



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (UCODE)

Minutes of Meeting

16 April 2026

In attendance: Kristen Holmquist (Chair), Adrienne Correa (Berkeley), Javier Arsuaga (Davis), Kristina Uban (Irvine), Raphael Rouquier (Los Angeles), Sean Malloy (Merced), Esra Kurum (Riverside), , Ross Frank (San Diego), William Martinez (San Francisco), Sarah Ackerman (alternate, San Francisco), Ruth Heller (Santa Barbara), Gabriela Arredondo (Santa Cruz), Rebecca Ruiz (Graduate Student Representative), Monica Varsanyi (Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs), Ahmet Palazoglu (Chair, Academic Council), Susannah Scott (Vice Chair, Academic Council), Stefani Leto (Analyst)

I. Consent Calendar, Chair's Announcement's

Action: UCODE approved the 16 April, 2026 agenda and the February 12, 2026 minutes.

Committee members volunteered to draft letters on the following proposals:

1. Systemwide Senate Review of Proposal to Establish a Systemwide Academic Senate Committee on Climate Change and Sustainability
2. Systemwide Senate Review Tribal Lands Workgroup Report

II. Consultation with Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs

Monica Varsanyi, Vice Provost, updated UCODE on various matters:

- Mark Lawson was recommended for reappointment as the Director of the President's Post Doctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP).
- No additional guidance has been put forth about search waivers. The carve out for PPFP hires was removed from systemwide search waiver guidance, but her office notes that campuses may hire PPFP fellows using search waivers as permitted by their campus-specific search waiver policies.
- A new early career awards fellowship program just determined Early Career Award winners.
- The MOP loan program will now use outside funding for both liquidity and resale concerns.

- The Expressive Activities Task Force focusing on academic freedom and concerns about the “intrusion” of extramural speech in the classroom. A report will go out for systemwide review in September.
- UCAD Plus subcommittees are working on what will become the final report. Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) principles play a central role in the recommendations of Workgroup 2, which addresses the Faculty Review Process.
- UCAD Plus as well as other areas of administration have continued discussions about online education. It remains an issue under consideration.
- The Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs (PUDP) Task Force is investigating undergraduate quality broadly speaking but also considering what that quality would look like in online education at the UC. The Provost has chartered an outside consultant to do an exploratory study on online education.
- While Advancing Faculty Diversity (AFD) grants have been discontinued, Vice Provost Varsanyi is proposing faculty recruitment and retention grants.
- Discussion included: queries about at what level of administration the decision to remove the word diversity from the waiver guidance was made, a request to have UC Legal meet with UCODE, and pointed reminders that Regents Policy 4400 highlights diversity as the central UC mission.

III. Campus Reports

Berkeley: The committee has been focusing on program reviews; some required significant discussion and reviewing and revising bylaws.

Davis: The CPB has been facilitating greater engagement by meeting in person. The campus has changed DEI to Inclusive Excellence on the name of a fellowship that was reviewed and approved by Council and the Chancellor, and six or seven applications have come in for it. The committee reviewed bylaws to modernize language. The committee is discussing AI and its impacts on campus, specifically its tendencies to reinforce bias based on the material it uses for training.

Irvine: The campus has a positive climate, and the CEI is well-respected. The committee consulted with a guest researching how universities respond to federal anti-diversity pressure. Some of the UCs are trending toward more compliance than others. The committee was urged to keep pressing the administration for transparency. A group working on a land acknowledgement for campus discovered efforts across the system, as well as identifying the loss of an FTE on campus for a liaison to Native communities. The committee plans memos for both to the division Senate.

Merced: The local committee has held productive discussions with the VPAP about PPFP and TOE waivers. Their second activity has been working with faculty to issue guidance on diversity statements from faculty. The campus released a 2020 report on anti-blackness on campus and the committee views the report as a way to address structural problems affecting diversity on campus.

Riverside: The VPAP indicated that departments can use TOE waivers to fund PFP hires. CODEI takes more of a reactive stance than proactive on campus. Student representatives are not deeply involved with the committee.

Santa Cruz: The CODEI has found many issues on campus are of interest to them, yet consultation before decisions are made is not often pursued by administration. For example, parking fees are set to increase dramatically over the next few years, yet there was no consultation on an issue that impacts faculty and staff.

San Diego: Student representatives to CODEI have been engaged and useful. The committee has pursued data on hiring trends to follow arcs over a few years and will focus on hiring trends for female faculty through the end of this year and next.

Santa Barbara: Committee members are not in full agreement on the purpose of the committee. Inadequate funding has limited the kind of investigation they can do into pay equity across campus and plans for future actions. Several visiting speakers have informed committee members about current issues. The committee hopes to come up with ideas for proactive work for their future.

San Francisco: CODEI is working with other committees to advocate for transparency around funding. Many faculty are on soft money and federal actions threaten their positions. Money has been available for capital projects but less for bridge funding or other faculty support. CODEI is working to create an explicit framework for financial decisions and to take into account disparate effects of federal challenges on certain fields and researchers to address inequities arising from them.

Graduate Student: Rising labor costs are leading some departments to switch students from 50 percent TA appointments to 25 percent and adding fellowships. but also moving employees into reader positions with fellowships to fill in gaps. This move may skip step advancement for students. In addition, pay timing differentials for readers and TAs have made financial management more difficult for some students. Some graduate students have reported difficulty getting desk or study space allotted and some have alleged bias in desk assignments.

IV. Consultation with Leadership

Council Chair Palazoglu and Vice Chair Scott updated the committee on various matters:

- The UAW and the university reached agreement and averted a strike. Details of the agreement will be finalized, and it is a four-year contract. The university will monitor issues to address in the 2030 labor negotiations.
- The Provost sent a letter about the agreement, and the Senate may follow up with a letter covering the details. Two highlights are the agreement establishes a clear line between academic work and employment, emphasizing faculty control over qualifying exams, dissertations, and courses, and wage increases will impact campuses and likely affect the number of employed students as PIs juggle their grant monies and employed graduate students. Negative impacts on research programs and the overall status of the university as a research institution are likely.

- Chair Palazoglu detailed the impact of the graduate student labor agreements on the UC's R1 status at the Regents meeting.
- Four new Regents have been appointed and two reappointed by the governor.
- The Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates (ICAS) had a Legislative Day, where members meet with legislators and update them on the successes and challenges facing the different segments of higher education in California. They talked about STEM pathways for high school students and the Common Course Initiative, which would set matching numbers for equivalent courses at different institutions. Attempts to change the Master Plan came up and Senate leadership emphasized that holistic approaches were better than piecemeal changes.
- The Assembly ratified Amani Nuru-Jeter as incoming Vice Chair of Council, and announced winners of the Oliver Johnson awards.
- The UCAD Plus Task Force has been finalizing recommendations, along with a matching effort on the administration side, the Administrative Transformation Initiative. The two groups plan a meeting in May to finalize their recommendations.
- The Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs (PUDP) has focused on program review. Because quality of online classes and programs has come up, the group has discussed testing centers and found that San Diego has best figured them and their faculty are happy with their approach. A statewide network across all segments might reassure faculty that the UC could maintain rigor in online courses.
 - Discussion included the Brandeis settlement and faculty governance issues. Assembly and Council plan to continue discussions.
 - Council looks forward to UCODE's letter on shared governance and the PPFP waiver situation.

V. Discussion Items

PPFP Letter

UCODE discussed a letter to Council regarding the PPFP waiver and guidance issued without Senate consultation. Both the process of the guidance done without faculty input, and substance, in that language around diversity was removed with the hiring waiver for PPFP hires, are of concern to the committee. Members worked on the letter, and will send it to Council.

ARO

The committee discussed the final report on Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) implementation on campuses, made some changes, and agreed to send it to the other signatory committees for review.

The committee adjourned at 12:58.

Minutes prepared by Stefani Leto, Analyst
Attest: Kristen Holmquist, Chair