

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Minutes of Videoconference Meeting
December 16, 2020****I. Consent Calendar**

1. Today's agenda items and their priority
2. Draft Academic Council Minutes of November 23, 2020
3. UCEP guidance on extending P/NP flexibility to 2021 winter, spring, and summer terms
4. Temporary modification of SR 636.C.1 (ELWR grading options in winter and spring 2021)
5. Waiver of SR 636.B and 636.C to allow UCD, UCI, UCSB, and UCSC option of not participating in the AWPE

ACTION: Council approved the consent calendar.

II. Senate Officers Announcements

- o **Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Chair**
- o **Robert Horwitz, Academic Council Vice Chair**

Curtailment: Faculty have raised questions about the legal basis of President Drake's curtailment program and its uneven implementation across campuses. UC General Counsel maintains that the Regents Standing Orders give the chancellors and President broad powers over workforce actions, and that no declaration of financial emergency is required prior to a furlough or salary cut. Senate leaders plan to discuss the concerns with President Drake.

Feasibility Study Work Group: The Work Group was charged with evaluating the viability of a new UC admissions test, following the Regents' decision to phase out the use of SAT/ACT in admissions by 2025. The Work Group's Steering Committee will discuss the draft report and recommendations with President Drake later this week, in anticipation of a Regents discussion in January.

Regents Health Services Committee: Chair Gauvain and Vice Chair Horwitz attended the December 15 meeting of the Health Services Committee, which included a briefing from Executive Vice President Byington on the status of the pandemic, UC's response, and expectations for vaccine delivery to frontline healthcare workers.

Sabbatical Credit: Senate leaders have conveyed to administrators a faculty suggestion for an additional sabbatical credit to recognize the extra teaching and service performed by faculty during the pandemic and the effect of the shutdown on their research. While modest, the credit would be one with real benefits to faculty on the cusp of a sabbatical. Administrators have been somewhat receptive, and no specific plans to follow up have been discussed.

Senate Vice Chair: Chair Gauvain invited Council members to nominate themselves or identify Senate members who might be interested in the role of 2021-22 Senate vice chair. She noted that the Senate office is developing new handbooks that establish explicit conventions and expectations concerning the role of the vice chair and their onboarding.

- In further discussion, Council members noted that a natural interpretation of Regents Standing Order 100.4 (*qq*) is to empower the UC president or a chancellor to implement furloughs only after the Regents declare a financial emergency. Regardless, the power to

implement furloughs should not be exerted lightly or frequently, and the Standing Order should be revised to address the ambiguity. In the meantime, the Senate leadership should ask UCOP to provide a formal written justification for its interpretation of S.O. 100.4 (*qq*).

III. UCEP Letter on Divisional Flexibility in Implementation of Senate Regulation 782

Council reviewed a letter from UCEP asking Council to issue a statement noting that, until further notice, Senate Divisions have the flexibility to modify provisions of Senate Regulation 782, which defines the upper limit on courses a student may take on a P/NP basis, , retroactive to the spring quarter or semester 2020.

ACTION: A motion to endorse the statement and forward to campuses was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

IV. Systemwide Review of Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and systemwide committees to the report of the Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force, which examined the implications of possible full-time, remote online, undergraduate degree programs at UC. Chair Gauvain included a letter in the report that asked reviewers to consider three options:

1. (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs;
2. (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that they meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
3. (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy equivalent UC coursework expectations, but not necessarily equivalent out-of-classroom opportunities

Chair Gauvain highlighted several themes and topics discussed in the campus letters. These included concerns about building a two-tier system that could provide a “second class degree” to certain students, the extent of campus autonomy to develop online degrees, and the role of systemwide oversight. There was also a feeling that the three options were too limiting and learning goals should guide degree programs. Chair Gauvain observed that the report is already outdated given the rapid shift to online learning during the pandemic. She noted a suggestion in one reviewer letter that UC should wait for data about the current “unplanned experiment” in online teaching and learning.

- UCEP Chair Potter noted that the Task Force did not unanimously support or oppose any of the options, but it wanted to provide guidelines to campuses seeking to explore “Option 2” (UC-quality remote degrees).
- Council members observed the split between faculty who believe online degrees will erode quality and others who believe they could increase access to a quality education. They suggested using data to help arrive at a definition of a “UC quality degree.” Given that UC’s reputation and quality depends on its status as a Research University that delivers research-based teaching, a relevant data point is the proportion of undergraduates involved in research. Employment outcomes for graduates are also important.
- Council members noted that many students benefit from the in-person, on campus experience, and that first generation and underrepresented students tend to perform better in that setting.

- Members noted that some administrators see online degree programs as a promising and inexpensive way to increase revenues. However, high-quality online programs would also require substantial investments in infrastructure, in faculty and staff to implement and maintain program content, and in new services to ensure the success of at-risk students.
- Individual members emphasized the need to support faculty who want to initiate new online pilot programs; that the form of teaching should follow the pedagogical aims; and that expanding access to new students unable to attend in person is a better justification for starting an online degree program than revenue
- Council members emphasized faculty members' already frequent and multifaceted use of technology in classrooms and laboratories as part of their hands-on engagement with students. They observed that technology could allow multiple campuses to offer a joint online degree. Members also observed the possible danger of competition between campuses and also within a campus between the face-to-face and online versions of a program. Systemwide guidance and coordination would be helpful in establishing baseline quality rubrics and in helping to prevent campuses from undermining each other.
- Chair Gauvain encouraged Council to use "Option 2" as a basis to consider the conditions that would support online degrees. She suggested that Council devote future time to the topic of online degrees and UC quality. She agreed to request an update from the UCI School of Business about the status of its proposed fully online undergraduate degree.

V. BOARS Items

- **Eddie Comeaux, BOARS Chair**
- **Monica Lin, Director, A-G and Transfer Policy Analysis & Coordination**

1. Proposed New Ethnic Studies Subject Requirement for UC Admission

BOARS Chair Comeaux noted that BOARS is proposing a new "Area H" subject requirement for UC admission. Area H would require California high school graduates to take a one semester (one-half unit) course emphasizing Ethnic Studies as part of the existing 15-unit A-G subject requirement. It would not add a half-unit to the 15-unit minimum requirement, but mandate only that one A-G course contain a half-unit of Ethnic Studies content. The requirement would apply to applicants for 2030-31 admission to allow high schools time to adapt and develop courses.

Director Lin noted that by adding Area H, the University would show support for a California Assembly bill that if passed, would mandate Ethnic Studies as a California high school graduation requirement. She said a State curriculum framework committee is developing model curricula to serve as guidelines for schools setting up Ethnic Studies courses, and that UCOP plans to convene a faculty workgroup to develop policy guidance for academic content that would qualify an A-G course for the Ethnic Studies designation. Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field, and it is expected that high schools could design qualifying courses in all or most of the A-G subject areas.

- Council members noted that Area H would advance the University's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. They emphasized that the faculty work group should not be limited to faculty appointed in specific departments, but broadly inclusive of faculty working in relevant topic areas. It was noted that a revision to Senate Regulation 424.A.3 adding Area H requires approval by the Council and Assembly, and agreed that the proposal should circulate for systemwide Senate review.

2. Letter on Admission Audits

Chair Comeaux introduced a letter from BOARS urging a greater faculty role in oversight and implementation of the recent California State Auditor report focused on special-talent and athletics admissions that revealed some vulnerabilities. He said the University is taking corrective actions, but BOARS is concerned that neither the audit report nor the UC administration has defined a distinct role for faculty in oversight of the corrective actions or more generally in the future review of special-talent admissions. BOARS feels a more pronounced role for faculty is needed, given the Senate's delegated authority over admissions.

ACTION: BOARS will consider specific opportunities for greater Senate involvement at the campus level, and draft a policy outlining basic parameters.

3. Letter on Eligibility Concerns Raised by the Regents

Chair Comeaux introduced a letter from BOARS communicating its intent to work with UCOP on adjustments to the UC eligibility construct to account for the phase-out of standardized tests. Currently the University determines basic statewide eligibility through an index of high school GPA and SAT/ACT scores that is designed to combine with the Eligibility in the Local Context program to capture the top 12.5% of high school graduates. BOARS is working with UCOP to identify alternative measures for the statewide index that will allow UC to identify a diverse class of eligible students.

VI. UCOPE Letters

1. UCOPE response to memo from campus vice provosts and deans outlining concerns about the systemwide AWPE and ELWR.

Council reviewed a letter from UCOPE responding to concerns from the Vice Provosts and Deans for Undergraduate Education (VPDUEs) about UC's Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) and the systemwide Advanced Writing Placement Examination (AWPE). UCOPE's cover memo asks Council's help in circulating the letter to campus VPDUEs.

ACTION: A motion to endorse the letter was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

2. Proposal for an Entry Level Writing Requirement Task Force

Council reviewed a request from UCOPE for a special Senate Task Force to discuss the future of the Entry Level Writing Requirement and to update the principles, purposes, values, and language of Senate Regulation 636, which defines the ELWR.

ACTION: Council agreed that the Task Force should be formed with the proposed goals and membership outlined in the UCOPE letter.

VII. **Executive Session: Nominee for Academic Senate Representative to Regents Committee on Health Services**

Council met with five candidates in executive session.

ACTION: Council selected Sonia Ramamoorthy of UC San Diego as its nominee.

VIII. UCFW/UCAADE Letter on Mitigating COVID Impacts on Faculty

- **Shelley Halpain, UCFW Chair**
- **Javier Arsuaga, UCAADE Chair**

UCFW Chair Halpain introduced a joint UCFW-UCAADE letter that discusses how the pandemic is disrupting faculty advancement, morale, work-life balance, and dependent care responsibilities. The letter emphasizes that disruptions are affecting women and minority faculty disproportionately. It makes recommendations for immediate actions to support faculty, and also longer-term systemic changes to better support equity, inclusion, recruitment, and retention.

One of the immediate recommendations is to establish a joint committee on each campus that would oversee the implementation of equity measures to mitigate COVID impacts, and respond to individual faculty requests to reduce teaching and service loads. The committees also recommend that CAPs adjust academic promotion expectations to align with Achievement Relative to Opportunities (ARO) principles by assessing faculty accomplishments in the context of pandemic circumstances, and use “stop-the-clock” and deferrals to delay file review only when ARO principles cannot be used. The committees invite UCAP to develop systemwide ARO guidelines. In addition, the committees recommend repurposing conference travel funds to help faculty pay for caregiving support and they emphasize the importance of effective and transparent communication, and the need to evaluate the success of the measures.

Chair Arsuaga noted that the longer-term recommendations include increasing on-campus child care services and faculty homeownership assistance; funding dependent care for faculty travel to scientific conferences; increasing family friendly policies; updating and redefining “excellence” and “success” in merit evaluations; and evaluating faculty holistically.

- Council members expressed support for the recommendations and emphasized the need to track the pandemic’s effects on faculty productivity, which may persist for several years. Members noted that the “stop-the-clock” mechanism should be used cautiously, given its long-term implications for career trajectory. They expressed support for revisiting the meaning of “excellence” and for considering faculty success more holistically. They noted that campus support for the recommendations will vary widely based on resources, and observed how difficult it is to accommodate teaching and service reductions equitably in a department. UCAP Chair Tapert noted that UCAP this year will seek to establish uniform standards for flexibility in faculty merit and promotion reviews.

ACTION: Chairs Halpain and Arsuaga will make final revisions and circulate the document to Council for final review.

IX. TFIR Letter on UCRP 2016 Tier “Second Choice Window”

Council reviewed a letter from UCFW and TFIR recommending support for a new option in the UC Retirement Savings Program 2016 tier that will allow certain Savings Choice faculty participants a chance to switch to the Pension Choice plan. UCFW and TFIR also suggest a change to the design of the 2016 tier related to vesting after a switch to Pension Choice. Although the University is considering a proposal to require a traditional five-year vesting period for enrollees who switch to Pension Choice, UCFW recommends immediate vesting after a switch, given that participants will have already devoted five years of service to UC.

ACTION: A motion to endorse and forward the letter to President Drake was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

X. 2030 Framework Goals

Chair Gauvain noted that she and Vice Chair Horwitz hope to set aside time at Council meetings for discussion of “big picture” topics related to the future of the University and higher education. One such topic is the UC 2030 Framework, a UCOP plan that emphasizes UC’s commitment to produce 200,000 more degrees by 2030, promote upward mobility, and invest in the next generation of faculty and research. Administrators are using the Framework to highlight the University’s critical role in training the next generation of Californians in “21st Century skills” relevant to the changing needs of the workforce and society.

- Council members noted that the Framework’s focus on STEM disciplines and emphasis on job training could contribute to the marginalization of the humanities, social sciences, and arts. The University does have an important job training mission, but it also prepares people to contribute to society as engaged citizens, fosters a curiosity about how the world works, and inspires a lifelong love of learning.
- Council members noted that UC represents the highest standards of academic excellence. That excellence depends on opportunities for undergraduate to engage in meaningful research experiences, the University’s commitment to community-engaged research, and post-graduation outcomes related both to career success and to community engagement.
- Council members noted that UC has an ethical obligation to meet the higher education needs of the state; however, the Framework may fall short in meeting actual future demand for a UC education given the state’s projected population growth.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm

Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola, Principal Committee Analyst

Attest: Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Chair