

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Daniel L. Simmons
Telephone: (510) 987-0711
Fax: (510) 763-0309
Email: Daniel.Simmons@ucop.edu

*Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

February 2, 2011

**MARK YUDOF, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Report on Senate efforts to streamline transfer

Dear Mark:

As requested by the Commission on the Future, I am submitting to you a report on the Senate's efforts to facilitate transition to UC for transfer students. My report is an interim description of on-going activities and is not a formal statement of the Academic Council or any of the standing committees, as the letter has not been reviewed by Senate agencies.

As you know, while UC is successful in recruiting and retaining transfer students, anecdotal reports indicate that these students must take additional prerequisite courses after they enroll before they can begin work in their upper division majors, increasing their time-to-degree. Some observers believe that this situation results from the fact that each department sets its own requirements, so that a student who was adequately prepared for a major at one campus may not be so at another. We do not have adequate data to support or disprove this hypothesis, although as you know, UC transfer students complete their degrees in approximately the same time as native students which suggests that transfer students generally are not burdened by differing lower-division degree requirements.

In Fall 2010, the Academic Senate co-sponsored an initiative with Student Affairs funded by Provost Pitts' office to explore commonalities among majors at different campuses. The project convened faculty and department chairs from all nine general campuses in five of the most popular majors (mathematics, biological sciences, history, psychology, and computer science). We asked them to engage in a focused discussion of the requirements they deem necessary for major preparation. These meetings were productive and revealed significant commonalities across the campuses. Four of the five majors found substantial overlap in their requirements to the extent that one group is considering adopting a uniform textbook for a required "gateway" course. All five groups discovered a common core of courses that could become the basis for the University's response to AB 2302. One major found substantial differences between preparation paths that are rooted in substantively different approaches and emphases in the field. Student Affairs staff have drafted a report with detailed summaries of the meetings, which will be released soon.

Based on my discussions with the participants and with Student Affairs leadership, I recommend that UCOP fund a second meeting of two of these groups to pursue deliverables from the commonalities

identified in their first meetings, as well as convene additional disciplines from the twenty high-enrollment majors by the end of the 2010-11 academic year. We note that any revisions to campus major requirements based on these consultations are a matter for the campus and departments involved, and must be done through normal Senate procedures.

The Senate, through its participation in the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS), will communicate to CCC and CSU faculty the results of these internal conversations so that they can incorporate information about UC's expectations into the design of AA transfer degrees as required by SB 1440. We will recommend that undergraduate programs examine CCC's proposals for transfer degrees to determine whether they meet their major prerequisites. Student Affairs staff have also participated in discussions with CSU and the Community Colleges through the C-ID project that is identifying Community College courses that are transferable into majors at CSU.

Finally, an ad hoc committee consisting of members of BOARS, UCEP and UCOPE considered whether UC could simplify transfer preparation by adding CSU's GE Breadth pattern of general education courses as an alternative to the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) so that prospective transfer students could satisfy general education requirements by either path. The ad hoc committee did not recommend further pursuit of this idea for several reasons. First, UC highly values aspects of IGETC that differ from GE Breadth, particularly its writing requirement, which is critical for success at UC.

Second, the ad hoc committee was concerned that the proposal did not address the issue of adequate preparation for certain majors prior to transfer. Their concern was validated in the disciplinary meetings convened in the fall. The math, biology, and computer science groups all expressed dissatisfaction with the level of major preparation of transfer students. They felt that students are advised to focus on completing GE courses at the expense of major preparation, resulting in heavy science and math course loads at UC. In these fields, completing some major preparation courses in Community College and postponing GE courses in order to create a more balanced course load at UC may be a better option. The ad-hoc committee has proposed that BOARS consider developing guidelines for Comprehensive Review for selection of transfer students in which the criteria for admission would be grounded in major preparation, supplemented with a sufficient number of GE courses. Admissions criteria would be designed for each major to select those transfer students with the strongest preparation to complete a major in two years. This approach would bring UC into better alignment with the ongoing CCC/CSU work implementing SB 1440. I am certain that the consultants to BOARS will keep you and Provost Pitts apprised of BOARS' ongoing discussions.

I am encouraged by the initial results of our effort to streamline transfer and I am optimistic that continuing efforts will be as successful. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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

Daniel L. Simmons, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Lawrence Pitts, EVP and Provost
Academic Council
Martha Winnacker, Academic Senate Executive Director