UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA   **ACADEMIC SENATE**
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Videoconference Minutes
Monday, January 8, 2024

Attending: Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI), A. Katie Harris, Vice Chair (UCD), Darlene Francis (UCB), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Catherine Sugar (UCLA), Christopher Viney (UCM), Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR), Geoffrey Cook (UCSD), Madeleine Norris (UCSF), Ben Hardekopf (UCSB), David Cuthbert (UCSC), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning and Policy Development, Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP)), Carmen Corona (Director, Academic Planning and Policy, IRAP), James Steintrager (Chair, Academic Senate), Steven W. Cheung (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I.   Consultation with Senate Leadership
- *James Steintrager, Chair, Academic Council*
- *Steven Cheung, Vice Chair, Academic Council*

The Senate representatives who will serve on the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs, including UCEP Chair Cocco, have received appointment letters. Chair Steintrager believes the task force will find the committee's statement on UC quality will be useful. The Senate will need to bring Senate Regulation (SR) 630.E to the full Board for consideration later this month. This is because Regents Bylaw 22.2 reserves their authority over various areas including degree requirements which the campus experience requirement is. Therefore, the Senate must recommend SR 630.E to the Regents for approval or disapproval. There are Regents who want fully online undergraduate degree programs (OUDPs), and a draft Regental policy on online education seen by Chair Steintrager oversteps the Board's authority but it is off the table for the time being.

Discussion: Having approved UCSC's Creative Technologies online major, new proposals for OUDPs will only be subject to review by the divisional Senate and not a systemwide review. One of the Senate's concerns is that administrators could hire adjunct faculty to teach the courses in online degree programs. Chair Cocco explained that SR 630.E has been misinterpreted as a ban on OUDPs and noted that campuses can request a variance to the regulation. Members shared their concerns about the ramifications if the Regents do not approve SR 630.E. The Senate will create a small task force to study artificial intelligence (AI) and Chair Steintrager asked UCEP members to think about the key topics regarding AI and send their input to Chair Cocco.

II.   Chair's Updates

The recent Assembly meeting included reports from President Drake and Provost Newman, and Academic Council discussed a report on doctoral programs. Chair Cocco proposed a statement from UCEP in response to the report from Academic Planning Council's workgroup on postdoctoral education.

Discussion: A member suggested elaborating on the impact decreased teaching assistant support will have on the quality of undergraduate education. Chair Cocco will work on the statement and share an updated draft on January 22nd.

III.   Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved today's agenda.
Action: The December 4, 2023 minutes were approved.

IV.   Updated Proposed Policy on Awarding Degrees Posthumously

Chair Cocco explained the history of the proposed policy on awarding degrees posthumously which UCEP began working on in 2018. Previous versions of the policy had very specific requirements and the current draft under consideration, developed with members of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA), is simplified.

Discussion: Members expressed concerns about the good academic standing criteria, noting that this had been questioned in earlier meetings. There should be exceptions for a student with a good overall grade point average but who, as a direct result of a physical or mental health condition, failed the most recent term and was therefore no longer in good academic standing. The policy should state that a student was on track to fulfill the degree requirements since whether they would have successfully completed them is unknown. Chair Cocco will communicate UCEP's proposed revisions to the chair of CCGA.

V.   Updated Statement on UC Quality
- *Catherine Sugar (UCLA) and Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR)*

Chair Cocco echoed Chair Steintrager's remarks about the committee's statement on UC quality being read by the new Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities so the goal is to finalize the document during UCEP's next meeting. The UCR and UCLA representatives have continued thinking about the elements of the in-person experience that are essential to UC quality and should be replicated in the online environment. The representatives have tried to incorporate members' feedback which included creating broad subheadings.

Discussion: The committee offered additional revisions to the draft and talked about the motivations behind and importance of the campus residency requirement. Members agreed that the University should do more to provide students with housing and stable living environments, but it is beyond UC's control to ensure this. A member would like to see more inclusive language in the statement.

VI.   Data and the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs

Chair Cocco explained the task force's charge which is close to being finalized and asked members for their ideas about factors connected to OUDPs that should be taken into account. Vice Chair Cheung is co-chairing the task force and is already gathering data to inform the group's deliberations. The chair intends to have ongoing conversations with the members as the task force's work moves forward.

Discussion: Members suggested the following issues should be explored by the Taskforce:

Quality of education
- the amount and form of contact hours with instructional staff
- the importance of maintaining small class sizes

- details related to accreditation and accreditation by professional bodies such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology and the American Chemical Society
- employability after graduation from OUDPs as a measure of success
- practical skill requirements for each major
- data collection – what should be collected and how should this be reported
- the added value of being in an OUDP would make it more than YouTube educational videos or a MOOC
- the need for equal access to the library of courses available to in person students
- ability of students to change majors

Mentoring and social interactions
- how faculty can mentor students in OUDPs (coffee, conversations outside class, etc)
- the opportunities for and the form of peer interactions
- how to measure difficult metrics (like peer to peer interaction) to determine if students receive critical elements of a UC education

Driving forces
- the lack of classroom space necessitating adoption of different modalities

Financial considerations
- the costs of duplicating all courses in a degree program for the online environment
- the investment required to provide OUDPs the right way to ensure they are not a second class experience – need a deep assessment of all resources needed
- the significant resources required to make sure OUDPs are taught by mainline UC faculty engaged in research

Unintended Consequences
- the impact of OUDPs on intercampus competition
- the impact of OUDPs on out of state and international students
- the problems UC's OUDPs may create for the California State University (CSU) system
- creating efficiencies by partnering with the CSU and California Community College systems to develop OUDPs instead of going it alone

VII. Campus Reports/Member Items

There were no campus reports or member items.

VIII. Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

Videoconference adjourned at: 1:00 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Melanie Cocco