



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)  
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Assembly of the Academic Senate  
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March 17, 2011

Dan Simmons, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Re: UC Quality**

Dear Dan,

Attached is a document defining characteristics of educational quality at UC. It originated in the Education and Curriculum working group of the Commission on the Future; UCEP edited it slightly and endorsed the version attached.

As changes are proposed and observed, we hope that this document will provide some concrete benchmarks to help us characterize the impact of those changes on educational quality.

While the audience for this document is UC faculty and administration, it could also provide a basis for preparing an explanation of UC quality for legislators or the public.

UCEP hopes that Council will endorse this statement.

Sincerely yours,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D G Kay".

David G. Kay, Chair  
UCEP

## **Characteristics of Educational Quality At the University of California**

**Fundamental Basis for a UC Quality Education.** The quality of education at the University of California is fundamentally derived from two key components: the background and expertise of UC faculty and students and the rich research-based environment inherent in the UC system of ten top-tier public land-grant research institutions.

- The vision of what constitutes desired and acceptable quality for any given degree or program at UC will ultimately come from the faculty responsible for the curriculum and teaching in each degree program.
- The measures of success will ultimately derive from the achievements of students in the program.

UC quality comes not from a single course or activity but from the comprehensive experience of a UC education.

**Characteristics of UC Quality Courses, Majors and Programs.** The following are features that contribute to the ability of UC to deliver a university education that meets a high standard of quality in terms of content and delivery. Courses, majors and programs that define UC quality are ones that:

- are developed by UC faculty with quality assurance monitored through the UC Academic Senate course and program review process.
- address content reflecting the most current research in their field of study.
- are delivered under the direction of UC Senate faculty, and include substantial contributions from lecturers, graduate students, and other academic positions filled by individuals who understand and can communicate the unique perspective of the UC research university environment.
- operate at an intellectual level appropriate to the high abilities of the student body.
- include appropriate and substantive student-instructor and student-student interaction.
- provide a framework by which students achieve objective standards of knowledge and competence appropriate to the field of study or profession.
- empower students with skills in the acquisition, assimilation, and synthesis of knowledge that will allow nimble adaptation to the ever-changing intellectual environment, and foster intellectual independence, creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship.
- develop interpersonal skills that will contribute to success through collaboration.
- develop sensitivity to the diversity of domestic and international cultures that will enhance students' capacity to operate within and advance American and global society.
- provide ample opportunity for closely-mentored relationships with faculty and other University-affiliated personnel that allow students to pursue independent research, creative activity, or service to society related to their field of study.
- foster the abilities to interpret and organize information critically, analytically, effectively and transparently, and to maintain intellectual integrity and high ethical standards and intellectual honesty.
- can contribute indirectly to student awareness of, and involvement in, the perspective unique to the culture of a public research university, with special insight for how that perspective enriches their disciplinary and general education.

- promote intellectual curiosity and an appreciation for knowledge, including knowledge for which practical applications are not immediately apparent.
- support achievement of the basic University of California missions related to teaching, research and public service.

**Ongoing Assessment and Oversight of Quality.** To ensure the effectiveness of UC courses, majors and programs are evaluated by a regular review process, and this process is another component leading to a quality education at UC. Key elements to this process are programs and majors that:

- include regular evaluation of faculty teaching by students that is a part of the evaluation process for faculty as they advance within the University.
- are evaluated regularly through self-assessment followed by an internal and external administrative and peer faculty review process that evaluates the “fitness for purpose” of the content and delivery of instruction.
- include a course and program learning assessment process in which faculty develop learning goals, map goals to the curriculum, and assess majors’ mastery of the learning goals. Learning goals include skills related to critical thinking, analytical reasoning, written communication, and other discipline-based skills.

**Context Contributing to UC Quality.** The unique environment created by UC’s system of ten top-tier public land-grant research universities contributes to the overall UC educational quality. Important aspects of this environment include the ability to:

- provide students with research opportunities closely mentored by UC faculty.
- take advantage of the unique benefits of UC’s 10-campus system through cooperation, collaboration, differentiation, administration and specialization among the campuses.
- provide a civil and inclusive multicultural environment that conveys and helps to develop the most current knowledge, theories, ideas and perspectives.
- provide insights and experiences that are based in both research and practice.
- take advantage of the important social, cultural and intellectual contributions enabled by having a diverse population of students from a variety of underrepresented populations.

**Expected Outcomes of a UC Education.** Graduates of UC will have the ability to:

- think critically and independently and demonstrate leadership.
- make relevant intellectual and creative contributions to issues important to California, the nation, and the world.
- facilitate meaningful engagement with others in diverse vocational, living and social environments.
- apply the scope and depth of their liberal-arts education.
- make professional contributions in their chosen field, informed by their experience in a research-oriented academic environment.