES OF MEETING

**I. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Pursuant to the call, the Assembly of the Academic Senate met on Thursday, December 7, 2023. Academic Senate Chair James Steintrager presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Senate Executive Director Monica Lin called the roll of Assembly members and confirmed a quorum. Attendance is listed in Appendix A of these minutes.

**II. MINUTES**

**ACTION: The Assembly approved the minutes of June 8, 2023.**

**III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SENATE LEADERSHIP**

- **James Steintrager, Chair**
- **Steven Cheung, Vice Chair**

Regents Meeting: The September and November Regents meetings featured public comments from faculty expressing concerns about the performance of the Retirement Administration Service Center, union members advocating for wage increases, and students urging UC to extend employment opportunities to undocumented students. Another significant concern was the Middle East conflict, with many UC community members noting worries about campus safety, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, free speech, academic freedom, and the response to the crisis by UC leadership. Chair Steintrager, in his November remarks to the full Board, referenced past Senate statements on free speech, academic freedom, and hate speech on campus, as well as the Senate’s published recommendations for posting political statements on department websites.

At the November meeting, President Drake announced funding for initiatives and educational programs to combat intolerance and foster constructive dialogue about the crisis, including a “viewpoint-neutral history of the Middle East.” Faculty in History and other departments contested the president’s “viewpoint-neutral” reference. In response, President Drake reiterated the University’s commitment to faculty academic freedom and clarified that participation in the educational programming is entirely voluntary.

In his remarks at Regents meetings, Chair Steintrager also discussed the lingering impact of the pandemic on faculty’s ability to balance teaching, research, and service commitments, and highlighted the importance of maintaining competitive total remuneration for faculty. In November, the Regents approved a 4.2% increase in faculty salaries and no change to employee contributions to the UC Retirement Plan.

Health Services: The Senate chair and vice chair attended meetings of the Regents Health Services Committee, which is discussing the implementation of the Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Health Care Organizations. The Senate has expressed concerns about

UC's affiliations with external healthcare affiliates that impose policy-based restrictions on care, particularly those rooted in Ethical and Religious Directives. Following a fall 2023 systemwide review, the Academic Council endorsed the presidential policy and the creation of a Joint Clinical Advisory Committee that is co-chaired by the Senate chair and UC Health Executive Vice President to monitor policy implementation.

Online Undergraduate Degrees: President Drake has approved the formation of a Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs that will evaluate instructional modalities and establish criteria for the potential introduction of UC-quality baccalaureate online degree programs. Some Regents and administrators believe that the Assembly-approved revision to Senate 630, which clarified residency requirements by specifying an on-campus experience requirement, is unnecessarily restrictive; they have indicated that they would like to see the regulation rescinded or substantially modified. Regental interest to reduce or remove the Senate's authority over curriculum and degree requirements has raised concerns about overreach and erosion of shared governance. Chair Steintrager communicated that should the Regents act counter to the principles of shared governance, he is prepared to call an emergency meeting of the Assembly.

Workgroups: The Academic Planning Council (APC) Workgroup on the Future of Doctoral Programs at UC, co-chaired by UCSB Division Chair Susannah Scott, is evaluating UC's doctoral education model. In August, the workgroup released interim guidance about delineating expectations for student academic progress from their employment activities. It also presented an interim report at the October 9 systemwide Congress on the Future of Graduate Education. Workgroup co-chair Scott noted that issues under discussion include strategies for addressing the increased cost of the new graduate student contracts, the challenge of mentoring graduate students in a unionized environment, summer enrollment and employment, and how to design graduate program requirements to protect quality. The APC Workgroup on Faculty Work & Recovery Post-Pandemic is co-chaired by UCD Senate Division Chair Palazoglu. Finally, the Senate is forming its own workgroup to discuss challenges and opportunities associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies at the University.

Total Remuneration Study: UC Systemwide Human Resources is preparing a request for proposals (RFP) to identify a vendor to assist with a study of UC workforce (faculty and staff) total remuneration against UC's comparator institutions. Two Senate representatives will be part of an administrative working group to review RFPs and shape the study's objectives and methods.

Legislation: Assembly Bill 1291 requires UC to create an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) Pilot Program at UCLA by 2026–27, offering community college transfer applicants who complete an ADT priority admission into various UCLA majors. The legislation also requires UC to guarantee that transfer applicants who meet UC admissions criteria but cannot be accommodated at UCLA are admitted to at least one other UC campus.

***During the discussion:***

- An Assembly member expressed concern about the Senate's June 2022 recommendations for department political statements, arguing that political statements should be prohibited and that departments are not following Senate recommendations.

- An Assembly member expressed concern about comments made by individual regents at a recent meeting: one suggesting that faculty should be barred from expressing political views in the classroom, and another suggesting that the regents take a larger role in faculty discipline.
- An Assembly member expressed concern about recent increases to UC employee health insurance premiums that were not communicated in a timely manner.

## V. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SENIOR UNIVERSITY LEADERS

- **Michael V. Drake, President**
- **Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President**
- **Nathan Brostrom, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**

Middle East Conflict and Campus Climate: President Drake noted that the Middle East conflict has exposed raw divisions on campuses. It has been challenging for UC and higher education more broadly to navigate the strongly held and seemingly incompatible points of view while maintaining an inclusive environment. President Drake wants to be proactive in fostering constructive dialogue, and at the November Regents meeting he announced three initiatives:

1. A campus safety enhancement initiative led by UC's Systemwide Director of Community Safety.
2. Establishment of a Systemwide Office of Civil Rights to support and monitor civil rights and anti-discrimination activities on campuses.
3. Funding for mental health resources; training for campus staff and faculty on fostering an inclusive learning environment; and voluntary programs promoting informed and respectful public dialogue. This includes foundational understanding of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and enhancing understanding of Middle East history rather than advocating for a particular viewpoint.

Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities: Provost Newman highlighted the potential for online degrees to expand UC's reach to nontraditional populations. She acknowledged that many online programs originated in the private sector and produced poor student outcomes, but noted that UC can be a leader in the development of a quality online degree that matches a residential degree at an R1 University like UC. She acknowledged that it will not be simple or inexpensive to implement, and the presidential task force will need to examine the resources faculty and students would need to achieve this goal. But once done, it will be a "shot heard round the world."

Student Transfer: President Drake expressed that offering guaranteed admission to more California Community College (CCC) students is challenging because UC has more qualified applicants than available space in transfer cohorts. He explained that increasing transfer admission would affect freshman access to UC and cautioned that a transfer guarantee system could advantage certain CCCs and students and limit opportunities for others.

Mentoring: President Drake recently met with the UC Graduate and Professional Council (UCGPC), who want to work with faculty to improve the student-faculty mentoring relationship. UCGPC asked for assurances that faculty take mentoring activities seriously and have access to resources that will support them in their mentoring roles.

Academic Congresses: Provost Newman is convening a series of systemwide congresses to gather input on important academic issues. As a follow-up to the Congress on the Future of Graduate Education, the provost is planning a one-day online conference in January focusing on ideas for improving undergraduate instruction. In February, she is convening a Congress on the Future of Artificial Intelligence that will address educational, professional, intellectual property, and healthcare impacts of AI. Finally, a Congress on the Future of Online Education is planned for the spring.

Undocumented Students: The University is exploring ways to better support undocumented students, including potentially allowing them to qualify for campus jobs despite legal hurdles.

Consultant Interview: UCOP has hired a consultant to assess UC's academic and labor relations structure, staffing, and practices through interviews with various constituents, including members of the Academic Council.

***During the discussion:***

- Individual Assembly members noted concerns about the lack of faculty involvement in systemwide labor negotiations that led to the current graduate student contract agreement terms. They also noted concerns about the way the University communicated increased healthcare premium costs, and they conveyed faculty frustrations about user problems associated with the transition to Oracle Alpha Financials software at individual campuses.
- A member criticized the way campuses are handling the Middle East situation, expressing the need for additional measures to address the safety concerns of Jewish and Israeli community members.
- A member asked about UC's plan to address gun violence following a recent incident at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- A member encouraged the University to consult with California State University (CSU) colleagues about any changes being considered for the mathematics (area C) requirement for admission and emphasized the need to monitor more closely for potential conflicts of interest in admissions policy development.
- President Drake acknowledged the national problem of rising healthcare costs and lamented that the University's communication about premium increases were socialized just before open enrollment. He explained the University's efforts to negotiate fair rates with healthcare providers and the steps that have been taken to mitigate the impact of increases on employees, including through higher employer subsidies. The University will conduct a comprehensive examination of health benefits for optimal value and cost effectiveness.
- President Drake acknowledged the safety concerns of Jewish students, faculty, and staff, noting that UCOP is working with campuses to ensure that safety personnel are specifically discussing this issue. He invited faculty to contact him with specific concerns and suggestions for improving the University's response.
- President Drake added that UC's director of community safety is developing a new system to collect data about campus safety incidents that will help inform security forces about interventions to prevent serious crime and promote campus safety. The University is also focusing on de-escalation training for campus safety personnel and adding campus safety ambassadors to address non-criminal issues.

- BOARS Chair Knowlton clarified that the BOARS Area C Workgroup will work with CSU and CCC faculty colleagues directly and through the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates as it examines criteria for area C coursework, including criteria for the Advanced Mathematics categories of area C that can validate the Algebra II/Mathematics III admission requirement.

**V. SPECIAL ORDERS**

- A. Consent Calendar [NONE]**
- B. Annual Reports [2022-23]**

**VII. UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY WELFARE REPORT [None]**

**VIII. SPECIAL ORDERS [None]**

**IX. REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES [None]**

**X. PETITIONS OF STUDENTS [None]**

**XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS [None]**

**XII. NEW BUSINESS**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Academic Senate

Attest: James Steintrager, Academic Senate Chair

Attachments: Appendix A – Assembly Attendance Record, Meeting of December 7, 2023

**Appendix A – 2023-2024 Assembly Attendance Record  
Meeting of December 7, 2023**

**President of the University:**

Michael Drake

**Academic Council Members:**

James Steintrager, Chair  
Steven Cheung, Vice Chair  
Maximilliam Aufhammer, Chair, UCB  
Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, UCD  
Arvind Rajaraman, Chair, UCI  
Andrea Kasko, Chair, UCLA  
Patricia LiWang, Chair, UCM  
Sang-Hee Lee, Chair, UCR (Absent)  
John Hildebrand, Chair, UCSD  
Steven Hetts, Chair, UCSF  
Susannah Scott, Chair, UCSB  
Patricia Gallagher, Chair, UCSC  
Barbara Knowlton, Chair, BOARS  
Dean Tantillo, Chair, CCGA  
Jennifer Burney, Chair, UCAADE (Absent)  
Stefano Profumo, Chair, UCAP (Absent)  
Melanie Cocco, Chair, UCEP  
John Heraty, Chair, UCFW  
Cynthia Schumann, Chair, UCORP  
Donald Senear, Chair, UCPB (Absent)

**Berkeley (5)**

Mark Goble  
Tyrone Hayes  
Chris Hoofnagle  
Jelani Nelson  
Dean Toste

**Davis (6)**

Joseph Chen  
Walter Leal  
Abigail Thompson  
Richard Tucker  
Rena Zieve  
Karen Zito

**Irvine (4)**

Noah Askin  
John Crawford  
Zeev Kain (Absent)  
Bert Winther-Tamaki

**Los Angeles (7)**

Mekonnen Gebremichael (Absent)  
Tim Groeling  
Ronald D. Hays  
Jody Kreiman  
Reynaldo Macias (Absent)  
Moritz Meyer-ter-Vehn  
Robert Zeithammer

**Merced (1)**

Shilpa Khatri

**Riverside (2)**

Y. Peter Chung (Absent)  
Jennifer Hughes

**San Diego (5)**

Niloofar Afari  
Kimberly Cooper  
Randy Hampton (Absent)  
Gabriella Caballero Hernandez (Absent)  
Deborah Stein

**San Francisco (5)**

Ifeyinwa Asiodu  
Robin Corelli  
David Hwang  
Kewchang Lee  
Soo-Jeong Lee

**Santa Barbara (3)**

Charles Akemann  
Joao Hespanha  
Elinor Mason (Absent)

**Santa Cruz (2)**

Matthew McCarthy  
Rita Mehta

**Secretary/Parliamentarian**

Andrew Dickson