

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Videoconference Minutes

Monday, May 1, 2023

Attending: Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI), Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair (UCLA), Darlene Francis (UCB), Katie Harris (UCD), Manoj Kaplinghat (UCI), Dorothy Wiley (UCLA), Holley Moyes (UCM), Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR), Geoff Cook (UCSD), Thuan Le (UCSF), Julie Bianchini (UCSB), David Cuthbert (UCSC), James Weichert (Undergraduate Student Representative, UCB), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning and Policy Development, IRAP), Ethan Savage (Academic Planning and Policy Analyst, IRAP), Susan Cochran (Chair, Academic Senate), Jim Steintrager (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I. Consultation with the Academic Senate Office

- *Susan Cochran, Chair, Academic Senate*
- *Jim Steintrager, Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

A workgroup of the Regents is preparing a report that envisions what UC will look like in 2050 and will include six aspirational recommendations. One recommendation is to reimagine how and where UC happens, and this entails creating satellite campuses at various physical and virtual locations to support Californians. While making investments in technology and infrastructure has been discussed, no consideration has been given to the faculty who would be needed to achieve this or the wisdom of having faculty in remote locations without colleagues to help them deliver UC degrees.

The Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) Intersegmental Implementation Committee ("AB 928 Committee"), tasked by the legislature with expanding the use of associate degrees, met this week. The group includes representatives from the California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU), private four-year universities, and UC. There are three workgroups: the workgroup on goals has set a goal of 63% of Californians having a post-high school degree or certificate; the workgroup on re-engagement is figuring out how to get students who dropped out to return to college; and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workgroup is tasked with creating an ADT for STEM by adding six units at the lower division. Members of the STEM workgroup have different opinions about how to approach this, with some individuals asserting that Engineering majors do not need general education and that too much preparation is required in Math and Science for STEM majors.

Assembly approved the appointment of Steven Cheung to serve as next year's Senate vice chair. Academic Council approved Mid-Career Awards to Kadee Russ, UCD's divisional Senate vice chair, and to Danny Widener at UCSD, the immediate past chair of the Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity. Council was briefed by Chair Cocco on the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission's (WSCUC) requirements for online courses within the context of online degrees. This is part of the Senate's effort to distill the information UCEP is accumulating about online instruction to inform the divisional Senate leadership and improve everyone's knowledge. Academic Planning Council (APC) has established a workgroup on the future of UC doctoral programs which will be co-chaired by UCSB's divisional Senate chair and UCI's Vice Provost for Graduate Education and is a response to issues that emerged in the context of having represented student employees. Provost Newman is planning a congress on doctoral education for some time in August.

Chair Cochran shared that Council sent a memo to the provost with a list of conditions for Senate approval of UCB's College of Computing, Data Science, and Society (CDSS). A few weeks later, the campus provided the requested documents, including the memorandum of understanding and various letters of support, to the divisional and systemwide Senate. UCB also changed the plan for faculty governance within the new college to make it clear that faculty in CDSS will have only one vote within the Senate rather than a vote in two colleges. After reviewing everything the campus submitted, the Senate notified the provost that UCB had met Council's conditions and Chair Cochran indicated that the Regents will vote on the new college in May. Establishing conditions for the Senate's approval motivated UCB to do what it should have done before the proposal was submitted to the Senate. While the Senate has been criticized for its approach, Chair Cochran believes the strategy led to a successful outcome.

Discussion: Chair Cocco reported that Provost Newman has repeatedly stated that online courses are effective when done well, but there is no definition of what "when done well" means. UCEP can think about quality markers and what students get from in-person courses that is missing from online courses. There is a risk that online courses will compromise the quality of a UC education, but administrators view online education as a way to increase enrollment and get more funding from the Legislature. One question is how UC can set up guard rails that improve online education, and a step in this direction was adopting Senate Regulation (SR) 630.E, the campus experience requirement.

However, the Regents have the power to overrule the Senate and could insist that UC offer fully online degrees or use online courses to double undergraduate enrollment. The committee would like to see data on online courses and degrees that is disaggregated from data on in-person courses and degrees. Chair Cochran indicated that UC is required to report to the state the number of online courses that are being offered, so this disaggregated data should be available. UCEP can send a recommendation to Council about the collection of data on online courses and the Senate will work with the provost and Institutional Research on this effort.

The undergraduate student representative expressed disappointment that UCB's CDSS proposal was approved without consultation with or regard for students and that the Senate's conditions did not address student concerns. Chair Cochran recommended that students share their criticism of the new school during public comment at the May Regents meeting because, although the Board will not respond in the moment, the input will be noted. Students at UCB should work with the divisional Senate to try to effect change and improve the CDSS.

II. Chair's Updates

Chair Cocco indicated that comments Provost Newman has made regarding online education and the provost's history with the University of Massachusetts Global suggests that UC is on the path to offering online degrees. UCEP must take steps to ensure that it gets the data needed to evaluate online degree programs and do what it can to support the faculty and students involved with them. The report from the APC workgroup on the future of undergraduate education has not yet been made public but the chair believes it will be worth reading, although some recommendations are not feasible because of the intensive resources that would be needed.

III. Consent Calendar

Action: The minutes of UCEP's April 3rd in-person meeting were approved.

IV. Best Practices for Online Courses and Standard Terminology

- *Vice Chair Bawn, Julie Bianchini (UCSB), Manoj Kaplinghat (UCI) and Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR)*

Vice Chair Bawn and the UCSB representative indicated that the work with representatives from the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) on standard terminology for online courses is complete. The comments offered by UCEP during the April meeting were shared with the CCGA members and incorporated into the document. Chair Cocco explained that the purpose of the standard terminology guide is to make sure that campuses will understand the terms related to online courses that the systemwide Senate will utilize.

Distance education programs are programs with over 50% of the courses online. When federal regulators review distance education programs to determine if students are eligible for financial aid, they will look for evidence of regular and substantive interaction and engagement activities. WSCUC follows federal guidelines which state that a credit hour is one hour of lecture from the instructor of record, either synchronous or asynchronous, and this counts as an engagement activity. In addition to the lecture, the credit hour also includes two hours of student work which can be reading and doing homework. Faculty spend as much time creating lecture videos as they do preparing for in-person lectures and they should be given credit for this intellectual work.

Based on a careful review of the Compendium, Chair Cocco has reframed the principles for online majors and minors document as best practices for online courses. Senate memos from 2019 stated that online degrees should be reviewed by systemwide committees as new programs, but this is not in the Compendium. The Compendium delineates four scenarios that trigger systemwide review, one of which is the creation of an undergraduate degree title that is unique to the campus. The Senate's 2019 ruling that UCI's proposal for an "online degree" in business administration required systemwide review was based on it being a new degree title.

The Compendium indicates that there are situations where undergraduate degrees may be subject to substantive change reviews by WSCUC, including new programs where 50% or more of instruction will be offered online. The systemwide review of online degrees is not addressed in the Compendium, and the process for creating a new undergraduate degree title does not require systemwide Senate review. Chair Cocco recently learned from UCB's divisional Senate chair that the campus is preparing to submit a substantive change proposal to WSCUC for a bachelor of arts degree that will be online and this will not need to be sent to UCEP because it is not a new title. Since the committee's best practices document will not be enforceable policy, Chair Cocco would like UCEP to make specific recommendations for collecting data to evaluate online degrees that will establish some level of accountability. For example, if only 30% of students graduate from an undergraduate online degree program, there should be a mechanism to address this. The chair will draft language to send to Council.

Discussion: UCEP can decide if UC should set a standard for synchronous interaction with a faculty member that is higher than WSCUC's standard. The committee discussed whether instructional hours can include simply watching pre-recorded videos and a member stated that viewing a video where students can see a faculty member's energy and enthusiasm is different from reading a textbook. Vice Chair Bawn will inform the CCGA representatives about the changes UCEP has approved, and Chair

Cocco will make recommendations to Council about collecting data on and assessment of online courses. Most campuses have a process for outcome assessments, but UCEP could request or encourage that those assessments are disaggregated by course type. In addition, the assessments should be independent rather than conducted by the instructor teaching the course, and they could entail looking at students' ability to solve problem sets or samples of their written assignments. UCEP should also inquire about whether the exams for online courses are proctored. Members should send Chair Cocco their input on the recommendations and the committee will vote on this matter on May 15th. The best practices document might not be disseminated to the campuses but instead be an internal document added to the committee handbook and be a reference for future members of UCEP.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to remove "pre-recorded videos" from the definition of instructional contact hours which will allow for asynchronous instruction. Members voted unanimously in favor of this proposal.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to add a preamble explaining that the standard terms will be used by systemwide committees and that this is not meant to preclude or dictate terms an individual campus may choose to employ. Members voted unanimously in favor of this proposal.

V. UCSC's Creative Technologies Proposal

UCSC has responded to the questions UCEP sent the proposers in February and this proposal will be discussed during the committee's May 15th videoconference. The UCM and UCSB representatives will determine if the campus has adequately responded to the committee's questions, but other members should also review the proposal and supplemental information. If there are concerns, this could be treated like a pre-proposal and UCSC would be notified that the program is provisionally approved and asked to respond to additional questions.

Discussion: A member appreciated UCSC's effort to respond to UCEP's questions and to adjust the minimum face to face requirement called for by SR 630.E. The description of how portfolio review will be used to determine if students will be accepted into the program is disorganized, so the committee could ask for more details about this process. It is unclear why the campus is still proposing an online degree and Chair Cocco remarked that the Regents and administration do not want to use the label "online degrees" because these are viewed negatively.

The UCSB representative suspects that the program is conceived as an online major since most of the courses for both freshmen and transfer students will be online, so committee members are asked to consider if there is enough information about the courses to determine if there is sufficient substantive interaction. Members are also asked to closely review the data about online course effectiveness. UCSC described the difference between accreditation and state authorization, but the information is incorrect because UC is not authorized to teach undergraduate students residing outside of California.

VI. Preparing to Update the Compendium

A Google Doc has been created to keep track of potential updates to the Compendium and the list includes issues that have come up during UCEP's discussions this year. Chair Cocco suggested adding that proposals for distance education program should indicate if the courses are synchronous or asynchronous. The provost will initiate the process for updating the Compendium and it is not clear when this will happen.

Discussion: One idea is to find a way to protect or empower student voices, and UCEP might suggest asking proposers to include letters of support from student leadership on campus. Executive Advisor Greenspan explained that the APC is the keeper of the Compendium and the last big revision was in 2014. There are a number of different parts in the document, but the primary focus is on the creation of new academic programs and units. Given the numerous policy changes since 2014 it is time to update the Compendium which typically takes a year. But since the Compendium is a compilation of existing policy, the Senate can implement new policies which are eventually added to it. CCGA, UCEP and the Committee on Research Policy participate in updating the Compendium and the revised document will go out for systemwide review. Although it is not known when the process of revising the Compendium will start, the analyst suggested that UCEP should begin identifying the changes it will recommend.

VII. Campus Reports/Member Items

This item was not discussed.

VIII. New Business/Executive Session

Chair Cocco asked if a member is willing to join an upcoming meeting of the UC Washington Center's Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) and serve on this group next year and the UCSC representative volunteered. The UCM representative will notify the point person for the AAC that an alternate will attend the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at: 1:25 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Melanie Cocco