



**Academic Council  
Minutes of Meeting**

June 25, 2025

**I. Consent Calendar**

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. Minutes of May 28, 2025 Council meeting
3. Proposal to rename UCSD's Graduate School of Marine Sciences
4. Proposed UCLA Master of Global Public Affairs

**ACTION: Council approved the consent calendar.**

**II. Senate Officers' Announcements**

- **Steven Cheung, Academic Council Chair**
- **Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Vice Chair**
- **Monica Lin, Academic Senate Executive Director**

**June Assembly meeting:** At its June 12, 2025 meeting, the Assembly approved a [resolution](#) calling on UC to suspend the implementation and use of Trellix and similar monitoring software. The resolution was transmitted to President Drake.

**Faculty Discipline Policies and Procedures:** UCOP issued interim systemwide guidelines for the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Senate-Administration Workgroup on Faculty Discipline Policies and Procedures that were presented to the UC Regents in May 2025. The workgroup report and any draft policy changes related to implementation will be distributed for a standard 90-day systemwide Senate review in fall 2025.

**Student Discipline Policies and Procedures:** A systemwide workgroup has been charged to review student discipline policies, procedures, and outcomes during the summer. UCOP has requested two Senate representatives to serve on the workgroup. Vice Chair Palazoglu will serve as one and a second representative is still pending.

**Global Language Network Pilot Program:** Chair Cheung shared information about the Global Language Network (GLN), a pilot initiative that aims to expand access to less commonly taught languages across the UC system by offering such courses online. UC Online is engaging the Senate on: 1) the development of assessment guidance for online language courses, 2) pre-approval of pilot courses that fulfill general education and major requirements, and 3) the establishment of a standardized framework for determining credit equivalencies between summer and quarter terms.

**Instructional Modalities Successor Task Force:** There is renewed interest among administrators and regents in expanding online teaching and course articulation across UC campuses. A new joint task force on instructional modalities will begin work in the fall, co-chaired by incoming Senate Vice Chair Susannah Scott.

**UCAD:** Four subgroups of the Academic Council Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD) are finalizing respective sections of a draft interim report, which is expected to be ready for Council's review in July 2025.

**July Regents Meeting:** Chair Cheung invited Council members to contribute a paragraph of input to help shape his final remarks to the Regents next month. These remarks will reflect faculty perspectives on the challenges and priorities of the past year.

**Discussion highlights:**

- Council members emphasized the importance of preserving UC's identity as a Research 1 institution and of supporting international students and scholars.
- Some members viewed the renewed focus on online education as potentially helpful to address barriers to enrollment and degree completion, resource constraints, and coverage for certain subjects. However, members raised concerns about the costs associated with high-quality online education, and emphasized the need for Senate and divisional control over the design and approval of online offerings.
- A concern was raised that the GLN pilot could discourage campuses that do not require a language from continuing to invest in or maintain their own local language programs. It was also noted that UC's accreditor requires institutions to request a "substantive change" review of a degree program if 50% or more of the degree's courses can be completed in an online modality.

**III. Budget Updates**

○ **Caín Díaz, Associate Vice President, Budget Analysis & Planning**

**State Budget:** The final UC budget for 2025-26 retains a 3% cut (\$130 million) proposed in the governor's May revision. The state plans to restore the 3% in fiscal year 2026–27. The budget also defers UC's 2025-26 Compact budget increase of \$240 million, with a partial payment of \$96 million in 2026-27 and the remaining \$144 million in 2028-29. A zero-interest loan option for the \$130 million is also included in the budget. The budget includes over \$45 million in one-time funding for various campus-based initiatives, including journalism fellowships, public health programs, transportation research, climate and anti-discrimination work, and more. UC appreciates the value of this funding, but is also concerned that earmarked allocations bypass central coordination. Two affordable student housing projects also remain funded.

**Tuition Stability Plan:** In July, the Regents will review proposed updates to the [Tuition Stability Plan](#), which locks in tuition rates for each undergraduate cohort and adjusts them annually against the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The plan has improved affordability and supported student retention. Potential changes include:

- Raising the annual increase cap from 5% to 7%, to allow greater flexibility in high-inflation years.
- Reducing the incremental return-to-aid rate from 45% to 35%, to redirect more revenue to campus operations.
- Adding an additional 1–1.5% increase above CPI in future years, still subject to the cap, to better match rising costs and address past underinvestment.

A regental vote on changes could occur as early as November 2025, for implementation in the 2026–27 academic year.

**Discussion highlights:**

- Council members asked whether UC should adopt a budget messaging strategy similar to the CSU, which secured funding by signaling institutional hardship and threatening campus closures. AVP Díaz acknowledged the effectiveness of CSU's approach but cautioned that such a strategy may limit future funding opportunities.

- Members questioned whether one-time earmarks are driven by individual lobbying efforts. AVP Díaz confirmed that while some of these items align with UC priorities, others reflect external political relationships. Funding requests ideally should be centralized.
- Council members asked if a firm timeline exists for restoring deferred state funding and if UC could see mid-year cuts if state revenues decline. AVP Díaz explained that while UC expects a restoration in July 2026, there is no guarantee. State revenues are currently tracking with expectations, but there is always a risk of mid-year adjustments.

#### **IV. UC Health Plan Offerings**

- **Richard Kronick, Academic Senate Representative to the Executive Steering Committee on Health Benefits Programs**

**Health Plan Outlook:** UC is projecting a 10.5% average increase in health plan premiums for 2026, significantly outpacing expected wage growth. Covering the full increase would cost UC ~\$290 million. If UC contributes less, employee premiums could rise sharply; for example, a 2% shortfall could lead to a more than 20% increase in employee costs. UC Systemwide Human Resources (HR) is working with UC Health to negotiate lower provider rate increases and exploring budget strategies to reduce the cost burden on employees.

**Plan Design Changes:** Systemwide HR is considering modest increases in out-of-pocket costs (deductibles and co-pays) to shift 1–2% of total costs from premiums to point-of-care. The UCFW Health Care Task Force (HCTF) largely opposes these changes, arguing that current out-of-pocket costs already discourage overuse and are often paid with post-tax dollars.

**Competitiveness and Pay Band Equity:** UC’s health plan consultant, Mercer, found that UC health premiums are less competitive than those at 12 peer institutions, especially in higher pay bands and for preferred provider organization (PPO) plans like UC Care. Kaiser and Blue & Gold remain more competitive for lower-paid employees. Systemwide HR is considering a shift from a “managed competition” model to “portfolio management,” which would align contributions more closely with actuarial values. HCTF is concerned that UC Care may be entering into a death spiral, where relatively healthy enrollees leave and unhealthy enrollees remain, creating a financially unsustainable situation. Raising Kaiser premiums to cross-subsize UC Care would disproportionately affect lower-paid employees, who are more likely to rely on Kaiser as their care provider. A move to flatten contribution differences across pay bands is also under consideration and could increase costs for lower-income employees. HR is also exploring a merger of the Core and Health Savings Plan into a single high-deductible PPO, a change supported by HCTF.

**UCOP Perspective:** Executive Director for Benefits Programs and Strategy Maynard Jenkins emphasized that no final decisions have been made. He noted that premium inflation, provider discount negotiations, and overall budget support are the primary drivers of employee cost increases. He underscored the need to preserve plan choice and improve UC’s market competitiveness, noting that UC’s current offerings rank below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to peer institutions.

#### ***Discussion highlights:***

- Council members expressed concern that employees on campuses without UC medical centers who rely on Kaiser care could be disproportionately affected by premium increases.

- Questions were raised about equity between represented and non-represented employees, especially since union contracts often cap premium increases. Jenkins said UC is seeking to replace these caps with more flexible stipends.
- Members emphasized that changes to plan design alone would not yield meaningful cost reductions and urged UC to focus on negotiating better provider rates.
- Some members questioned whether UC should eventually move to self-insure to eliminate reliance on commercial insurers.
- There was broad support for improving transparency in actuarial data to help faculty better understand plan costs and trade-offs.

## **V. Consultation with UC Senior Managers**

- **Michael V. Drake, President**
- **Katherine Newman, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs**

**International Students:** Provost Newman noted the instability in international student enrollment, driven by visa processing delays and increased government scrutiny, including social media reviews. The disruptions pose academic and budget risks for UC, which enrolls 40,000 international students. She noted that UC has secured approval to allow international students who have completed 50% or more of their degree to finish remotely, even if their program is not formally online. She proposed expanding remote access to selected UC programs, such as certificate pathways, and invited faculty input. She emphasized that any expansion would build on Senate-approved online offerings.

**Junior Faculty Support:** Provost Newman introduced the Junior Faculty Research Excellence Initiative, launching in 2025–26. The program will provide approximately 60 grants of \$50,000 each to early-career faculty across UC. Each campus may nominate up to 10 faculty, with at least two awards guaranteed per campus. The funds may be used flexibly for research-related needs, such as course release, summer salary, travel, or support for students and postdocs. The program aims to support junior faculty, especially those affected by recent disruptions to federal funding.

## **President Drake's Remarks:**

- President Drake acknowledged the challenging global and national environment, including geopolitical instability and federal actions impacting higher education.
- He reported that the final state budget includes a 3% reduction to UC's budget, with a commitment to full restoration in 2026–27, an outcome reflecting continued support from the governor and Legislature.
- UC will implement a 3.2% salary increase for policy-covered staff and academic appointees in 2025–26, helping to maintain competitiveness despite fiscal constraints.
- He highlighted legal victories, including the reversal of federal overhead caps and reinstatement of NIH and NSF grants. UC is currently engaged in over 40 federal legal matters and is working with four external law firms to defend its core mission.
- He noted a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Ames v. Ohio*) affirming that Title VII protections apply equally to all individuals, which aligns with UC's existing compliance under Proposition 209.
- President Drake acknowledged upcoming leadership transitions at UCR and UCSB and reflected on challenges during his tenure, including the COVID-19 pandemic, labor disputes,

and international crises. He thanked the Council for its partnership and reaffirmed his confidence in UC's continued strength.

**Discussion highlights:**

- Council members raised concerns that remote degree completion for international students could set a precedent to expand student remote instruction accommodation requests. They emphasized the need to consider the impacts on faculty workload, pedagogical quality, and equity across student groups. Expanding online or international certificate programs could also shift hiring incentives and create long-term structural changes in academic units.
- Provost Newman agreed to bring these concerns to the successor Instructional Modalities Task Force and committed to consulting UC Legal on the implications of expanded remote instruction. She underscored the need to prepare for potential declines in international enrollment and reiterated that any new programs would undergo standard Senate review processes.
- Council members expressed gratitude to President Drake for his decades of leadership, praising his thoughtful, compassionate, and committed service to the University. President Drake thanked the faculty for their collaboration and reaffirmed his pride in UC and its mission.

**VI. International Students and Scholars**

- **Cynthia Dávalos, Associate Vice President, Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs (GUEA)**

Associate Vice President Dávalos briefed Council on challenges affecting international students and scholars. In spring 2025, over 150 UC students had their immigration records revoked due to minor legal infractions. Following successful lawsuits and public pressure, the federal government reversed course and restored the records. UC had mobilized legal support using a special fund, and while the immediate crisis has passed, UC is now evaluating how best to use the remaining resources, including whether support can extend to faculty and staff.

She confirmed that most affected students appear to have remained in the U.S., though exact numbers are unavailable. Students facing immigration issues should contact the campus International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office, which can provide guidance and referrals to legal resources, including the Immigrant Legal Services Center.

A new federal policy requires in-depth online vetting of visa applicants, including social media reviews. As a result, consulates are reducing the number of visa appointments, significantly slowing the process. These delays could prevent UC students from arriving for fall 2025 and possibly winter term as well, raising questions about options for temporary accommodations. She also noted that UC has 667 enrolled students from the 19 countries subject to the June 2025 travel ban, who risk being unable to return if they leave the U.S.

**Discussion highlights**

- Council members expressed concern about how these developments will affect international faculty and staff. AVP Dávalos indicated that systemwide HR is reviewing the issue and that more communication may be forthcoming.
- Members discussed possible earlier admissions timelines to help mitigate future visa processing delays. AVP Dávalos agreed this was worth exploring and emphasized that while the current situation has stabilized, ongoing caution and flexibility is necessary.

## **VII. Academic Council Special Committee on Transfer Issues (ACSCOTI)**

### **○ Dave Volz, ACSCOTI Chair**

**Proposal to Sunset ACSCOTI:** Chair Volz recommended sunseting ACSCOTI, noting that the committee has fulfilled nearly all elements of its original charge. He proposed that BOARS assume responsibility for any ongoing or future transfer-related work through a dedicated subcommittee. He emphasized that BOARS includes faculty with relevant expertise and is well-positioned to carry forward this work.

**New Transfer Pathway Focused on Biological Sciences:** ACSCOTI proposed consolidating four UC Transfer Pathways—biology, biochemistry, cell biology, and molecular biology—into a single Biological Sciences Transfer Pathway, given that all share identical course expectations. The consolidation will simplify guidance and communication to prospective transfers. The revised pathway will also allow students to complete either a one-year sequence of organic chemistry with lab or calculus-based physics with lab, depending on the requirements of their intended major and the specific UC campus.

### ***Discussion highlights***

- A Council member asked whether BOARS is prepared to manage increased attention to transfer issues. Chair Volz affirmed that BOARS is well-equipped to do so and noted its ongoing involvement in transfer policy and intersegmental coordination.

**ACTION: Council approved both proposals.**

## **VIII. Academic Council Special Committee on Laboratory Issues (ACSCOLI)**

### **○ Lorenzo Valdevit, ACSCOLI Chair**

Chair Valdevit provided an overview of UC's role in managing three Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratories: Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore, and Los Alamos. These labs collectively operate with over \$10 billion in annual funding and employ more than 30,000 staff.

ACSCOLI provides Senate oversight of UC's lab partnerships. Its responsibilities include advising lab leadership on policy, promoting UC-Laboratory collaboration, and assessing the value of UC's continued role in lab management. In 2024–25, the committee held three meetings and participated in site visits, advisory board consultations, and discussions on research security, restricted research policies, and UC Lab-funded academic programs.

Chair Valdevit highlighted several initiatives, including the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Science at Scale pilot, two Early Career Faculty Programs at Los Alamos and Livermore, the Lab Fees Research Program (LFRP), and the SoCal Hub, which strengthens ties between southern UC campuses and the labs. He noted a possible restructuring of the LFRP under the UC National Labs office to enhance responsiveness and focus.

ACSCOLI also discussed challenges such as new federal restrictions barring citizens from “countries of concern” from National Nuclear Security Administration labs, budget uncertainty, and a shift in DOE priorities from clean energy toward nuclear, geothermal, and AI research. All three labs are investing in AI, with Los Alamos forming partnerships with NVIDIA and OpenAI.

Chair Valdevit emphasized opportunities for UC-Lab engagement, including joint faculty appointments and summer schools and broader dissemination of research opportunities. He

described the UC-Lab relationship as healthy and productive, with strong leadership and shared interest in expanding collaboration.

### ***Discussion highlights***

- Council members encouraged more publicity of faculty engagement opportunities with the labs. Chair Valdevit agreed and said ACSCOLI could play a stronger role in outreach. Members also raised concerns about the stability of UC's lab management contracts. Chair Valdevit said no changes were anticipated and noted that UC recently secured a contract renewal, although litigation is pending over UC's bid to manage the Frederick National Lab.

## **IX. Proposed Revisions to APM - 360, Appointment and Promotion, Librarian Series**

Council reviewed feedback from nine Senate divisions and three systemwide committees to the [proposed revisions to APM - 360](#). Senate reviewers supported the overall intent to clarify ambiguities without redefining the librarian series. However, some raised concerns that some proposed changes may unintentionally diminish the instructional and scholarly roles of librarians.

Council members emphasized the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between the responsibilities of professional librarians and those of Senate faculty, particularly in peer-reviewed research and for-credit instruction. Members acknowledged that librarians perform diverse and valuable work, and that some do engage in research or serve as instructors of record. There was broad support for recognizing this diversity without establishing scholarly activity as a default expectation for all librarians.

Council also noted that librarians work across a wide range of physical and digital environments and suggested more inclusive language to reflect this. Several members supported the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) recommendation to preserve flexibility in evaluating librarians based on their specific roles. Some suggested that librarians who regularly engage in instruction or research might instead hold additional instructional or research titles, rather than expanding the scope of the librarian series.

**ACTION: Council agreed to send all comments and a summary letter to Deputy Provost Lee and Vice Provost Varsanyi.**

## **X. Reports from Senate Division Chairs**

**Budget Challenges:** Nearly all campuses are preparing for or implementing budget cuts, and several campuses are reporting structural deficits. Several have initiated layoffs, particularly in health systems, and are planning for deeper reductions. Several Senates are involved in scenario planning around fiscal uncertainty tied to federal funding shifts and changes in healthcare reimbursement.

**Federal Policy:** Chairs reported anxiety and disruption related to federal actions, especially the termination or suspension of NIH grants, particularly those linked to diversity, equity, and inclusion; confusion around the reinstatement of rescinded grants; and immigration enforcement activity, including concerns about visa denials that affect international students and scholars.

**Cybersecurity:** Several divisions passed resolutions opposing the implementation of Trellix and EDR monitoring software. Concerns include personal device privacy and control and inadequate Senate consultation.

**Artificial Intelligence:** Many campuses are discussing the impacts of AI on instruction and the future of remote and hybrid learning. Several chairs emphasized the importance of defending in-person instruction as AI reshapes how students approach coursework. It was noted that UCB has adopted a policy requiring declarations of AI use on syllabi.

**Remote Instruction, Research, and Faculty Workload:** UCSD approved a one-time exception to allow remote instruction for international students, and UCB is considering similar guidance. Several chairs raised concerns about sustaining the Research 1 status of their campus in the face of declining graduate enrollment and grant losses. Many chairs cited growing concerns about faculty workload creep, particularly as administrative work is increasingly offloaded onto faculty.

**Shared Governance:** Multiple divisions expressed frustration over insufficient Senate consultation on key decisions, including cybersecurity, instructional modalities, and student support. Efforts to improve Senate visibility and faculty engagement included town halls, divisional chair visits to schools and departments, and “silent dialogue” events. UCLA highlighted increasing demands for symbolic action and rising tension in parliamentary proceedings.

## **XI. New Business**

**International Student Accommodations:** Immediate Past UCLA Division Chair Andrea Kasko, acting on behalf of the entire divisional leadership team, sought feedback on questions related to allowing remote instruction for international students unable to secure visas. Council members noted that such accommodations should be temporary and limited, and that financial pressures should not drive long-term changes to instructional policy. Concerns were raised about admitting students without also providing viable paths into in-person programs; legal, accreditation, and pedagogical risks, including a slippery slope toward new online education mandates; and the importance of protecting in-person instruction for on-campus students. Some members saw admission deferrals as preferable, particularly for graduate students. Chair Cheung agreed to consult UC Legal on UCLA’s discussion questions.

**2026 Health Benefits Rates:** Council reviewed and endorsed a set of recommendations proposed by the UCFW Health Care Task Force to guide 2026 UC health benefits rate setting. The HCTF recommended that UC increase the employer health insurance contributions by at least the same percentage as the average employee premium increase to avoid disproportionately burdening lower-paid employees. They also opposed narrowing cost differences between the UC Care, Blue and Gold, and Kaiser insurance plans, arguing that doing so would penalize lower-paid employees and encourage shifts to more expensive plans. UCFW urged a delay in major changes until after a planned pay band contribution review and recommended a larger “friends and family” discount for UC employees at UC medical centers.

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Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm  
Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director  
Attest: Steven W. Cheung, Academic Council Chair