



**Academic Council
Minutes of Meeting**
January 29, 2025

I. Consent Calendar

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. Minutes of December 18, 2024 meeting
3. Master of Urban Studies and Regional Planning at UCSD
4. UCEP letter to Divisions re: credit for UC Center Sacramento courses
5. [UCR Variance to Senate Regulation 780](#) - UCEP and UCRJ approvals
6. Cancel February 13 Assembly meeting per [Bylaw 110.3.b](#) to make room for rescheduled Special Assembly meeting on February 13, 2025

ACTION: Council approved the consent calendar.

II. Senate Officers' Announcements

- **Steven W. Cheung, Academic Council Chair**
- **Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Vice Chair**

January 2025 Regents Meeting: Senate and administrative leaders discussed faculty disciplinary processes in response to concerns from regents about the length of time between alleged violations and sanctions. The joint Academic Senate–Administration APM 015 / APM 106 Workgroup charge is being revised to explore options and potential improvements, including non-location-bound Privilege and Tenure hearings and a systemwide case-tracking system. The workgroup must submit recommendations in advance of the May 2025 Regents meeting, with a three-member regents panel meeting monthly to monitor workgroup progress. While some regents have suggested drastic policy changes, Senate leadership believes targeted improvements can address concerns without undermining faculty self-governance.

UC Budget Challenges: The governor's 2025-26 budget includes a \$270 million cut to UC. Although tax revenues are exceeding projections, wildfire relief efforts may claim excess state funds. The budget also pauses the nonresident tuition buyout, whereby UCLA, UCB, and UCSD may admit more nonresident students to help narrow budget gaps. In light of these fiscal conditions, Chair Cheung is recommending that UC pause its planned 1% enrollment growth under the state compact to prevent further strain on faculty-student ratios.

Federal Executive Orders: The University is closely monitoring rapidly changing federal executive orders affecting hiring, research grants, and financial aid programs. UC is developing guidance to help faculty navigate legal and funding uncertainties, including risk assessments.

Leadership Searches: The UCSB and UCR chancellor searches are progressing. The Academic Advisory Committee for the UC presidential search is evaluating both traditional and nontraditional candidates and will meet with the Regents Special Committee on February 3, 2025.

Systemwide Academic Calendar: The Academic Planning Council (APC) Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar is assessing the opportunities and challenges of semester vs. quarter systems and conducting a cost analysis for any potential transition. Its initial report is forthcoming in early March 2025, with systemwide review planned for spring quarter.

Benefits Studies: Workgroups led by UC Systemwide Human Resources (HR) are conducting studies on total remuneration and UC employee benefits. Senate faculty are expected to participate in both HR workgroups.

III. Systemwide Academic Personnel Updates

o Amy K. Lee, Deputy Provost

Faculty Discipline Review: The joint Senate-Administration APM 015 / APM 016 Workgroup is evaluating regents' concerns about delays in faculty disciplinary processes and will draft a report and recommendations for a more accelerated timeline. The workgroup's initial charge to address concurrent academic misconduct investigations and personnel actions will be delayed until fall 2025.

Retiree Health Benefits & Recall Policy: A new policy, driven by the Medicare Secondary Payer Act and the Affordable Care Act, affects faculty who retire and are recalled to UC employment within six months. These faculty will lose eligibility for retiree health benefits and must enroll in employer-sponsored faculty-staff health benefits programs, which tend to be more expensive. For emeriti faculty who accept a recall appointment after six months of retirement, the aforementioned consideration does not apply. UC Human Resources and Systemwide Academic Personnel are working to ensure faculty receive clear guidance when considering retirement.

AB 1905 Compliance: Assembly Bill (AB) 1905 prohibits issuing "official" letters of recommendation for job applicants unless the author of the letter verifies the subject of the letter has faced no prior sexual harassment allegations. Interim UC guidance allows faculty to write personal letters of recommendation without verification, provided they include a disclaimer stating they are offering personal views and not speaking on behalf of UC. Faculty may use UC letterhead under this guidance. These provisions are included in [proposed revisions to APM 036](#), now under 60-day systemwide review. A toolkit and frequently asked questions document will be provided once the UC policy is finalized.

Other Policy Reviews:

- [APM 675](#) (Veterinary Medicine Salary Administration) – Currently under systemwide review, revisions clarify that faculty may participate in the Negotiated Salary Program but remain ineligible for the Health Sciences Compensation Plan.
- APM 360 (Librarians) – An upcoming systemwide review will correct inconsistent policy language regarding instruction and research expectations.
- APM 500 (Misconduct Disclosures) – An upcoming systemwide review will formalize pre-hiring misconduct disclosure requirements.

IV. UCOPE Sunset Proposal

o Ken Feer, University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) Analyst

Council discussed a proposal to eliminate UCOPE and reassign relevant elements of its charge to the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

Rationale:

- UCOPE's core duties have diminished over time, as many responsibilities have been eliminated or reassigned to specialist subcommittees.

- The discontinuation of UC’s Analytical Writing Placement Examination in 2022 has led individual campuses to manage their own placement assessments, reducing the need for a dedicated systemwide committee.
- Six of the nine undergraduate campuses no longer maintain a dedicated Preparatory Education committee within their Senate division, so this change aligns with current practices.
- Under the proposal, UCOPE’s Entry Level Writing Requirement Coordinating Council (ECC) and the English for Multilingual Students Advisory Group (EMSAG) would be integrated into UCEP as subcommittees, creating a more focused and efficient governance model.

Analyst Feer acknowledged concerns that dissolving UCOPE might reduce the focus on student preparation issues and that adding preparatory education responsibilities to UCEP could increase its workload. Despite these concerns, the proposal has the support of both UCOPE and UCEP.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members noted increasing disparities in student readiness, especially in math, following the removal of standardized tests. The widespread use of self-directed placement assessments has raised concerns about student success in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) courses.
- Members noted the long-term impact of the pandemic on student preparation, with some advocating for a pathways-based approach—structured academic paths that align preparatory coursework with students’ intended majors.
- Members noted that the proposed subcommittee model for UCEP mirrors existing, successful Senate structures (e.g., the Healthcare Task Force under the University Committee on Faculty Welfare).
- Since the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) focuses on admissions rather than post-matriculation student preparation, shifting UCOPE’s responsibilities to UCEP was deemed appropriate.

ACTION: By unanimous consent (20-0), Council approved circulating the proposal for systemwide review.

V. Consultation with Senior Managers

- **Michael V. Drake, President**
- **Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs**
- **Nathan Brostrom, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer**

Wildfire Response & Recovery: UC is engaged in wildfire recovery efforts, providing support for emergency response, healthcare, and rebuilding. UCLA is hosting Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters on newly acquired property, and UCLA Chancellor Frenk’s expertise in disaster management has been instrumental. UCSD’s fire monitoring system helped detect new fires, enabling early response.

Federal Policy Changes: UC is monitoring a series of executive orders from the new administration, including:

- The suspension of foreign aid, including funding for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which could severely impact the developing world.
- The January 27, 2025 executive order freezing federal funds, which briefly disrupted grants, loans, Medicaid, and other services before being halted by a court-issued temporary restraining order.

- The use of vague terms such as “Marxist equity” and “wokeness,” which has created widespread confusion.

UC leaders are working with Federal Governmental Relations teams and peer institutions to clarify the implications and respond to these directives.

Support for Vulnerable Populations: President Drake emphasized UC’s commitment to supporting undocumented community members. The University is monitoring immigration policy changes, and ensuring that legal resources and protections are available. Although UC has not practiced affirmative action since the 1990s, UC administration is analyzing federal restrictions on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to safeguard essential equity and inclusion programs. President Drake emphasized balancing advocacy while managing risk exposure.

UC’s Financial & Legislative Standing: Despite a proposed \$271 million budget cut, state officials continue to view UC as a critical asset and partner. Past negotiations have sometimes resulted in funding increases or reduced cuts. UC remains focused on meeting state compact goals—reducing achievement gaps, shortening time to degree, and improving diversity—in alignment with state funding agreements. Additional funding would allow UC to continue to accelerate these efforts.

Academic Affairs: Provost Newman provided updates on several initiatives:

- The APC Workgroup on the Future of Doctoral Programs at UC has completed its report. Provost Newman called for robust campus-level discussions involving faculty and department leadership.
- The UC Center Sacramento (UCCS) is expanding its role in public policy by integrating graduate programs (e.g., UCB Goldman School’s MPA program) and establishing a permanent presence for the California Policy Lab, which will enhance faculty’s access to state administrative data for policy research.
- The joint APM 015 / APM 016 Workgroup will consider reforms to the faculty disciplinary processes, including increased systemwide faculty involvement and enhanced data collection and reporting. Maintaining faculty self-governance in these matters remains a priority.
- UC Education Abroad Program’s Global Start allows first-year undergraduates to begin college abroad (currently in Sicily), easing campus space pressures. UC is also experimenting with remote math courses for students at underserved community colleges to boost transfer enrollment in STEM fields.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members urged UC to leverage its size and influence to address federal challenges, emphasizing the importance of truth, justice, and dignity. One member shared a personal story of overcoming hardships with the help of federal and state programs, underscoring their importance to students and faculty.
- Members raised concerns about funding shifts affecting specific research areas. They emphasized the need for clear UC and agency guidance about grant applications, and suggested targeted events at UCCS to raise awareness.
- Concerns were raised that the Regents’ issues with faculty discipline appear to be based on a few high-profile cases rather than systemic problems. Some members worried about the politicization of the discipline process and emphasized the need for data-driven approaches and clarity on chancellors’ roles.

- President Drake stressed that UC must remain a “beacon of hope” while navigating federal uncertainties strategically, highlighting UC leadership’s commitment to resilience, collaboration, and advocacy in protecting UC’s core values and programs.
- Provost Newman encouraged collective problem-solving and civil discourse, noting that the UC systemwide Academic Congress on Research in March 2025 will provide a forum to discuss federal funding issues.
- A Council member raised concerns about systemwide High-Performance Computing (HPC) capacity, and called for greater coordination. President Drake acknowledged the issue and agreed to follow up on systemwide coordination efforts.
- Concerns were also expressed about broad interpretations of state Senate Bill (SB) 791 and AB 810, which require job applicants to disclose any misconduct allegations. Provost Newman promised to follow up with UCOP’s legal team on this matter.

VI. Executive Session

VII. Support for Vulnerable Students

- **Yvette Gullatt, Vice President and Vice Provost, Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs (GUEA)**
- **Cynthia Dávalos, Associate Vice President, GUEA**
- **Allison Woodall, Deputy General Counsel, UC Legal**

UC leaders provided an update on efforts to support undocumented students and those from mixed-status families, acknowledging a rapidly changing policy environment and heightened anxiety among affected communities. The discussion focused on legal protections, available resources, faculty responsibilities, and potential risks for students navigating these challenges.

Legal and Policy Framework: UC operates under state [Senate Bill 54](#) (California Values Act), which limits state law enforcement from assisting with immigration enforcement, and state [Assembly Bill 21](#), which ensures that all students have access to higher education, regardless of immigration status. UC also maintains a 2016 [Statement of Principles in Support of Undocumented Members of the UC Community](#), which emphasizes privacy rights, non-cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, and equal access to campus resources. UC Police must comply with state laws that limit collaboration with federal immigration authorities.

Know Your Rights & Legal Support: Other resources include [FAQs for UC Employees About Possible Federal Immigration Enforcement Actions on University Property](#) and [Know Your Rights cards](#), available through Undocumented Student Services Centers. In addition, campus Immigrant Legal Services centers provide legal representation to students, some employees, and student family members based on their individual circumstances.

Faculty & Staff Responsibilities: The confidentiality of personal information for students, employees, and patients is protected by [UC Policy 130](#), [FERPA](#), [HIPAA](#), and other state and federal regulations. UC employees must maintain confidentiality; any subpoenas requesting student records should be referred to campus counsel for verification.

Other Areas of Support: Many undocumented students feel safest on campus, where they have access to basic needs, mental health services, and community support. Faculty can assist students who may need to temporarily stop out, request alternative exam accommodations, or avoid travel. Emergency grants and financial aid are available for undocumented students through campus

Financial Aid Offices. Students from mixed-status families are encouraged to apply through the California Dream Act Application instead of the federal financial aid form, which requires sensitive family information. UC is expanding mental health services by coordinating counselors across campuses and partnering with community organizations to address resource gaps.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members suggested reactivating UC’s rapid response legal networks to quickly address any escalation in immigration enforcement actions.
- It was noted that faculty are increasingly asked to accommodate students facing crises—ranging from pandemic disruptions to immigration issues—which places additional pressure on them to determine flexible academic arrangements.
- UC leaders acknowledged these concerns and recommended that faculty establish clear parameters for flexibility while recognizing each student’s unique situation and balancing their own workload concerns.
- UC leaders emphasized that UC would provide legal guidance, financial support, and mental health resources to assist students. Undocumented Student Services centers remain the primary support hubs for affected students, and will work with legal organizations to assist if a student is detained, deported, or subject to a travel ban. Re-enrollment policies for returning students may also be considered.
- UC is developing a faculty toolkit that consolidates policies, resources, and legal guidance for distribution on campuses, and will update its website with the latest information.

VIII. Academic Senate Voting Process and Thresholds

Chair Cheung noted the significant variability in how Senate divisions manage divisional ballots and petitions. This includes differences in qualifying criteria, the structure of pro-con statements, and participation thresholds required to validate voting outcomes. He observed that some divisions require only a simple majority from a few petitioners, while others seek broader buy-in. Chair Cheung asked whether there was interest in developing systemwide policies or guidelines to create greater consistency.

Discussion highlights:

- Some Council members suggested an effort to share best practices across campuses; however, others cautioned against overly prescriptive guidelines that force uniformity, given the diversity in campus sizes and traditions. Members noted that some current rules are historical artifacts that no longer suit the modern University. Others raised concerns that specific thresholds may not work equally well for all campuses.
- One member reported mixed opinions among faculty at their campus regarding voting procedures, particularly in the context of UCSF’s proposed memorials on Senate membership. Some faculty desire greater consistency with practices at other campuses, while others value maintaining the local process.
- Several members expressed support for developing a set of guiding principles rather than imposing uniform rules. Such principles would preserve local autonomy but encourage campuses to review and adjust their processes based on best practices.
- In conclusion, Council recognized the value of developing principles to guide the formulation of systemwide guidelines. Chair Cheung proposed to follow up with a request for further input from Council members.

IX. Academic Senate Office Budgets and Re-Investing in Shared Governance

○ Monica H. Lin, Systemwide Senate Executive Director

Council reviewed a budget advocacy letter and statement presented by the systemwide and divisional Senate executive directors on re-investing in shared governance that also included guiding principles for resource allocations in support of Academic Senate operations. Originally developed in 2004 to assist the newly formed UC Merced Senate Division and revised in 2010 during the Great Recession, these principles have been updated to address evolving budget challenges and the need for adequate resource support for Senate offices in light of anticipated state funding cuts in 2025-26.

Executive Director Lin noted that the growing workload for Senate staff and faculty calls for a review of funding models to ensure necessary support for Senate operations and shared governance. Current practices vary across Senate divisions in terms of resource support and funding structures. The statement emphasizes the Senate's unique role in University governance and the critical need for stable resources for the Senate to fulfill its responsibilities effectively. This includes ensuring an operational baseline to fund essential Senate functions, such as adequate staffing and fair compensation for faculty serving in Senate committee leadership roles.

Key Points:

- Fully resource Senate offices at both the campus and systemwide levels.
- Prioritize funding for human resources, facilities, equipment, and information technology systems that support Senate operations.
- Involve Senate offices in centralized system developments and ensure access to relevant institutional data.
- Avoid trade-offs that force Senate chairs to choose between funding Senate staff and providing faculty research grants.
- Address inconsistencies in budget reporting lines, given that only three Senate divisions currently benefit from direct funding from the chancellor's office.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members expressed support for the updated guiding principles and overall framework presented.
- Several division chairs raised concern that support for enhanced Senate funding is not uniform across divisions and that mandated campuswide budget cuts of 5%-10% could force Senate offices to draw on limited research funds.
- Some members cited historical comparisons to highlight that Senate offices have traditionally been underfunded compared to other administrative units.
- Members stressed that Senate offices play a central role in curriculum approvals, program development, disciplinary processes, academic personnel reviews, and other key functions. They also stressed that retaining skilled staff is essential for continuity and expertise within the Senate.
- Executive Director Lin suggested that divisions quantify their workload and outcomes to clearly demonstrate how budget cuts would negatively impact essential functions.
- There was consensus that Senate offices are critical to shared governance and that funding should ideally come directly from the chancellor's office rather than secondary channels.

ACTION: A motion was made and seconded to endorse the statement and principles and forward them to the president for presentation to the Council of Chancellors. The motion passed 19-0.

X. Reports from Senate Division Chairs

Budget, Enrollment, and Infrastructure Challenges: Several chairs highlighted concerns about increasing faculty workloads and inadequate classroom space as enrollment growth outpaces faculty hiring. Budget constraints are prompting discussions about strategic cuts as alternatives to across-the-board reductions that could worsen inequities. There are also calls for greater transparency in athletics budgets and their prioritization relative to academic programs. Chairs also raised concerns about deteriorating research infrastructure, outdated labs, and unsafe working conditions.

Federal Executive Orders: Chairs reported widespread concerns about federal executive orders potentially affecting research funding, DEI, and institutional autonomy. Several divisions stressed the need for stronger faculty advocacy to counteract political and financial pressures that could undermine academic freedom and other core UC values.

Campus Climate: Several campuses are discussing time, place, and manner policies in anticipation of student protests. UCSD has established a Senate-student workgroup, in collaboration with the Associated Students and the Graduate Student Association, to develop guidelines and resources that foster a culture of care in the classroom. One campus reported a concerning increase in hate speech in course evaluations and online student forums, with discussions underway on how to mitigate harm to faculty.

Administrative & Research Support: Chairs reported challenges with research administration, grant processing, and post-award financial management, due to staff turnover and outdated financial systems. Some faculty continue to face bureaucratic hurdles in accessing research funds and navigating institutional processes.

Shared Governance: Some divisions noted positive shared governance interactions, but others continue to struggle with ensuring faculty voices are included in major policy decisions. Instances were reported where Senate views were disregarded or misrepresented by campus administration.

Wildfire Impact: UCLA experienced significant impacts from recent wildfires in Los Angeles, including the loss of homes for faculty and staff. During the emergency, the Senate was involved in decisions to transition to remote instruction amid conflicting and sometimes inaccurate communications about campus operating status.

Leadership Searches: UCR and UCSB emphasized the importance of chancellor searches in shaping the future direction of their campuses. Faculty want transformative leaders who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of those campuses.

UCSF Memorials: Several campuses are hosting town hall meetings to discuss the memorials proposed by UCSF.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm
Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director
Attest: Steven W. Cheung, Academic Council Chair