



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (UCODE)

Minutes of Meeting

12 February 2026

In attendance: Kristen Holmquist (Chair Berkeley), Gareth Funning (Vice Chair, Riverside), Adrienne Correa (Berkeley), Javier Arsuaga (Davis), Kristina Uban (Irvine), Raphael Rouquier (Los Angeles), Sean Malloy (Merced), Esra Kurum (Riverside), Ross Frank (San Diego), Ruth Heller (Santa Barbara), Dev Bose (Santa Cruz), Will Martinez (San Francisco), Gabriela Arredondo (Santa Cruz), Rebecca Ruiz (Graduate Student, Irvine), Alexis Garcia (Undergraduate Student, San Diego), Ahmet Palazoglu (Chair, Academic Council), Susannah Scott (Vice Chair, Academic Council), Monica Varsanyi (Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs), Yvette Gullatt (Vice President for Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs and Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), Mark Lawson (Director, President's Post Doctoral Fellowship Program), Stefani Leto (Analyst)

I. Consent Calendar, Chair's Announcements

Actions: Members approved the February 12, 2026 agenda and the December 11, 2025 minutes.

The chair asked for feedback on the meeting schedule introduced this year. Committee members suggested that their divisional committees could usefully be more proactive.

II. Consultation with Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs

Vice Provost Varsanyi updated the committee on the President's Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) search. When the Provost was informed that campuses were implementing the policy in varying ways, she clarified the changes for them. Waivers used to include spouses, target of excellence hires, and PPFP fellows. The PPFP search waiver has been removed as a specific carve-out, but fellows can still be hired without a specific search waiver. Target of excellence (TOE) search waivers, even on campuses where fellows are not listed as specific TOE category. In addition, PPFP fellows can also be hired under regular faculty searches.

VP Varsanyi indicated that she would support systematic faculty development efforts at OP. Now that the Advancing Faculty Diversity funds have been diverted to the Early Career Awards, one way to create a development program might be through some kind of grant program. She asked that a future UCODE meeting consider this idea.

While focusing on external threats to diversity at the UC, internal threats in the form of policy changes have been promulgated from the central administration. Members expressed concern about changes to funding and policies without any Senate consultation. Systemwide Academic Personnel, under guidance from the Provost, is responsible for the changes to the PPFP policy. Members noted

frustration with forces at the UC who appear to preemptively halt diversity-related work, even though the university is in full legal compliance and the presidential administration has been losing court cases against diversity programs.

III. Consultation with Leadership

Academic Council Chair Palazoglu and Academic Council Vice Chair Scott joined UCODE to update them on Senate concerns and activity. Labor issues are in the forefront, and both the Senate and Provost will issue guidance for faculty. Committee members expressed frustration over wanting to mentor and educate students yet not being able to afford their cost.

The state budget appears promising for the UC, but differences of opinion remain between the governor and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) about projected revenues. The May revise will help finalize budget outcomes. The UC is continuing advocacy about the budget. The governor's budget included no capital funds, but the UC is pushing for two General Obligation bonds, one for affordable housing and the \$23 billion California Science and Health Research Bond, SB895.

The Regents approved their changes to APM 015-016, the Faculty Code of Conduct and Administration of Faculty Discipline. A joint Senate Administration taskforce examined the issues following concerns raised by the Regents about discipline processes, and their work went through systemwide review, and was approved by Council and Assembly. The long and sometimes difficult process is an example of shared governance. A taskforce is being convened to make recommendations about what will constitute policy violations in the realm of expressive activities. Their goal is to have a common understanding of Academic freedom and faculty extramural speech.

The Provost is convening a systemwide congress about mathematical preparation in March, following a report from UC San Diego reporting a lack of mathematics preparation in incoming students.

The UCAADE bylaw changes for UCAADE will go forward to Assembly today, and if approved, the committee's name will change to the University Committee on Diversity and Equity (UCODE).

The UCAD final report is available on the Senate website. The UCAD Plus group has received a second installment from the steering committee and continues to meet.

The Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs Task Force (PUDP) has been working to come up with metrics for the evaluation of online degree programs at the undergraduate level; campuses already evaluate in person programs. The group is focusing on how those evaluations might need to be changed for online ones. Online program evaluations must go beyond academic questions to investigate all student interactions – peer, professor, and access to services and supports. The task force is also looking at infrastructure and support needs. One possibility is targeted management review concerning undergraduate online programs before the report is released, and there may need to be the same kind of consultation from UCAADE about equity issues.

Discussion included concern about lack of senate consultation in the changes to the PFPF and fee waiver guidelines. Members asked for resources about diversity in graduate programs following increased costs, and whether faculty now focus on students from elite universities as the admit pool shrinks.

IV. Consultation with Graduate, Undergraduate & Equity Affairs

Vice President and Vice Provost Gullatt briefed the committee on the status of the “Dear Colleague” letters. The Department of Education dropped its appeal of lawsuits, and so the Dear Colleague letters referencing the Students for Fair Admissions Supreme Court decision no longer apply to secondary and postsecondary education. The UC has followed all applicable laws and should continue to do so.

A court has approved an appeal to an injunction against the original anti-DEI executive orders issued last February. The matter will continue through the courts, but the UC retains rights of free speech, and we can use words like diversity and equity and inclusion.

The UC faces the possibility of the elimination of duration of status for international students. Homeland Security may end it in March, meaning students on F, J, and I non-immigrant visas will have fixed days of entry, restriction of transfers, and a formal process to extend their stays. This action will affect future students and has equity implications. Much work will have to be done on campus and by faculty to make sure students can complete their studies.

The state may try to fill the gap posed by limits on professional program student loans, but it is unlikely. Proposed changes to Public Service Loan Forgiveness would depend on the service the nonprofit agency provides. This may lead to ideologically limited loan forgiveness. Such changes are not yet in the rules, and Congress has not changed the law, retaining only the requirement that the borrower complete 120 payments over ten years for a nonprofit 501c3 institution. If the administration moves forward with proposed limits, it will be challenged in the courts.

VP Gullatt did point out that OP cannot control how campuses apply hiring waivers. Campuses are free to use them for PFP hires. Waivers are a faculty/department decision. Guidelines are not policies. Realistically, all faculty hiring has slowed across the system. The fact that the hiring incentive was retained is a victory. Her office will work with the President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program to create a dashboard laying out the impact of the scholars at the UC, to provide a complete picture of their benefits to the UC and make the argument for retaining both the program and the hiring incentive funding.

V. Consultation on the President’s Post Doctoral Fellowship Program

Mark Lawson, Director of the President’s Post Doctoral Fellowship Program (PFP), briefed the committee on ongoing issues around the program. Committee members expressed concerns about revised guidelines for PFP search waivers, specifically Target of Excellence (TOE) waivers. They reported guidance including disqualification from search waiver hiring for candidates coming from fellowships. This unwritten guidance risks creating a denial of employment based on a fellowship. This would open the UC up to both litigation and union action. Some campuses are interpreting guidance allowing PFP hiring waivers for Target of Excellence hires, who must demonstrate academic promise, as needing end-career levels of accomplishment. PFP candidates have demonstrated promise by virtue of being chosen through the highly competitive fellowship process, which duplicates a TOE waiver process and goes beyond the two standards for general faculty hiring: being an outstanding scholar in your discipline and an outstanding scholar educator. PFP fellows add the criteria of expanding the discipline by bringing new participants into it, part of the UC’s research and public service excellence goals.

In terms of the program's success, PFP scholars achieve tenure at rates higher than other faculty hires, and ten years after hiring, they have a higher rate of retention at the UC. If the UC focuses on late-career exceptional hires, it risks not building a new generation of faculty.

Discussion included consideration of a letter to Council supporting the PFP and urging adherence to the actual policies surrounding the program.

The committee adjourned at 12:34 pm.

Minutes prepared by Stefani Leto, Analyst

Attest: Kristen Holmquist, Chair