



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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February 4, 2026

Subject: UCAD Plus Joint Task Force Update #2

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to provide our second update on the work of the [UCAD Plus Joint Task Force](#), which is now more deeply engaged in the substance of their working group assignments. We continue to work diligently toward our goal of sharing our preliminary recommendations with UC President Milliken, the Chancellors, and Senate faculty throughout the system by the end of this academic year. That will be followed by a systemwide review in the fall of 2026, with a view toward bringing the task force to its conclusion by January 2027. We are well on our way, but these are complex issues occurring in a multi-layered federal and state landscape. Accordingly, there is still much to plan so that we can be prepared to address the challenges ahead.

You can learn more by reading through the summaries provided by the co-chairs of each UCAD Plus workgroup. At the end of this account, you will also see some information on the work of the parallel Administrative Transformation process being led by CFO Nathan Brostrom, COO Rachael Nava and colleagues.

Workgroup 1 – Research Activities and Infrastructure

This group has organized itself into four subareas, focusing on scenario planning around the following themes: (1) disruptions affecting a single campus; (2) disruptions affecting a single discipline; (3) disruptions affecting a single agency; and (4) broad disruptions affecting the entire system, across disciplines and agencies. These groups are each working on reports identifying key issues and potential mitigation strategies, including proposals that might be effective under a range of different disruptions. It is also engaged in ongoing efforts to inventory core research facilities across the system, and with University Committee on Planning and Budget ([UCPB](#)) and University Committee on Research Policy ([UCORP](#)) on topics of shared interest.

Workgroup 2 – Academic Personnel Evaluations

This group is pursuing two focus areas:

- Individual campus practices in applying Achievement Relative to Opportunities (ARO) principles under COVID and thereafter, or other mechanisms for providing flexibility during academic reviews.
- Mechanisms that enable (a) flexibility for changing faculty series and (b) providing increased flexibility regarding the time period for merits and promotion (two of the recommendations in the UCAD report).

The next step involves a discussion of ARO principles including best practices and implementation processes at other universities, with the objective of determining what they should recommend to the campuses. Workgroup staff have put together an outline of an initial report, and in our future meetings they will be focusing on the remaining parts of the charge.

Workgroup 3 – Academic Program Planning, Evaluation and Alignment

This workgroup has identified a set of key questions, beginning with a review of the conditions under which a campus might consider resizing, restructuring, or reorganizing an academic unit or degree program, and the criteria that would distinguish short-term disruptions from long-term disruptions. The group is also exploring opportunities to strengthen the interaction, collaboration, and financial resilience of departments and programs between UC campuses.

To support the committee in exploring these issues, the working group has asked executive vice chancellors, Divisional Senate chairs, and the [University Committee on Planning and Budget](#) (UCPB) for input and insight on prior periods of academic restructuring at UC and/or illustrative examples of current academic models.

Workgroup 4 – Instructional Opportunities and Course Offerings Across Modalities

A four-part framework described in the previous update (assessing types and impact of disruptions; leveraging a department approach to instruction; developing flexible instruction models; clarifying the role of UC Online) structures the work of this group.

Progress to date on developing materials and recommendations for the four sections of the report that the workgroup anticipates producing includes:

1. Defining the types of disruptions to the teaching mission that are possible, including short-term events (earthquake, fire) and longer-term events, and providing suggestions for tracking and documenting disruptions.
2. Increasing the resilience of the teaching mission by creating a culture of shared responsibility for instruction at the department level and leveraging a collective approach that includes how best to share online course materials.
3. Developing flexible instructional team models that are more resilient to disruption.
4. Outlining the roles of UCOP (including UC Online), the systemwide Senate, campus administration, and Divisional Senates in addressing disruptions.

Workgroup 5 – The Future of Graduate Education

This workgroup has been collecting data from UC campuses about key graduate education practices:

- Admissions for both PhD and other graduate education programs
- Retention and time-to-degree
- Mentoring and research supervision
- Academic program reviews for graduate programs

Variation across the system and by discipline has become a central theme, with efforts to understand where systemwide support may be helpful and where campus or even school/college/department/program level innovation is more appropriate. The workgroup aims to understand how groups are responding to current pressures, and some of the impacts of recent changes. They are also gathering information on costs and cost projections for graduate education.

In addition, the workgroup is collecting best practices and program- and campus-level innovations to share broadly, especially where greater visibility could lead to wider adoption. They are also identifying ideas that may merit pilot funding. The workgroup chairs regularly meet with the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs ([CCGA](#)) and the Council of Graduate Deans ([COGD](#)) to ensure input from these important groups is recognized appropriately in their deliberations. Finally,

February 4, 2026

Page 3

based on feedback from the community, the group added a member to ensure faculty representation of the humanities.

Update on the Administration Transformation Taskforce

Administrative and finance leaders appreciate the efforts that are being considered for academic transformation and feel a collaborative sense of urgency to identify strategies to build institutional resilience – both administrative and academic. From taking new approaches to expense reimbursement, to examining routine approval processes, to exploring regional partnerships among campuses, the group is examining a wide range of areas that could reduce administrative burdens and increase resilience across individual campuses and the UC system. Campus leaders also noted that the academic enterprise appropriately represents a significant portion of their budgets but recognize that the current cost structure is not sustainable if funding continues to be constrained and the University is unable to grow alternative revenues. Administrative and finance leaders look forward to continued partnerships with the UCAD Plus Joint Task Force and the academic community to develop holistic solutions that best support our campuses.

With thanks to all the people who are giving so generously of their time and ingenuity, we will provide our next update in early spring.

Cordially,

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