UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

Academic Council
Minutes of Meeting
November 17, 2025

I. Consent Calendar

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. October 22, 2025 Academic Council minutes

ACTION: Council approved the consent calendar.

II. Senate Officers' Announcements

- **Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Chair**
- **Susannah Scott, Academic Council Vice Chair**
- **Monica Lin, Academic Senate Executive Director**

State Governmental Relations: Senate leadership met with UC State Governmental Relations (SGR) about several proposed state bond measures. UC seeks inclusion in an infrastructure bond and a housing bond critical to systemwide needs and supports Senator Wiener's proposal (Senate Bill 607) to establish a $23 billion California Science Foundation. Once SB 607 is introduced, UC is planning a campaign across all campuses within statutory limits to highlight campus research.

Trellix/ IT Governance: Senate leaders are consulting with CIO Van Williams about faculty concerns related to Trellix and data privacy. President Milliken is considering a response to the Assembly resolution on this issue. Broader efforts are underway to strengthen IT governance, empower divisional Senate IT committees, and support the University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications' roadmap for improved Senate engagement in IT oversight.

Global Climate Leadership Council (GCLC): The fall GCLC meeting highlighted UCI's opening of UC's first all-electric hospital and continuing expansion of off-site renewable energy projects. At the meeting, UCM Chancellor Muñoz announced that the campus has achieved carbon neutrality (with some use of offsets). The GCLC also discussed sustainable procurement challenges; upcoming efforts to reduce Scope 3 emissions, including fleet turnover; and ongoing "living lab" initiatives across campuses. Vice Chair Scott informed the GCLC about an upcoming proposal for a systemwide Senate standing committee on Climate and Sustainability.

Opportunity for All Litigation: The California Supreme Court transferred the Opportunity for All case regarding employment of undocumented students back to the Court of Appeal. UC is still reviewing how the order aligns with federal law.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The Senate AI workgroup expects to bring its report to Council in December 2025. President Milliken has expressed interest in forming a broad presidential task force on AI, including Senate and external representation, to guide UC strategy.

November Regents Meeting: The meeting will include discussion of the 2026–27 UC budget, renewal of the tuition stability plan, and updates on the UC retirement plan, retiree health, and investment performance. The agenda also includes a presentation on UCAD Plus to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and a UC Inspires session featuring Nobel Prize laureates.

Special Assembly Meeting: Faculty petitioners have requested a special Assembly meeting, scheduled for November 20, to discuss a proposed resolution concerning the perceived release of personally identifiable information (PII) in connection with federal Title VI investigations. Vice Chair

Scott summarized the analysis of the resolution requested of UC Legal, which identified several inaccuracies and mischaracterizations. Council leadership is considering ways to address these issues at the November 20 special meeting. President Milliken has also responded to Council's October 27 statement on disclosure of PII at UC Berkeley.

III. Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs & Systemwide Academic Personnel

- **Monica Varsanyi, Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs**
- **Amy K. Lee, Deputy Provost, Systemwide Academic Personnel**

Systemwide Library Facilities: Shari Laster has been appointed Systemwide Director of Library Facilities following a national search. The northern and southern storage facilities have been consolidated into a single unit managed at Berkeley.

Comparison 8 Analysis: The annual comparison of UC faculty salaries to public and private peers shows that UC's overall salary gap has narrowed from 8.5% below peers in 2015–16 to 2.5% today. UC remains ahead of public comparators but continues to lag private institutions.

Total Remuneration Study: The systemwide Total Remuneration Study is stalled due to disagreements over methodology. Senate faculty experts on the study's advisory committee object to Deloitte's proposed approach and have proposed an alternative. While both methodologies will now be included, Senate representatives remain concerned about how the results will be framed and communicated.

Task Force on Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs (PUDP): PUDP co-chairs Vice Provost Varsanyi and Senate Vice Chair Scott described the task force's work to develop metrics for evaluating undergraduate degree program quality, with particular attention to fully online programs. Current subgroups are focused on (1) metrics and measurement principles for online programs and (2) the respective roles of UC Online and the Academic Senate.

Visa and Immigration Updates: Deputy Provost Lee provided several updates:

- **H-1B fee rule**: Updated Frequently Asked Questions reflect more favorable guidance including fee exemptions for certain visa transfers and existing visa holders.
- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD) rule**: U.S. Customs and Immigration Service has ended automatic extensions for several EAD categories. UC has identified all potentially affected employees and will advise them to file renewal requests at least 120 days in advance.
- **Offer letter language**: New systemwide templates addressing visa sponsorship have been sent to campus academic personnel offices.
- **Federal legislation**: In response to concerns about the short comment window on the Colleges for the American People Act and the American Tech Workforce Act, UC Federal Governmental Relations confirmed that UC may submit comments on a rolling basis. A coordinated set of campus comments is being prepared for the December 8 deadline.

Discussion Highlights

- Deputy Provost Lee confirmed that the Comp 8 methodology, jointly developed with the Senate, does not adjust for cost of living and relies on publicly available AAUP data. A Council member pointed out that private institutions in the comparator group tend to be located in areas with cost of living more similar to UC than the publics.
- Council members emphasized that the PUDP should build on existing Senate principles of educational quality, especially the University Committee on Educational Policy's recent guidance on online instruction, rather than create new criteria independently.

- Members raised questions about overlap between the PUDP and UCAD Plus. Vice Provost Varsanyi and Vice Chair Scott agreed that initial discussions suggest limited duplication. Vice Chair Scott noted that UCEP conceptualized quality principles, PUDP is operationalizing them, and UCAD Plus may focus on implementation, i.e., PUDP will define how quality is assessed while UCAD Plus may inform how campuses act on those assessments.

IV. Executive Session

- **Melissa Matella, Associate Vice President of Employee and Labor Relations**
- **Amy K. Lee, Deputy Provost, Systemwide Academic Personnel**

V. Consultation with UC Senior Managers

- **Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs**

UCAD Plus: UCAD Plus is now underway and strong faculty participation will be essential. Because the initiative was launched later than expected, the timeline has been extended to allow more opportunities for campus feedback and Senate input. The revised calendar now spans most of the academic year. The work is increasingly important as campuses confront intense budget pressures.

Faculty Discipline: Provost Newman described a productive discussion with several UC Regents on proposed revisions to APM - 015 and 016. Regents agreed to adopt systemwide review recommendations that preserve campus authority while allowing use of a systemwide reserve P&T pool when needed to ensure timely case resolution. The goal is to improve timeliness without undermining campus jurisdiction. The Regents did not address Attachments A–D, which will require further discussion with Senate leadership.

Total Remuneration Study: Provost Newman instructed Deloitte to produce a second analysis aligned with the methodology supported by Senate experts. The final report will include both analyses. She underscored the importance of ensuring faculty confidence in the study while also acknowledging Deloitte's professional standards.

PPFP Hiring Incentive: Provost Newman acknowledged faculty concerns over the possible elimination of the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) hiring incentive. She explained that the issue was driven primarily by financial constraints at the campuses and UCOP. She reaffirmed the longstanding value of the PPFP and noted that costs increased substantially after the cap on funded hires was lifted. She noted that the president is assessing decisions in light of extensive faculty feedback. The President is expected to provide clarification soon.

Discussion Highlights

- In response to questions, Provost Newman noted that legal review had raised concerns about the use of search waivers for PPFP hires. UC is moving toward this approach that is consistent with campus hiring norms. Waiver use will now be limited.
- Members emphasized the importance of PPFP incentives for faculty hiring in the humanities and social sciences and expressed concern for PPFP fellows who accepted UC offers of postdoctoral employment based on longstanding expectations.
- Council members also raised concerns about APM - 015/016 Attachments A–D, particularly the treatment of extramural speech and the structure of aggravating and mitigating factors. Provost Newman reiterated that these issues would require additional consultation.

VI. Consultation with UC Senior Managers

- **Nathan Brostrom, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, UC Finance**

State Budget: UC will ask the Regents to approve a state budget request seeking a 10% increase in operating funds and $1.3 billion in one-time capital support. Although UC has exceeded the enrollment targets in the multi-year compact with the governor, the state has not delivered roughly $400 million owed under the agreement due to deferrals and unmet commitments, including buyouts tied to reducing nonresident enrollment.

Tuition Stability Plan: At its upcoming meeting, the Regents will consider renewing the cohort-based Tuition Stability Plan, which successfully boosted campus operating revenue, expanded financial aid, and improved cost predictability for families. Proposed adjustments include:

1. Maintaining the 5% cap on annual cohort increases but allowing "banking" of up to 1% to account for inflation above 5% for future use;
2. Reducing return-to-aid from 45% to 40%, to strengthen campus budgets;
3. Adding 1% above the inflation-based increase to support campus capital needs.

Pension and Retiree Health: UC's financial position remains strong, largely due to investment gains. UCRP achieved a 12.7% return, reaching 90% funded (market) and 85.4% funded (actuarial). The CFO will recommend a 0.5% increase in employer contributions, with no changes for employee contributions. Retiree health costs have risen about 14% due to medical inflation and enrollment growth. The CFO is also considering suspending future STIP borrowing to preserve liquidity.

Fundraising and Capital Markets: UC plans a $2 billion bond issuance in December. CFO Brostrom expressed interest in exploring systemwide matching models for research fundraising, similar to endowed chair and student support programs. He also highlighted volatility in federal research funding, noting that more than 1,600 awards totaling over $1 billion were suspended or terminated this year (although many were reinstated), creating significant operational challenges.

Discussion Highlights

- In response to questions about PPFP costs, CFO Brostrom said he would provide additional details and noted that UCOP's operating budget is close to $240 million after pass-through funds are excluded.
- He addressed the UCLA Title VI litigation, noting that the Temporary Restraining Order blocking the $1.2 billion demand from the U.S. Department of Justice significantly reduces near-term financial risk.
- Members raised concerns about long-term sustainability of campus fundraising capacity; CFO Brostrom noted that while UCOP cannot conduct fundraising centrally, a presidential matching model could help campuses secure new resources for systemwide research priorities.

VII. President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

- **Kristen Holmquist, Chair, UCAADE**

Council reviewed a letter from the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE), outlining concerns about the process and rationale behind potential changes to the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP), particularly the possible termination of the hiring incentive. Council members agreed with the concerns raised in the letter and emphasized the lack of consultation and the unclear and often conflicting communication from UCOP and campuses about the status of the PPFP. Several noted that mixed messaging has caused uncertainty for departments and PPFP fellows. Council stressed the need for transparency regarding legal advice, cost analyses, and the decision-making timeline; the importance of reaffirming PPFP's role in faculty hiring; and the need to protect current fellows from abrupt

program changes. Members also raised broader shared governance concerns and underscored the importance of establishing constructive, consultative processes with the new president.

ACTION: Council voted unanimously to endorse the UCAADE letter and transmit it to President Milliken, along with a cover letter requesting prompt clarification of the status of the PPFP hiring incentive and highlighting the shared governance issues involved.

VIII. CSU Doctoral Program Reviews

- **Partho Ghosh, Chair, Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA)**

Chair Ghosh presented CCGA's review of seven proposed professional or applied doctoral programs submitted by the California State University (CSU) under state Assembly Bill 656, which permits CSU to offer new doctoral degrees that do not duplicate UC doctoral programs. CCGA focused on whether any UC program existing or listed in campus five-year plans might overlap with the CSU proposals in scope or intent. CCGA concluded that two proposed programs (an EdD in Educational Technology at CSU Fullerton and a Doctor of Engineering in Human Factors at CSU San Jose) would not duplicate UC offerings, while the five others potentially duplicate UC degrees in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and biotechnology.

Council members discussed how to interpret "duplication," noting the complexity of distinguishing applied or licensure-oriented doctorates from UC's research-focused degrees, as well as questions about target student populations, professional versus academic objectives, program capacity, and the need for clearer expectations between UC and CSU in future cycles. Members also raised concerns about how UC should balance protecting its authority over research doctorates with the state's broader workforce needs.

ACTION: Council voted to endorse CCGA's recommendations and will forward its decision to Provost Newman. The vote was 17 in favor and 1 opposed.

IX. Presidential Interim Policy for UC's Use of Online Program Management Companies

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees regarding the systemwide review of the Presidential Interim Policy for UC's Use of Online Program Management (OPM) Companies.

Senate reviewers expressed general support for the interim OPM policy as a necessary response to the State Auditor's findings and an important step toward ensuring academic integrity, transparency, and regulatory compliance in UC's online program partnerships. However, they found that several areas require clarification before a final policy is issued. Reviewers called for clearer definitions of the policy's scope, stronger Senate oversight of OPM-affiliated instruction, and explicit protections for student data, intellectual property, and faculty control of course content. They also recommended aligning instructor hiring and evaluation practices with existing Senate regulations, strengthening enforcement and accountability mechanisms, and increasing transparency about OPM contracts and campus practices across the system.

ACTION: Council agreed to forward the systemwide comments and a summary to Provost Newman.

X. Revisions to APM - 015 and 016 & Interim Systemwide Guidelines on Faculty Discipline

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees on the systemwide review of proposed revisions to APM - 015 and 016 and the interim systemwide guidelines on faculty

discipline. In addition, Chair Palazoglu charged the University Committee on Privilege and Tenure (UCPT) to convene a workgroup to conduct a detailed analysis. Reviewers agreed on the importance of a timely, consistent, and transparent process for adjudicating faculty misconduct cases, but raised concerns that the proposed timelines, procedural changes, and new guidelines could compromise due process, Senate authority, and academic freedom.

A central concern was Attachments A–D, which many found overly prescriptive while also ambiguous, and potentially chilling to academic freedom and extramural speech. Reviewers also highlighted the confusion created by new aggravating and mitigating factor frameworks.

The UCPT workgroup opposed creating a Systemwide Network Privilege and Tenure (P&T) Committee, warning it would weaken campus autonomy, and instead recommended a Systemwide Reserve P&T Pool coordinated by UCPT to assist campuses as needed. The workgroup report called for substantially revising or withdrawing the attachments. UCPT and several reviewers also endorsed a memo from Professors Seana Shiffrin (UCLA Law) and Brian Soucek (UCD Law), which provides an analysis of academic freedom and constitutional protections for faculty speech. Their recommendations stress that discipline related to expressive activity should be imposed only when conduct clearly and significantly impairs University functions.

Discussion highlights:

- Council agreed that the UCPT report and the Shiffrin–Soucek analysis should guide final revisions to APM - 015, APM - 016, and the associated guidelines, to align faculty discipline with constitutional protections, academic freedom, and shared governance.

ACTION: Council agreed to forward the systemwide comments and a summary to Vice Provost Varsanyi and Deputy Provost Lee.

XI. University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) Issues

- **Karen Bales, UCFW Chair**

Statement on the Total Remuneration Study: Council reviewed a statement from the Senate members of the Total Remuneration Advisory Committee (TRAC), endorsed by UCFW and its Task Force on Investment and Retirement (TFIR), recommending an alternative analysis to Deloitte's proposed methodology for the Total Remuneration Study. Chair Bales explained that subject matter experts in TRAC have raised concerns about Deloitte's approach to blend all UCRP tiers, which obscures competitiveness for new hires, and average retirement benefits in ways that misrepresent actual employee incentives and behavioral effects. Provost Newman has directed Deloitte to produce both its own analysis and the Senate-requested analysis; however, UCFW and TFIR are concerned that the two approaches will not measure the same thing and should not be presented as equally valid. The UCFW statement calls for using the Senate's methodology as the basis for policy deliberations, ensuring the opportunity for Senate review of both analyses, and highlighting the need for earlier Senate involvement in future study design.

ACTION: Council endorsed the statement and will transmit to Provost Newman, Vice President Lloyd, and Chief Operating Officer Nava.

Statement on Continued Gender-Affirming Care, Research, & Teaching at UC: Council reviewed a statement endorsed by UCFW and its Health Care Task Force (HCTF) supporting UC's continued commitment to providing health care, conducting research, and engaging in instruction about gender-affirming care across UC medical schools, health centers, and clinical programs.

ACTION: Council endorsed the statement and will transmit it with a cover letter to President Milliken and Executive Vice President Rubin.

XII. UCFW Health Care Task Force (HCTF)

- **Vickie Mays, UCFW HCTF Chair**
- **Gerald Kominski (UCLA), HCTF Member**
- **Patrick Romano (UCD), HCTF Member**

HCTF members outlined HCTF's priorities and its review of UC's 2026 Health Benefits Plan. They explained elements of UC's shift to a portfolio management model for setting premiums, which smooths annual variations across plans but can create inequities. For 2026, this model has resulted in substantial premium increases for some Kaiser Permanente enrollees, while moderating increases for UC Care and the PPO plans. HCTF is stressing the need for clearer actuarial modeling to evaluate whether cross-subsidization among plans is equitable and sustainable.

HCTF members highlighted positive developments, including lower-than-expected premium increases systemwide, stabilization of the Health Savings Plan after the merger with the CORE plan, and anticipated network improvements under Blue Shield's new administration of the PPO plans. They also noted concerns including UC's ability to sustain an 84% premium subsidy amid rising medical costs; the disproportionate impact of Kaiser increases on lower-paid and younger employees who rely on Kaiser; restrictive GLP-1 (weight-loss medication) coverage; and uneven provider access in certain regions.

HCTF emphasized the need for early Senate involvement in plan design, transparent actuarial assumptions, an equity framework that evaluates the differential impacts of rate changes across employee salary bands, and a multi-year planning horizon to prevent abrupt premium changes and ensure benefits design aligns with workforce needs.

XIII. Systemwide Review of UCAD Interim Report and Recommendations

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and systemwide committees in response to the systemwide review of the interim report of the Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD). Reviewers commended UCAD for addressing timely questions about institutional resilience but noted that the report blends short-term crisis responses with longer-term structural proposals, creating uncertainty about its intended scope. Several noted that exploratory ideas in the report could be interpreted as actionable recommendations, particularly in light of the launch of the joint Senate-administration UCAD Plus before Senate deliberations were complete.

There was broad support for proposals to provide bridge and recovery funding for disrupted research, along with calls for clearer criteria, attention to campus inequities, and inclusion of all disciplines and career stages. Reviewers reaffirmed Achievement Relative to Opportunities (ARO) as essential for equitable evaluation during disruptions and recommended clearer guidance and wider applicability. The most significant concerns centered on program resizing and restructuring, which some feared could be interpreted as endorsing program elimination or financially driven consolidation. Reviewers stressed that academic program decisions must remain faculty-led and campus-based and that UC's comprehensive disciplinary breadth is fundamental to its mission.

Reviewers supported efforts to strengthen instructional continuity but emphasized that instructional quality, Senate authority, and realistic resource modeling must guide any cross-campus instructional collaboration. Additional suggestions included broadening the definition of

disruptions, more fully integrating the perspectives of and impacts on graduate students and staff, strengthening communication protocols, embedding equity and academic freedom considerations, and identifying clearer metrics for resilience.

Council members noted the need for better coordination among UCAD, UCAD Plus, and related initiatives and emphasized the importance of allowing workgroups to adjust their charges based on systemwide feedback.

ACTION: Council agreed to forward the systemwide comments and a summary to UCAD and the UCAD Plus steering committee.

XIV. Reports from Division Chairs

At UCSD, there has been significant fallout from a Senate–Administration Admissions Workgroup report on undergraduate math preparedness. The report describes the sharp rise in first-year students requiring remedial math, which is straining departmental resources and affecting STEM and engineering programs. The report attributes the trend to COVID learning loss, the elimination of the SAT, increased admits from Local Control Funding Formula Plus (LCFF+) schools, and widespread grade inflation in high schools. UCSD is proposing a new math index to better identify students who need support and to realign admissions practices while preserving access and social mobility. The report has attracted national attention, raising concerns about perceptions of public schools and UC's relationships with California K–12 partners.

Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools Chair Volz noted that BOARS is planning a discussion with campus admissions directors and the State Board of Education about strengthening Area C (math) expectations and better aligning admissions standards with demonstrated competencies.

Other division chairs reported a range of concerns, including uncertainty surrounding the future of the PPFP hiring incentive and the effect that ambiguity is having on departments and current fellows. Several campuses noted budget pressures affecting core Senate programs, including the possibility of pausing faculty research grants. Chairs also described challenges with residency reclassification and confusing communication to students about new documentation requirements. Additional issues included increasingly complex disability-related instructional accommodations, rising administrative burdens related to lecture recording and digital accessibility compliance, and local discussions about AI governance, exam integrity, and instructional continuity planning.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm
Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director
Attest: Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Chair