UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

Academic Council
Minutes of Meeting
December 17, 2025

I.   Consent Calendar

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. November 17, 2025 Academic Council minutes
3. Simple Name Change: UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine

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**

UCAD and UCAD Plus: The UCAD Plus steering committee issued a [letter to the UC community](#) with updates on early workgroup progress. Senate divisions have expressed interest in strengthening humanities representation on UCAD Plus workgroups. UCAD is moving toward finalizing its report, which will include new sections addressing UC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mission and visibility, and graduate education. UCAD is also preparing position papers on UC Health, and the UC budget and Sacramento relations for discussion by the UCAD Plus Task Force.

Regents Innovation Awards: The [Regents Innovation Awards](#) announced at the November 2025 Regents meeting recognize UC faculty and researchers for use-inspired research, civically-responsible entrepreneurship, and translation of research into solutions with societal benefit.

Task Force on the Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs (PUDP): The PUDP's draft recommendations emphasize assessment of undergraduate programs, particularly in online modalities. Additional recommendations address the Senate's role in setting systemwide standards and UC Online's role in supporting technology and course delivery. A draft report is being revised and is expected to be ready for systemwide review in winter quarter.

PPFP Follow-up: The University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) withdrew its letter on the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) that Council discussed in November, following President Milliken's announcement that the PPFP hiring incentive will remain in place. Senate leadership is engaging with the president and provost on next steps, program parameters, and expectations for a future review committee.

Assembly Meeting: Senate leadership clarified procedural handling of a postponed resolution from the November 20, 2025 special Assembly meeting. A subsequent request for another special meeting was ruled out of order after consultation with the parliamentarian. The resolution will be discussed as unfinished business at the January 15, 2026 regular Assembly meeting.

Math Preparation: Senate leadership and UCSD are discussing concerns raised in a November 2025 UCSD Senate-Administration Workgroup on Admissions [report](#) on undergraduate math preparedness. Relatedly, Council Chair Palazoglu distributed a [BOARS statement](#) to divisions reaffirming that UC's mathematics admission requirements remain unchanged.

III.   Executive Session

IV.   Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs & Systemwide Academic Personnel
- o **Monica Varsanyi, Vice Provost, [Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs](#)**
- o **Amy K. Lee, Deputy Provost, [Systemwide Academic Personnel](#)**

Systemwide Academic Personnel presented revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) - 015 and 016 and the Interim Systemwide Guidelines on Faculty Discipline. The revisions were developed in response to [feedback](#) from the systemwide review and incorporate recommendations from the University Committee on Privilege and Tenure ([UCPT](#)). Senate leadership and a Regents working group found the revisions acceptable. Key elements include the following:

- Replace the previously proposed Systemwide Network Privilege and Tenure Committee with a Systemwide Reserve Privilege and Tenure Pool, coordinated by UCPT, to support campus-level P&T committees and facilitate timely formation of hearing committees, while maintaining a preference for campus-based proceedings.

- Replace open-ended disciplinary benchmarks with recommended timeframes for initial assessments, investigations, and filing of charges. These timelines are framed as "should," rather than mandatory requirements; may be modified by applicable policies or campus procedures; and may be extended for good cause under [Senate Bylaw 336](#).

- Revise APM - 015 to align with Senate Bylaw 336 by requiring P&T hearings to begin within 60 calendar days of filing charges, unless extended for good cause, replacing the prior 90-day standard. The revisions also require appointment of the hearing committee chair within 14 days and the full committee within 50 days of filing charges.

- Remove the requirement for a single investigation model, instead encouraging, but not mandating, streamlined investigations and committing to the development of a separate systemwide best practices document.

- Revise disciplinary sanctioning guidelines to clarify that they apply only <u>after</u> a policy violation is found, and to refine mitigating and aggravating factors to support greater consistency across campuses. Guidance on good-cause extensions was also revised and expanded.

- Reaffirm academic freedom and principles for extramural speech. Concerns about ambiguity in determining when expressive activity constitutes a policy violation will be addressed through a new joint Senate–administration workgroup, beginning in January, with any resulting guidance subject to separate systemwide review.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members questioned the practical impact of the revised timeframes and the role of sanctioning guidelines. Deputy Provost Lee clarified that the guidelines apply only after a violation is established and reflect existing practice.
- Members raised questions about information-sharing with UC Police. Deputy Provost Lee clarified that recommendations focus on enabling campuses to obtain necessary information to proceed with disciplinary processes, not on automatic reporting to law enforcement.

Degree Plus: Vice Provost Varsanyi provided a brief update on the Degree Plus pilot program, a two-year pilot workforce-readiness initiative at UCSB and UCSD, noting that early undergraduate enrollment results are strong, with both campuses approaching or exceeding initial participation targets.

V. Report of the Academic Senate Artificial Intelligence (AI) Workgroup
- ### James Steintrager, Chair, [AI Workgroup](#)

Chair Steintrager summarized the AI Workgroup's final [report](#), emphasizing that it is intended as a framework for ongoing, Senate-led work rather than a set of fixed policy prescriptions. The report is designed to prompt continued discussion within the Senate, with the administration, and potentially with the Regents. Organized around three guiding principles—trustworthiness, adaptability, and agency—the report emphasizes faculty labor and Senate governance as central to responsible engagement with AI. Rather than offering definitive solutions, it identifies areas requiring further development and continued Senate leadership. Workgroup members remain available for further consultation. The report addresses four primary areas:

- **Research:** Opportunities for AI to support research activities, alongside concerns about adequate investment, environmental impacts, ethics, and long-term costs.
- **Instruction:** The inevitability of AI in the classroom and the need for critical AI literacy for faculty and students.
- **Admissions:** Reaffirmation of Senate responsibility for admissions and discussion of potential uses of AI to streamline application review and evaluation.
- **Data Stewardship:** AI-related challenges involving data security, privacy, intellectual property, and open access.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members commended the report and discussed the likelihood of increased faculty workload related to AI, particularly in instruction, and whether a new Senate structure may be needed given the pace of change.
- The BOARS chair noted concerns about applicants' use of AI in applications and BOARS' limited capacity to monitor such use at the scale suggested in the report.
- Chair Steintrager emphasized the workgroup's reluctance to recommend enforcement or policing mechanisms and suggested that addressing admissions-related AI issues may require additional Senate structures or workload support.
- Workgroup members raised concerns about the methodology and interpretation of results from a systemwide AI survey conducted by an UCSD Tritonlytics, and Council members expressed interest in further analysis of the underlying survey data.
- Members emphasized the importance of continued Senate leadership and collaboration with the administration. It was noted that AI guidance will need to evolve quickly and may require a new standing Senate committee or special structure to develop, update, and coordinate Senate guidance on AI.

ACTION: Council endorsed the report and approved forwarding it to divisional chairs, Provost Newman, and President Milliken.

VI. Consultation with UC Senior Managers
- ### Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

UCAD Plus: Provost Newman thanked Council members for their engagement with [UCAD Plus](#), describing it as a long-term, faculty-informed effort to address structural challenges facing the University, rather than only a response to recent disruptions.

Fiscal Challenges: Provost Newman underscored the importance of transparent communication with faculty about UC's fiscal constraints. She emphasized candid discussion of tradeoffs through shared governance and highlighted joint administration–Senate budget briefings and open forums

as effective models. She also noted an upcoming report on systemwide and campus efforts to improve administrative efficiency, including potential uses of technology, to be shared with the Council.

Three-Year Degree Completion: She noted an increase in three-year undergraduate graduation rates at UC and indicated that further analysis is planned to better understand the drivers and equity implications.

Academic Congresses: Academic Affairs is planning a March 2026 systemwide congress on math and science preparation and a May 2026 congress on international education.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members observed that restoring faculty trust will depend on visible follow-through; specifically, acting on issues that faculty view as priorities and clearly communicating what actions were taken and with what results, while also demonstrating that administrative efficiencies are being pursued alongside academic initiatives.
- A member noted faculty concerns that UC manager headcounts have increased relative to student enrollment while tenure-track and tenured faculty headcounts have declined, and that administrative changes are less visible than academic ones.
- Members raised questions about the causes and consequences of increasing three-year graduation rates, including the role of credit by exam, dual enrollment, and summer coursework, and stressed examining effects on student experience, outcomes, and equity.
- A member encouraged the provost to review the UC Davis START report on math preparation as an alternative approach to the UCSD report.

VII.   Consultation with UC Senior Managers
  o   **Nathan Brostrom, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, UC Finance**

Capital Markets: UC completed a systemwide bond issuance, increasing the offering from $2.0 billion to $2.2 billion due to strong demand. The issuance drew over $5.5 billion in orders, achieved an all-in interest cost of 3.26%, and affirmed UC's AA credit ratings from Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch, despite negative outlooks for the higher education sector.

Tuition Stability Plan: The Regents approved a seven-year extension of the Tuition Stability Plan with modifications, including retention of the 5% annual cap on cohort increases; authority to bank inflation above the cap; a reduction in the return-to-aid rate from 45% to 40%, with an automatic drop to 33% once the systemwide average reaches that level; and an additional 1% above CPI without restrictions on campus use. Changes take effect for undergraduate resident and nonresident tuition in Fall 2026; graduate tuition will continue to rise with inflation.

State and Federal Budget: The Regents approved UC's 2026–27 state budget request. UC remains nearly $500 million below expected funding levels due to prior cuts and deferred compact commitments from the governor, and has requested full restoration in 2026–27, along with a one-time $1.4 billion capital request. CFO Brostrom also highlighted federal budget risks, including potential impacts to Medi-Cal and Medicare reimbursements, state budget priorities, federal research funding, and indirect cost recovery.

Sustainability and Capital Projects: Several campuses continue to advance toward carbon neutrality, with some projects demonstrating positive long-term returns. UC will prioritize all-electric new construction, financially viable sustainability projects, and remaining federal incentives, including potential geothermal opportunities.

Pension and Investments: UC reported strong pension and investment performance, with the pension fund now over 90% funded on a market basis and solid returns across UC investment portfolios.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members asked about the potential impacts of federal cuts to Medicare, Medi-Cal, and research funding on UC medical centers and state budget priorities. CFO Brostrom noted that changes in these areas could significantly affect medical center finances and emphasized the need for continued monitoring of federal and state developments.
- Members questioned whether sustainability initiatives can continue amid fiscal constraints and how campuses are prioritizing long-term projects. CFO Brostrom responded that several projects remain financially viable and emphasized prioritizing positive-return investments while ensuring new construction does not increase UC's long-term carbon footprint.

VIII. Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees regarding the systemwide review of the [proposed revisions](#) to the Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members expressed support for the intent of the revisions and noted that many updates reflect current practice, including strengthened green building standards, updated transportation provisions, and a shift toward direct emissions reductions. Members also welcomed reduced reliance on indirect compliance mechanisms such as biogas and carbon offsets.
- Members also raised concerns about cost, feasibility, accountability, and flexibility, particularly in the current fiscal environment. Several cautioned that expanded requirements could impose significant capital, operational, and administrative costs, especially for campuses with structural deficits or extensive deferred maintenance.
- Members emphasized the need for clearer accountability mechanisms, cost analyses, and explicit tradeoff assessments, including impacts on core academic priorities. Suggestions included exploring state line-item funding for sustainability projects and clarifying exemptions or streamlined review processes for research and medical facilities.

ACTION: Council will transmit the Senate feedback and a summary letter to Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Brostrom.

IX. Proposed Presidential Policy IMT-1300 Information Technology Accessibility

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees regarding the [proposed revisions](#) to Presidential Policy IMT-1300 Information Technology Accessibility.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members expressed support for the policy's goals and affirmed digital accessibility as a foundational principle for instructional and administrative technology. However, members raised significant concerns about resource and staffing needs, an unrealistic timeline, unclear definitions, and a complex exception process, describing the proposal as an unfunded mandate.

- Members emphasized that compliance responsibilities should not fall primarily on individual faculty and encouraged systemwide solutions, including potential AI-enabled tools, to reduce burden and promote consistency.
- Members noted concerns about academic freedom and pedagogy in disciplines where full accessibility may not be immediately achievable and stressed the need for phased implementation, flexibility, and clear communication that the policy establishes a compliance obligation rather than an instructional mandate.

ACTION: Council will transmit Senate feedback and a summary letter to Chief Information Officer Williams.

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

Council held a follow-up discussion on the proposed revisions to APM - 015 and 016 presented earlier in the meeting by Deputy Provost Lee. Members emphasized that the revisions respond to Regental concerns by improving consistency and timeliness in the faculty discipline process. They characterized the outcome as a significant shared-governance success that preserves faculty self-governance, due process, and academic freedom, while noting concerns about the impact of shortened timelines on campus charges committees, to be managed through existing good-cause extensions.

ACTION: Council endorsed the revisions and will transmit them to the Assembly for consideration at the January 15, 2026 meeting.

XI.   Planned Revisions to Senate Bylaw 336
   o   **Susan Amussen, Chair, University Committee on Privilege & Tenure (UCPT)**

UCPT Chair Amussen outlined planned conforming revisions to Senate Bylaw 336 to align with the proposed changes to APM - 015 and 016. The amendments make minimal adjustments, including formalizing UCPT's role in managing a reserve P&T pool, specifying timelines for committee appointments tied to the APM, clarifying procedures for activating the pool, and adding expectations for timely chancellor responses to P&T recommendations. The Assembly is expected to consider the bylaw revisions at its February 12, 2026 meeting, following anticipated Regental approval of the APM revisions in January 2026.

XII.   Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 140

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees on proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw 140 updating the name and charge of the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE). Reviewers supported removing the term "affirmative action" to align with current law, but many raised concerns that the broader revisions weakened the committee's charge by diluting explicit commitments to diversity, equity, accountability, data collection, and reporting. Several noted that the changes were widely perceived as reactive to external political pressure and risked undermining UCAADE's authority and institutional role.

During the discussion, Council members and the UCAADE chair acknowledged the gap between intent and perception and considered whether to proceed, delay action, or narrow the scope of revisions. A consensus emerged around striking references to "affirmative action" from the committee name and bylaw while leaving the substantive charge largely intact, aside from minor technical clean-ups. Council agreed to receive in January a revised redlined proposal reflecting this

narrower change, pending UCAADE's endorsement, before forwarding it to the Assembly for approval consideration.

XIII.   Proposed Presidential Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees regarding the [proposed Presidential Policy](#) on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct. Reviewers generally agreed that the policy appropriately aligns UC with updated federal research misconduct regulations and modernizes UC's approach. They raised concerns about clarity and scope, noting the absence of a clear policy statement, insufficient definitions, and limited systemwide guidance for campus implementation.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members emphasized the need for clearer due process protections, whistleblower safeguards, and minimum expectations for local procedures, while recognizing the policy's intent to remain narrowly focused on federal compliance. Concerns were also raised about implementation timelines, resource demands, and emerging issues such as the role of AI in research misconduct.
- The UCORP chair emphasized that the policy is intended to be narrowly focused on compliance with updated federal regulations and conduct that meets the defined standards of research misconduct. He cautioned that references to broader research practices or standards outside those definitions could create confusion and dilute the policy's purpose.

ACTION: Council will transmit Senate feedback and a summary letter to Vice President Maldonado.

XIV.   Proposed Revisions to APM Section 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/ Employment

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and committees regarding the [proposed revisions](#) to APM - 036.

Discussion highlights:
- Council members agreed the revisions represent an improvement and are better organized, but raised continuing concerns about ambiguity in defining "official" versus personal letters, unclear verification procedures, and the resulting faculty workload. Members cautioned that these requirements could deter faculty from writing letters, particularly for student employees.
- Members expressed concern that restricting Official Letters of Recommendation based on an individual's status as a respondent, rather than on adjudicated findings, risks implying guilt, undermining due process, and compromising confidentiality.

ACTION: Council will transmit Senate feedback and a summary letter to Vice Provost Varsanyi and Deputy Provost Lee.

XV.   Reports from Senate Division Chairs
- Division chairs reported continued campus budget pressures, faculty concerns about protecting core academic missions amid budget cuts, and the importance of meaningful faculty involvement in budget planning.

- Divisions are considering how best to ensure sustained Senate oversight of AI in instruction, research, and academic policy, including whether to establish new standing committees or integrate AI oversight into existing Senate structures. Chairs emphasized the need for faculty-led guidance and flexible approaches that can adapt to rapid change.

- Chairs raised concerns about academic freedom and classroom speech, including issues related to lecture recording for disability accommodations and broader protections for and extramural speech. Several divisions are developing principles or frameworks to help guide campus responses to requests, disputes, and policy decisions involving these issues.

- Chairs noted concerns about student preparation, particularly in mathematics, and expressed interest in alternative models for math preparation and placement.

- Finally, chairs highlighted ongoing challenges related to faculty morale and trust, perceptions of outsized administrative growth relative to faculty hiring, and broader uncertainty affecting the academic environment.

XVI.   New Business

Goldbook Review: New revisions to the [Universitywide Police Policies and Administrative Procedures](#) ("the Goldbook"), last updated in 2011, will circulate for 90-day systemwide Senate review in 2026. Chair Palazoglu encouraged division and committee chairs to engage committees and other faculty in the review.

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