



Robert M. Anderson
Telephone: (510) 987-9303
Fax: (510) 763-0309
Email: Robert.Anderson@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

July 12, 2012

**MARK YUDOF, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Proposed moratorium on UCOE loan repayment

Dear Mark:

The Academic Council has reviewed recent documents from UCOE, as well as reports and letters from UCEP, UCPB, BOARS, and UCAAD describing concerns about UCOE's progress. Council wants UC to develop a high quality product and is cognizant of the interest of the Administration and Regents in moving UCOE forward so UC can establish itself as a leader in online education. Foremost among the Council's concerns is that UCOE has prioritized the recruitment of non-matriculated students ahead of establishing the necessary infrastructure to ensure UC quality, resulting from what we perceive as a rush to repay the loan. *In order to ensure programmatic success for UCOE, Council urges the Administration to grant UCOE a one to two year moratorium from its loan obligations and encourage UCOE to substantially scale back its recruitment of non-matriculated students over the next year or more so it can focus its attention on more critical programmatic issues.* Council would support such an action provided it is linked to a program, organized jointly by UCOE and the Academic Senate, aimed at addressing the broad concerns outlined below. Council strongly supports ensuring that the focus of UCOE is on the education of UC students guided by UC faculty, as originally envisioned.

A particular concern of the Council is that plans for cross-campus enrollment in UCOE, a primary UCOE benefit, have barely been addressed, with only four of twenty pilot courses submitting paperwork for approval as systemwide courses to date. There also are infrastructure issues that have not been addressed that require attention before the program can credibly be brought to market. BOARS and UCAAD were particularly disturbed about the absence of equity concerns in a marketing plan that emphasizes recruitment of "overachievers" who are already the most advantaged and wealthy high school students in California, but we have been reassured by Interim Director Keith Williams that this will be corrected and UCOE will investigate avenues for equitable inclusion. Addressing all these properly, however, will take time. Moreover, our concern remains that this is not a unique event, but reflective of the fact that benefiting UC students, or achieving UC quality, are now secondary objectives compared to meeting the target for demand from non-matriculated students. That target exists solely to repay the loan.

Independent of UCOE, the campuses are continuing to develop their own online courses and programs, with one division in discussions with Stanford about the possibility of joining their efforts. In fact, the divisional approach is a viable option for UC to engage in online education that could realize the aspirations of those advocating an increased UC presence in the online market. A primary advantage of UCOE to UC is facilitating cross-campus enrollments in these days of financial instability, but the failure of UCOE to move almost all of its courses through the approval process shows this ball has been dropped. While there is a role for the Senate here, there also needs to be some effort in bringing the campus administrations along in a plan to deal with the resource implications of meaningful numbers of UC students taking such courses; this has not been a priority, given the focus on non-matriculated students.

Universities across the nation are venturing into online education at a rapid rate and UCOE has promised some unique features that could catapult UC into a leadership role, *if* we deliver on them. Unlike plans announced by other universities to offer mega-courses that would enroll tens of thousands of students who would interact solely with video and computer generated responses, UCOE proposes UC-quality courses that include both asynchronous and synchronous learning environments, bringing matriculated and non-matriculated students together with UC instructors with somewhat more realistic course sizes. The Council endorses this approach, provided that course quality and access to matriculated students is maintained, and believes UC has an important counter-message to prevailing trends, namely that human interaction is paramount to ensuring educational quality. It is in this way that UC can be a leader in online education, and it is in the spirit of seeing UC successfully deliver on this vision that we write to you now. UC cannot and should not try to compete in the low-quality end of this market. We would prefer that this become the mission of UCOE, over catering to non-matriculated students. A focus on benefiting UC students has been the Senate's emphasis from the beginning of this conversation, and it remains our main motivation in suggesting this moratorium.

Please let us know if you have any questions. The Senate is committed to helping UCOE redirect its priorities to get the job done right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Anderson".

Robert M. Anderson, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Aimée Dorr, Provost and Executive Vice President
Chris Edley, Berkeley Law Dean and Special Advisor to the President
Academic Council
Executive Director Winnacker

Encl.



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
Jose Wudka, Chair
Jose.wudka@UCR.EDU

Assembly of the Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: (510) 987-9466
Fax: (510) 763-0309

July 10, 2011

Robert Anderson, Chair
Academic Council

Re: Moratorium on UCOE loan

Dear Bob,

Over the last few weeks UCEP has become increasingly concerned with the uneven progress of the UCOE program. There is no doubt that online education is an avenue of instruction UC faculty is actively involved in, and which the university must explore and support, but this should be done without damaging the image of the University or lowering the quality of education. We believe that the additional pressures currently acting on UCOE, especially those brought about primarily by the schedule for the repayment of the loan, have put these goals in jeopardy.

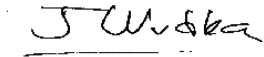
There are several indications that the UCOE program has serious problems. To name a few: the implementation of the Common Learning Environment, essential for the smooth functioning of the courses, has been beset by problems; the marketing programs are unfocused and have shifted target populations several times, indicating that there is no clear idea which populations will be most likely to enroll as non-matriculated students, yet an enormous amount of money has been spent in this effort, much more than in course development; there appear to be difficulties in adopting constraints on course listings aimed at ensuring quality of education and accessibility of matriculated students to course instructors; the evaluation component of the program (based on its initial realization as the Online Instruction Pilot Project) is no longer a first priority (as indicated by UCOE's response to queries by the Blue Ribbon Panel), nor is the dissemination of the results of such evaluation.

None of these problems is insurmountable, but solutions require time, a commodity the program does not have given the loan repayment requirements. For the UCOE approach to online education to become an important component of the educational mission of the University, it is paramount that, from its inception, it is designed with the standards expected of all UC programs, and contains safeguards for maintaining and, indeed, enhancing the quality of education, as well as providing access to that education to all matriculated students.

Faced with this situation, UCEP proposes a moratorium of one year on the repayment of the loan, *provided* this is linked to a program aimed at overcoming the above obstacles, with the specific items and schedule of implementation to be agreed upon by the UCOE and Senate leadership in the immediate future. The Senate participants on the UCOE Advisory Board and all relevant standing committees would be prepared

to continue to engage constructively to address these obstacles. However, we have come to believe that the determination to repay the loan on a preset schedule, which drives the desire to raise revenues from non-matriculated students, has become an impediment to the success of UCOE. In short, the Senate cares much more about protecting quality of instruction than about repayment of the loan. From the initial conception, the Senate insisted that UCOE benefit primarily UC students, and while we are not opposed to extending UCOE courses to non-matriculated students, they can never become our primary target, nor revenues our primary emphasis. Given that, we see no alternative but to urge that we slow down and attempt to get things right. UCEP recognizes that this will limit the flexibility of UCOE, but considering the difficulties the program is facing and the instability produced by a changing leadership, such a constraint we believe will be beneficial for the future success of this aspect of online education at the UC.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jose Wudka", written over a horizontal line.

Jose Wudka, Chair
UCEP