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*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate  
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February 23, 2017

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

**Re: UCEP Investigation of Policies and Practices for Student-led Courses**

Dear Janet:

I am pleased to respond to your request for a Senate review of campus practices concerning undergraduate student-led courses, which you and I discussed last fall. I asked the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) to compare campus policies and procedures and to recommend any best practices it identified.

As you can see from UCEP's letter, there is a high degree of policy uniformity across the campuses for the faculty oversight of undergraduate student-led courses. All campuses require a faculty supervisor who is generally involved in the design—and often delivery—of the course and who attends class for at least a portion of the lectures. In addition, several campuses require or encourage training in pedagogy for the student instructor. I have no doubt that leading a course with faculty supervision is a great learning experience for the student. I also am convinced that the students in the class benefit both from the standard Academic Senate oversight provided by campus curriculum committees that approve the course proposal and from involvement of an experienced faculty supervisor.

I hope you find this information useful and I would be happy to direct any requests for additional information to UCEP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Chalfant".

Jim Chalfant, Chair  
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council  
Senate Director Baxter  
Senate Executive Directors



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)  
Barbara Knowlton, Chair  
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February 8, 2017

JIM CHALFANT, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC SENATE

**RE: CAMPUS POLICIES FOR STUDENT-LED COURSES**

Dear Jim,

During UCEP's October meeting, you requested that UCEP investigate current policies on student-led courses and identify any best practices being used at the campuses for these courses. Reportedly, President Napolitano and some Regents have asked about UC's policy for these types of courses, which must go through the established course approval processes. The following information about campus practices was reported during the committee's November meeting. At the February meeting, this information was reviewed and approved by UCEP members.

**Berkeley:** UCB has policies similar to the other campuses. There is a faculty sponsor, the course design is done with the sponsor, students are encouraged to take pedagogy and the sponsor is expected to oversee the syllabus and attend a small number of the classes and oversee it actively. The chair of the department has to approve the course. Deans in some colleges require the course content to be approved at the dean's level. Faculty can only sponsor one course a semester.

**Davis:** At UCD, the Committee on Courses of Instruction established two new course numbers for what the campus calls "student facilitated courses." There are one or two unit courses, and one course is intended for lower division students while the other is for upper division students. The student must have a faculty mentor who designs the course with the student. The student has to take a training course which is also under the guidance of a mentor and while teaching the course, the student must take another course with the faculty mentor to discuss how the class is going. The faculty mentor is expected to attend 50% of the classes that are taught. It is not clear how often this has been used at UCD since the program was instituted in May 2014. The idea is to make sure that the faculty mentor, who is the instructor of record, is actively involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of the course.

**Irvine:** At UCI, student led courses are under an administrative unit on campus, not an academic unit. The CEP does not like these courses and is troubled by the idea of charging someone tuition who will then be teaching a class. At one point these classes proliferated on the campus and the CEP stopped a large number of them.

**Los Angeles:** Students apply to teach a student-led course and these courses have close faculty oversight. In addition to teaching the course, the student has to take a course on pedagogy. These courses are very specialized and are touted as innovative. There is a committee that reviews the courses but it may not necessarily be the Committee on Curriculum.

**Merced:** This campus does not have anything extensive in this area but the supplemental instruction is similar to what has been described at other campuses. Students have prerequisite experience in pedagogy and there is a faculty member involved in the course.

**Riverside:** At UCR, the courses are vetted by the Committee on Courses and the CEP and they are one credit courses. The students take a pedagogy course before teaching their courses and there is a good deal of oversight.

**San Diego:** At UCSD students who want to lead a course go through the same Undergraduate Council process as the faculty. In practice, after the workload becomes clear, students have decided against teaching a course. There are no student-led courses at this campus right now.

**Santa Barbara:** These courses are rare at UCSB, but a student-led course has a faculty mentor and the course must go through the standard course approval process.

**Santa Cruz:** At UCSC, the CEP reviews all student-led courses and they must be overseen by a faculty member.

UCEP members agree that these courses are clearly being monitored and that the campuses are already sharing many of the same practices. The close involvement of a faculty member and oversight by appropriate campus curriculum committees are common features in place to ensure quality. System-wide, student-led courses are reviewed in the same way as faculty-led courses. These courses are typically offered only once. In rare cases, a faculty member may encourage students to lead a specific course resulting in that course being offered more frequently. In most cases, students receive training in pedagogical methods that enhance the experience for the students leading these courses. UCEP members encouraged all campuses to include such training for students leading these courses.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B Knowlton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Barbara Knowlton, Chair  
UCEP