



**Academic Council
Minutes of Meeting
February 26, 2025**

I. Consent Calendar

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. Minutes of January 29, 2025 meeting

ACTION: Council approved the consent calendar.

II. Senate Officers' Announcements

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

Leadership Searches: The Academic Advisory Committee for the UC presidential search has reviewed ~250 prospects and recommended 30 for further consideration. The search firm is conducting a deeper review of those prospects to prepare the Regents' Special Committee to engage with top candidates. Chancellor searches for UCSB and UCR are ongoing, and President Drake has committed to seating new chancellors before he retires at the end of June 2025.

APC Calendar Workgroup: The Academic Planning Council (APC) Workgroup on Systemwide Academic Calendar is preparing its draft report. Vice Chair Palazoglu, who co-chairs the workgroup, explained that the report will be circulated for systemwide Senate review at the beginning of March with a subsequent Academic Council discussion scheduled for May 28, 2025. The review process will also invite input from the broader University community through a Qualtrics survey. A discussion is expected to occur at the Regents meeting in July 2025.

Faculty Discipline: In late January 2025, the Regents sent President Drake and Chair Cheung a letter requesting a comprehensive review of policies and procedures governing the faculty disciplinary process. A joint Senate-Administration workgroup, co-chaired by Chair Cheung and Interim Vice Provost Haynes, has been meeting regularly. The Regents asked the administration and Senate to perform a specific review of Privilege and Tenure (P&T) procedures including:

1. Evaluate options and develop recommendations for handling situations in which a P&T hearing panel is having difficulties convening, particularly when faculty are unable or unwilling to serve.
2. Clarify and evaluate whether P&T cases should be handled at the divisional or systemwide level, considering the potential benefits and challenges of each.

The workgroup is assessing several models and their tradeoffs: the current model, dominated by location-bound hearings; a hybrid model, with some cases heard by a systemwide UCPT committee; and a fully systemwide model. The Regents plan to discuss the issue later this year in May and again in July.

March Regents Meeting: The March 2025 meeting of the Regents' Academic and Student Affairs Committee will involve an update on the Systemwide Advisory Workgroup on Students with Disabilities report recommendations, including the status of campus policies on Incomplete grade notations on transcripts, fees assessed for "I" grades, and timeframes to resolve Incomplete grades.

Special Assembly Meetings: The February 13, 2025 special Assembly meeting discussed faculty concerns about the President's information security plan, the timing of faculty salary adjustments,

and rising healthcare premiums. Systemwide UC Information Technology Services committed to developing clearer communication, and UC Human Resources committed to more timely engagement with the Senate. A second special Assembly meeting will be held March 25, 2025 to discuss faculty concerns about the consultation process for any proposed common academic calendar for the UC system, a motion to allow each campus currently on a quarter system to vote on whether to adopt a semester calendar, and an additional motion to “recommend that all University of California administrators at the Dean level and above receive salary range adjustments at the same time as the regular faculty.”

UC Faculty Survey Report: The report on the 2024 UC Faculty and Instructor Experience Survey is being finalized by systemwide Senate leadership with input from 2022-23 Senate Chair Susan Cochran and 2023-24 Chair James Steintrager. It is slated for discussion at the April 2, 2025 Council meeting.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members inquired about the scope of divisional versus systemwide Senate authority and the impact of any Senate vote on a common UC academic calendar. Chair Cheung clarified that while Senate divisions may vote on various matters, the systemwide Senate does not compel divisions to hold ballots. Vice Chair Palazoglu added that the Regents retain final authority on the University’s academic calendar. He also emphasized that the APC report is a study rather than a set of specific recommendations about the academic calendar for campuses, and that divisions are free to organize a vote if they wish.
- A Council member suggested that the threshold to call a special Assembly meeting in [Bylaw 110.A.3.c](#) should be based on 25 voting members of the Assembly rather than of the Academic Senate.

III. Systemwide Academic Personnel (SWAP) Updates

- **Amy K. Lee, Deputy Provost, SWAP**
- **Douglas Haynes, Interim Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs & Academic Programs**

Faculty Discipline Review: The joint Senate-Administration Academic Personnel Manual (APM) 015 / APM 016 Workgroup was originally charged to evaluate faculty discipline policies in the specific context of free expression and community safety. It found that that current APM policies address those issues comprehensively. The workgroup’s other initial charge, to address concurrent academic misconduct investigations and personnel actions, will be delayed until fall 2025. The workgroup has shifted its focus to the Regents’ concerns about delays in faculty disciplinary processes and is exploring recommendations for how to accelerate timelines.

Academic Policy Reviews:

- [Proposed revisions to APM 036](#) now under systemwide review comply with the State Assembly Bill (AB) 1905 prohibition on issuing “official” letters of recommendation for job applicants unless the UC author of the letter verifies the applicant has faced no prior sexual harassment allegations.
- [Proposed revisions to APM 500](#) now under systemwide review comply with the State Senate Bill 791 and AB 810 requirements to formalize prospective UC employee pre-hiring disclosure requirements around substantiated allegations of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination.

Discussion highlights:

- A Council member expressed concern that some campuses are using a pause mechanism to halt tenure cases while disciplinary proceedings are pending, creating inconsistencies across the UC system. Interim Vice Provost Haynes confirmed that the workgroup will evaluate the pause practice in fall 2025. Deputy Provost Lee added that the practice described is permissible under existing policy, but underscores the need for a uniform approach.
- Council members emphasized that a systemwide review should accompany any proposed policy change and asked if the workgroup was discussing disciplinary processes for medical staff. Interim Vice Provost Haynes clarified that a systemwide review of any policy recommendations will follow discussion at the May 2025 Regents meeting. Chair Cheung added that tight regental deadlines require the adoption of a general approach now, with additional recommendations possible once more data becomes available. Deputy Provost Lee added that the current review does not extend to medical staff.
- Several Council members expressed concern that the language in APM 500 is overly broad in comparison to new state law. Specifically, they pointed out that proposed UC policy mandates reporting “allegations” of misconduct rather than “substantiated allegations” as stated in the law, and that the policy scope could extend to any misconduct—including violations of time, place, and manner policies—potentially harming recruitment. Deputy Provost Lee encouraged faculty to document these concerns during the systemwide review and provide feedback for refining APM 500. Although the policy is intended to apply only to allegations leading to a finding, the law includes provisions for cases where no finding occurs (e.g., if the employee vacates the position before a finding is made).

IV. Proposed Presidential Policy on Use of Animals in Research and Teaching

Council reviewed feedback from Senate divisions and committees to the proposed *Presidential Policy on Use of Animals in Research and Teaching*. The revisions are intended to: 1) reaffirm UC’s commitment to the humane and responsible use of animals in research, teaching, and testing; 2) expand the policy’s scope to include wildlife and agricultural animals; 3) establish minimum standards for campus Animal Care and Use Programs; and 4) update references to current laws and regulations. Senate reviewers expressed general support for the policy. Chair Cheung summarized several concerns from the letters:

- Reviewers observed that the phrase “for the good of society” was too vague, and called for clearer ethical guidelines to prevent misuse.
- Reviewers recommended that the policy definitions be revised to exclude privately owned animals not used in federally funded research.
- Reviewers requested clarification on distinctions and priorities among research, teaching, and testing within the policy. UCSF suggested that alternatives to American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care accreditation be permitted to avoid research disruptions. UCB highlighted a lack of transparency regarding Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees membership.
- Reviewers also stressed the importance of input from faculty directly affected by the policy to ensure practical implementation and requested clarification on whether the policy applies to UC affiliate sites, volunteers, and visiting scholars.

- Reviewers recommended updates and clarifications to language and terms used in the policy, called for a clearer distinction between “research” and “testing,” and suggested explicitly addressing ecological and environmental impacts.

ACTION: Council will forward the comments and a summary to Vice President for Research and Innovation Maldonado.

V. Consultation with Senior Managers

- **Michael V. Drake, President**
- **Caín Díaz, Associate Vice President, Budget Analysis & Planning**

Merced’s R1 Status: President Drake announced that UC Merced has achieved R1 status from Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in less than 20 years, illustrating its academic excellence. He also emphasized Merced’s leadership in advancing social mobility, noting that UC Merced was named the nation’s top school for social mobility in 2024 by the Wall Street Journal.

Labor Challenges: President Drake expressed disappointment that UPTe and AFSCME chose to call a strike despite UC’s strong offers during negotiations. He noted that the strikes are particularly troubling given mounting pressures on the University, and he stressed that measures are in place to ensure critical services like patient care remain uninterrupted.

Federal Issues:

- President Drake detailed the threat to scientific research posed by proposed cuts to NIH Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost recovery. Although the cuts have been paused following lawsuits filed by 22 state attorneys general and a coalition of higher education institutions, including UC, they could devastate the UC research enterprise and efforts to advance science.
- Similarly, the recent House-passed federal budget resolution includes potential cuts to Medicare and Medicaid that could have a major impact on public health and the University’s health services.
- The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights’ “Dear Colleague” letter targeting the elimination of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs has prompted vigorous legal responses and active engagement with campuses to protect DEI programs and vulnerable populations. President Drake affirmed that UC’s DEI programs fully comply with state and federal law.
- President Drake emphasized that UC’s core values remain unchanged. He encouraged faculty to stay focused on core values and advancing the academic mission.

State Budget

- President Drake acknowledged the challenging state budget situation, including a proposed \$271 million reduction in state funding. He highlighted positive interactions with state legislators who support the University and affirmed UC’s commitment to honoring its shared goals with the Governor’s Office and the Legislature despite funding uncertainties.
- Associate Vice President Díaz emphasized that state funding is only one component of UC’s overall revenue, but shared that over the coming period of several years, UC is expected to generate about \$1.5 billion in core revenues against projected expenditures of \$2.2 billion, highlighting the gap that state support helps to bridge. He explained that the state’s calculation of a 7.95% reduction is inflated because it includes funds already earmarked for debt service

that should be excluded. By focusing on an “unrestricted” base, the effective reduction should be lower than \$271 million. He discussed advocacy efforts to argue for a consistent and fair method of calculating funding reductions and to secure continuing funding commitments under the compact.

Discussion highlights:

- A Council member raised concern that while UC’s response to the NIH funding threat was robust, there seemed to be a lack of similar vigorous action around defending DEI programs. Another member encouraged UC to pursue flexibility around compact goals, such as those mandating reductions in nonresident enrollment.
- President Drake explained that the differing nature of the threats requires distinct responses. The clear legal framework around NIH funding allows for an immediate response, while the ambiguous language of the “Dear Colleague” letter requires a more measured approach. He noted that there have been extensive meetings and legal actions to address threats to DEI programs and emphasized UC’s continuing commitment to those initiatives. He also reiterated UC’s focus on maintaining its compact commitments, including expanding UC access for California students.
- When asked about the proposal for a common academic calendar at UC, President Drake affirmed that the discussion of such is postponed. He explained that there is no rush to make a decision given the complexity of the issue.
- Council members stressed the need for clear advocacy messaging on the state budget and related issues, and suggested expanding communication channels to spread advocacy talking points to a broader audience.

VI. Landscape of Federal Policy Research

- **Phillip Harman, Director of Research, Federal Governmental Relations**
- **Theresa Maldonado, Vice President for Research & Innovation**

The Office of Federal Governmental Relations (FGR) is helping UC navigate new federal policies and executive orders affecting research and budgets. FGR’s strategic outreach efforts include targeting the California congressional delegation to highlight the negative impact of proposed funding pauses and F&A cuts; engaging Congress to protect research funding, preserve policy protections, and counter negative perceptions of higher education; and securing funding to support technology transfer and commercialization initiatives. These efforts emphasize UC’s research contributions, economic impact, and role in public health, climate change, wildfire research, and healthcare advancements. Other efforts include coordinating with campus vice chancellors for research and federal governmental relations offices and identifying faculty champions to communicate UC’s impact effectively.

VII. Reports from Senate Division Chairs

Budget and Financial Issues

- Proposed F&A rate cuts are a major concern across campuses. UCSF highlighted that a drop from a 64.5% rate to 15% could reduce NIH-related distributions by \$120–150 million, severely impacting research.
- Campuses are preparing for 5% budget cuts amid anticipated state funding reductions. At UCSC, a growing budget deficit is sparking discussions about no-confidence resolutions against senior administrators.

- Faculty across campuses are urging UC to invest in additional research infrastructure and research support, and address deferred maintenance.

Communications and Faculty Engagement

- Senate divisions are seeking to enhance communication and faculty dialogue on issues through town hall meetings, surveys, and direct engagement. Town hall meetings have focused on concerns such as F&A funding and the common academic calendar.
- Divisions are discussing how best to disseminate and discuss the APC report on the Future of Doctoral Education, with individual chairs planning dedicated town halls.
- Other direct communication efforts include innovative surveys (e.g., “keep, start, stop”) to capture faculty concerns, individual meetings with department chairs, dissemination of budget updates and information about the Senate’s strategic initiatives, and tailored messages to junior faculty regarding tenure prospects amid grant uncertainties.
- At UCSD, proactive steps are being taken to engage faculty and administrators to support equity, diversity, and inclusion programs.

Common Academic Calendar

- A notable source of frustration and discontent across divisions is the potential implementation of a UC systemwide semester calendar. Faculty fear it will erode campus autonomy, disrupt established practices, negatively affect teaching and research, and be imposed without sufficient consultation. Conflicting messages from faculty associations and Senates have further complicated the issue.

Artificial Intelligence

- Several chairs stressed the need for a coordinated, systemwide approach to artificial intelligence (AI) that addresses issues such as data security and inconsistent campus-specific licensing. There are calls for the UC system to develop its own large language model or negotiate a unified strategy, rather than have each campus work independently. While AI offers potential administrative efficiencies, its rapid rollout without centralized oversight poses significant risks.

Other CampusSpecific Issues

- At UCM, student enrollment challenges in a rural setting require extra recruitment efforts. New initiatives have already increased application numbers, and Merced is introducing new majors and repackaging existing programs to stimulate enrollment. University Extension programs are under review, with debates over the Senate’s role in approving credit-bearing versus non-credit courses.
- At UCB, the negotiated salary program has positively impacted retention; however, inconsistent application of a minimum 10% contingency fund requirement is creating disparities. Faculty at UCB are also concerned about an overemphasis on administrative functions like athletics, which detract from faculty growth and the academic mission.
- UCR anticipates significant budget implications related to a proposed hospital expansion.

VIII. Executive Session

- **Allison Woodall, Deputy General Counsel, UC Legal**

IX. New Business

1. Joint Academic Senate-Administration Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD)

Chair Cheung circulated a proposal for a joint task force charged to both recommend new ideas and review developing plans to sustain UC’s teaching, research, and public service missions amid federal executive orders, anticipated budget cuts, and a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.

2. UCFW Ad Hoc Rapid Response Task Force (RRT)

University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) Chair Pardo-Guerra circulated a proposal for a new ad hoc task force under UCFW that would review and analyze risks posed by new policies, regulations, and laws affecting higher education; advise on their potential impact on UC faculty welfare; and recommend strategies to protect faculty welfare. The task force would report findings and recommendations to UCFW, which in turn would report to the Academic Council.

Discussion highlights:

- Council members agreed that establishing some form of task force is timely given the evolving challenges. Several noted the risk of overlapping charges between the two proposed groups. They underscored the need for clear and distinct charges, defined membership, and flexible meeting structures (e.g., a “coalition of the willing”), to avoid redundancy and ensure effective representation of faculty voices.
- Members expressed general support for the UCAD proposal, noting that it would reassure faculty to see proactive efforts. The group should focus on preserving the core mission of the University, rather than politics or activism. They suggested including UC Health leadership to address potential changes in health sciences budgets. They also highlighted the importance of clear messaging given similar campus initiatives in the past that have sometimes led to misinterpretation.
- Chair Cheung affirmed Council’s support to move forward with the UCAD group and that further refinement of both proposals will be pursued in collaboration with relevant constituent groups.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm
Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director
Attest: Steven W. Cheung, Academic Council Chair