

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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*Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
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May 3, 2011

Lawrence Pitts
Provost and Executive Vice President
University of California

Re: UC System-wide Courses

Dear Larry:

With this letter I forward to you a letter dated May 3, 2011, from the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) that addresses implementation of Senate Regulation 544. As you know, SR 544 deals with student enrollment in courses beyond their home campus and also authorizes UCEP and CCGA to designate previously approved UC courses as systemwide courses. As UCEP indicates, this framework already applies to courses offered at the UC Washington and Sacramento centers as well as to a currently approved online course in Arabic.

UCEP identifies a long-standing administrative difficulty with respect to providing information about system-wide courses in campus catalogs and recording course results on students' transcripts. UCEP points to problems that must be resolved if we are to move forward with the creation of system-wide academic programs. As UCEP suggests, I hope that you can work with campus registrars to develop a method for campuses to fully incorporate UC system-wide courses into their curricular offerings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel L. Simmons".

Daniel L. Simmons

Encl (1)

Cc: Academic Council
David Kay
Robert Anderson
Martha Winnacker



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
David G. Kay, Chair
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May 3, 2011

Dan Simmons, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: IMPLEMENTATION OF SR 544 (CROSS-CAMPUS REGISTRATION)

Dear Dan,

This year, UCEP has frequently discussed issues surrounding the implementation of SR 544, which addresses registration by students in courses offered by UC campuses other than their home campus. Besides registration in conventional courses at another campus, SR 544 provides a framework for handling registration for courses offered through the UC Sacramento Center, the UC Center in Washington, DC (UCDC), and for online courses, both currently offered (e.g., Arabic Without Walls) and planned.

SR 544 provides that courses designated by UCEP (or CCGA) as “system-wide” be listed in the divisional catalogues. Yet UCEP has received reports that some courses are not listed and that students have difficulty finding information about system-wide courses. [The director of the UC Language Consortium, Robert Blake, reported to UCEP in March of this year that there is low enrollment in the Arabic Without Walls course due to ineffective publicity.] The utility of a listing in a catalogue depends on the quality of the index; if, for example, the index entry for “Arabic” in the divisional catalog does not refer to the entry for Arabic Without Walls in the system-wide course section, few students will find that information. The need for effective indexing is even stronger for the many students who get course information from online sources; again, a search for “Arabic” should turn up Arabic Without Walls along with any local Arabic course offerings. While the registrars report that they have implemented the provision of SR 544 on listing system-wide courses, UCEP recommends that they review their indexing practices and search capabilities to ensure effective publicity for system-wide courses.

SR 544 also provides, by implication from the requirement that a campus permit its students to enroll in (at least some) courses at another campus, that the units and grades that students earn from cross-campus enrollments be reflected on their home-campus transcripts. Anecdotal information suggests that this transfer of credit does not proceed smoothly in all cases and that bureaucratic obstacles sometimes arise. UCEP recommends that the extent of these problems be assessed via the UCUES survey and queries targeted at participants in UCDC and other cross-campus programs. It would be prudent to ensure that credit transfer proceeds seamlessly now, as the volume of cross-campus enrollments is likely to increase with the advent of more online courses. As students are surveyed, we also urge the registrars to review their credit transfer processes with a view to making them as transparent as possible.

The accommodation of system-wide courses also requires development of procedures for communicating to the registrars all additions and changes to the list of system-wide courses.

UCEP recognizes that changes to the registrars' systems will require serious planning and consideration, adequate lead time, and financial resources. UCEP also notes that the need for effective publicity and seamless credit transfer will increase greatly as more online courses are developed and offered. Achieving these goals meshes well with UCOP's "Working Smarter" initiative to develop efficiencies in university operations: Enhanced publicity, online enrollment in system-wide courses, and seamless transfer of credit will improve students' educational experience and will reduce the time that staff and faculty currently must spend on clerical tasks. We therefore believe that the time is opportune for the registrars to begin to address these implementation issues surrounding SR 544.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D G Kay", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David G. Kay, Chair
UCEP