

VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING OF ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

December 8, 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

I. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Pursuant to the call, the Assembly of the Academic Senate met on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. Academic Senate Chair Robert Horwitz presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Senate Director Hilary Baxter called the roll of Assembly members and confirmed a quorum. Attendance is listed in Appendix A of these minutes.

II. MINUTES

ACTION: The Assembly approved the minutes of June 9, 2021.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SENATE LEADERSHIP

- **Robert Horwitz, Chair**
- **Susan Cochran, Vice Chair**

Labor Negotiations: The University has reached a five-year contract agreement with the UC-AFT, the union representing Unit 18 Lecturers. The UC-AFT canceled a planned strike and its members are expected to ratify the agreement. The University is also negotiating the membership of a new Graduate Student Researcher bargaining unit. UC wants the unit to include students who are UC employees paid through university research funds and grants, but exclude students who are not UC employees and receive research funding in the form of fellowships. The issue is likely to be discussed at a Public Employees Relations Board hearing in February.

UC Budget: The 2022-23 UC budget proposal asks the State to make substantial new investments in the University's core operations, capital projects, and deferred maintenance. The budget includes a 4% across the board increase to faculty salaries and an additional 1.5% to address salary equity gaps.

UCRP: The Regents approved a reduction in the UCRP employer contribution rate from 15% to 14% with the 1% balance addressed through additional STIP borrowing. The change will help campuses avoid \$140 million in costs in each of the next two years. A sunset clause automatically restores the contribution to 15% in two years unless the Regents act.

Climate Crisis: Several campus Senates have new sustainability committees that are exploring ways to reduce campus carbon emissions and incorporate climate issues into the curriculum. The systemwide Senate's new Climate Crisis Task Force is also drafting a Memorial to the UC Regents on the topic of the climate crisis. The Task force plans to ask the Academic Council to recommend to the Assembly that it initiate a systemwide faculty ballot on the Memorial.

Mitigating COVID Impacts: Provost Brown has convened a joint working group to respond to Academic Council's January 2021 recommendations for mitigating COVID-19 impacts on faculty. The working group's preliminary report focuses three high priority recommendations: 1) adjust expectations for promotions and merit advances to conform to "Achievement Relative to Opportunity" principles; 2) create funding mechanisms to help faculty recover research costs; and

3) fund approved faculty teaching duty modifications. President Drake has agreed to ask campus chancellors to begin implementing and socializing the recommendations across CAPs, department chairs, and deans.

Entrepreneurship: In May, the Regents Committee on Innovation Transfer and Entrepreneurship recommended devolving patent authority from UCOP to the campuses to facilitate more activity and funding. The Committee also recommended revising the Academic Personnel Manual promotion and tenure guidelines to include specific wording for consideration of innovation and entrepreneurship activities. Senate leadership have asked UCORP and UCAP to consider whether and how such activities pertain to the research, teaching, and service elements of the merit and promotion process.

Academic Integrity: Faculty are concerned that several student tutoring websites that gained popularity during the pandemic facilitate academic dishonesty and the illegal posting of faculty intellectual property. The Senate has asked UC Legal to consider an institutional response, which may include automated take-down requests, and to engage other universities and accrediting agencies in a broader campaign against the websites.

Teaching Modalities: The Academic Council is discussing how to address uneven policies and practices across campuses for determining teaching modalities and responding to student/instructor requests for remote teaching accommodation. Council is gathering information and hopes to produce a set of guidelines that supports appropriate flexibility for faculty with medical and dependent care needs

Transfer Admissions: The Intersegmental Committee on Academic Senates will devote significant time this year to the implementation of Assembly Bill 928, a new law that creates a singular transfer pathway from the Community Colleges to UC and CSU through the CSU Associate Degree for Transfer.

Discussion:

- Assembly members noted that the new Unit 18 Lecturer contract is fair and improves pay and job security, but they also observed that the contract negotiations had included a request for Senate membership, which could affect the operation of shared governance. Chair Horwitz noted that the systemwide Senate is assembling a Task Force to study issues and concerns affecting the morale of clinical and other non-Senate Health Sciences faculty, some of whom may have been placed in the wrong job series. Assembly members also noted that graduate students can transition in and out of different roles, and their distinctive role as researchers can be particularly complex, nebulous, and prone to change.
- Members noted that in considering a Memorial to the Regents on the climate crisis, the Senate should understand that converting campus power plants away from natural gas to electric will require expensive retrofitting, and should weigh this priority against other important and competing priorities. Chair Horwitz observed that Senate memorials focus institutional attention on a problem and have an aspirational quality. He also noted that the new federal infrastructure bill could be a potential source of funding for electrification.
- Individual Assembly members noted that embedding specific forms of research activity in the APM, or giving faculty “extra credit” for patent and start-up activity could suggest that such activities are expected. UCAP Chair Kuriyan noted that UCAP will be examining the issue impartially and without presupposition.

- Assembly members noted that the COVID Impacts Report had been distributed unevenly and suggested that campus Senate offices distribute the report through their all-faculty listservs.
- Members noted that the roles of disability student offices in student requests for remote learning accommodation differ across campuses. Some offices primarily advocate for students; others have a more implementation-focused role. CCGA Chair Kasko noted that CCGA is crafting recommendations to campuses about responding to TA requests for remote teaching accommodation for non-medical reasons.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SENIOR UNIVERSITY LEADERS

- **Michael Drake, President**
- **Michael T. Brown, Provost and Executive Vice President**

Faculty Salary Plan: Provost Brown noted that he, President Drake, and the other UC senior leaders are committed to increasing the competitiveness of UC faculty salaries. Progress has been made, but there is more to do to make the salary scales more useful and reflective of the market. The 2022-23 UC budget plan includes a 4% across-the-board adjustment to the salary scales, an additional 1.5% for equity adjustments, and funding for regular merit increases.

NAGPRA: The University is finalizing a revised Presidential Policy on Native American Cultural Affiliation and Repatriation. The policy updates UC’s compliance with the federal and state versions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and strengthens UC policy and practices related to the curation, repatriation, and disposition of Native American remains and cultural items in the University’s custody.

Systemwide Programs: Provost Brown noted that the pandemic had affected systemwide experiential academic programs like the UC Center in Sacramento (UCCS), the UC Center in Washington (UCDC), and the UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP). UCOP is funding the programs to help return them to full vitality, including new housing and instructional facilities for the UCCS. UCOP is also investing more resources in the California Digital Library.

Union Negotiations: President Drake said the agreement between UC and the UC-AFT is strong, fair, and supports lecturers and students. The University is working through some important language regarding the membership of a Graduate Student Researchers bargaining unit. The University believes it would be inappropriate for the unit to include individuals doing research who are not compensated UC employees.

COVID: The University is monitoring new variants and expects the pandemic to continue changing. Hospitalizations and severe cases have been increasing at relatively modest rates. UC campuses have low case rates and high rates of vaccination and masking, making them safer than surrounding communities. The University recommends booster shots for all students, faculty and staff.

Community Safety Plan: Faculty are serving on two systemwide campus safety working groups. The first is focused on mechanisms for collecting campus safety data, and the second on demilitarized alternatives for police vehicles, uniforms, and equipment. The University has employed a search firm to recruit a systemwide director for the Community Safety Plan.

Discussion:

- Assembly members thanked senior managers for their commitment to improving faculty salaries, encouraged them to focus on the published salary scales as an effective way to “raise

all boats,” and asked how UC would account for current inflationary conditions in the 2022-23 salary plan.

- Assembly members noted that faculty are experiencing burn-out and low morale; the University should consider providing an additional sabbatical credit to recognize the extra teaching and service performed during the pandemic and the effect of the shutdown on research.
- An Assembly member observed that the U.S. Surgeon General recently issued an advisory about the nation’s youth mental health crisis. Another member asked about the status of Academic Council’s recommendations for making UC a more supportive environment for students with atypical neurological functioning.
- An Assembly member asked for clarification about which graduate students UC believes should and should not be included in the GSR union. Finally, they asked President Drake to comment on challenges the University should be preparing for in the coming years.

- President Drake said UC wants the 2022-23 salary plan to be as fair as possible to all employees and acknowledged the challenge of inflation. He said the mental health problem in society extends beyond young people, and that the University was increasing funding for student mental health services.
- He said UC wants the GSR union discussions to maintain a clear distinction between graduate students in an academic program with a research component and students who perform work like a UC employee. The key distinction is what the student is doing, not the source of the funding. A graduate student doing independent research should not be in the union if they are not performing a compensated service for the University.
- He noted that upcoming challenges include maintaining a positive relationship with the State; increasing funding to a level that sustains excellence; maintaining labor peace; adjusting the UC educational model to expand capacity; defining an appropriate role for online education; and determining the post-pandemic “future of work” for administrative staff.

- Provost Brown promised to forward a formal response detailing UC’s multi-pronged approach to the recommendations on neurodiverse students. He said he appreciates faculty efforts during the pandemic, and while he does not support the idea of an additional sabbatical credit, he is thinking about new mechanisms to support faculty.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS

- A. Consent Calendar [None]**
- B. Annual Reports [2020-21]**

VI. UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY WELFARE REPORT [None]

VII. NEW BUSINESS [None]

VIII. SPECIAL ORDERS [None]

IX. REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES [None]

X. PETITIONS OF STUDENTS [None]

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS [None]

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Academic Senate

Attest: Robert Horwitz, Academic Senate Chair

Attachments: Appendix A – Assembly Attendance Record, Meeting of December 8, 2021