

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE  
ON  
EDUCATIONAL POLICY  
2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:**

The University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) met eight times in Academic Year 2012-2013 to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in [Senate Bylaw 170](#) and in the Universitywide Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units (the "[Compendium](#)"). The major activities of the committee and the issues it addressed this year are outlined briefly, as follows.

**UC Online Education (UCOE)**

Driven largely by the explosive interest in online technologies to increase accessibility, decrease times to completion, enhance the educational experience, and reduce costs to higher education, most of UCEP's work this year was related to online education. At the beginning of the academic year UC's online education program was primarily directed towards enrolling non matriculated students for financial reasons. This business model abruptly changed following the emergence of free, online courses from world class universities. With the obvious enthusiasm of the Regents, the intrusion of legislation into curriculum, and the financial encouragement of the governor, online technologies would play a significant role in delivering a UC education. UCEP opined on academic issues related to the role and implementation of online courses at UC.

One of UCEP's functions is to approve undergraduate courses for listing in a system-wide catalog (SB 170.B.3). In the first half of the year UCEP received thirteen requests for system-wide designation from instructors of online courses at five campuses. Applications were assigned two reviewers who evaluated the proposals and presented their critiques and opinions at the next UCEP meeting. Any questions that the reviewers might have regarding a proposal were typically emailed to the instructor prior to the meeting so that they could be clarified before the reviewer's report. This allowed the majority of applications to be approved in less than a month; two were reviewed and approved over a weekend. All thirteen applications were approved for system-wide designation.

The application process is described in the 2011-2012 UCEP [Guidelines for Systemwide Courses](#). These guidelines were written in the expectation that system-wide courses could include a large number of non-matriculated students and much of the document was focused on ensuring that non matriculated students do not supplant enrolled students. As the priority shifted back to enrolled students who are allowed to take any course on any campus for unit credit (SR 544), the criteria for designating courses as system-wide were not well established.

UCEP opined at length on whether or not some courses needed to be differentially called out in a system-wide database and if so, what role should UCEP play in the process. Some committee members argued that UCEP needed to play an active role in evaluating courses for content and delivery, others thought course review needs to be solely at the local campus level with the role of UCEP being largely administrative. And lively discussions were had on the criteria for designating a course as system-wide. UCEP agreed on three criteria for designating a course for a system-wide catalog. The first was that the course had been approved on the campus from which it originated. The consensus was that campus courses committees were the gatekeeper for ensuring excellence in teaching. The second criteria was that system-wide courses should increase accessibility for UC students and facilitate their degree completion. This can be done by offering a course that provides additional or alternative times of instruction or offer a subject not available on all campuses. The third criterion is that system-wide courses should be taught on more than one campus and that it was incumbent on the instructor to facilitate cross campus articulation.

Council considered the criteria for systemwide courses in July and voiced several concerns. The primary question was whether UCEP should have any role in designating a course for system-wide listing. In general UCEP felt there was a role for the Senate in insuring that the quality of courses not suffers when offered across many campuses and that the course can be easily enrolled by students at any campus.

The Blue Ribbon Panel appointed to review the evaluation of the Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP) received the Evaluation Summary Report Year 1 from the UC Evaluation Center in October. A memo from the Panel, submitted to Council and forwarded to Provost Dorr in February, posed serious and critical questions about OIPP and the evaluation activities conducted on Phase I of the Pilot as described in the UCEC report. The administration has not responded formally to the Panel's memo to date. In a meeting with the Senate leadership in July, the Interim Director of UCOE reported that a series of reports from UCEC will be ready starting in September 2013. The Senate leadership has been informed that UCEC's principal investigator is leaving UC and it is presently unclear what type of evaluation will be undertaken as UCOP launches its new Innovative Learning Technology Initiative. Members of both UCEP and the Blue Ribbon Panel will look forward to learning more about the plans for evaluation next year as details become available.

### **Western Association of Schools and Colleges Handbook Revision**

Last year, UCEP produced two important documents for WASC's consideration, a [White Paper](#) on peer review as a tool for external validation and a [practical proposal](#) for adapting the program review process UC has already developed to meet the needs of accreditation review. In November, UCEP was joined by telephone by Jackie Donath, the Chair of WASC's Policy and Planning Committee, for a discussion about the draft revised WASC Handbook. From UCEP's perspective, the most controversial matter was related to WASC's conversation about the meaning and integrity of the degree and the ways institutions will demonstrate their understanding of the standards for the common elements of the degree. UCEP members emphasized that graduate programs should not be treated the same way as undergraduate programs. The committee suggested that WASC should think more about specialization as it establishes review teams and recommended that there be standards for who is on the review team. WASC was set to vote on the revised Handbook in February and it remains to be seen if there is any improvement when the next UC campuses participate in the process. ICAS is concerned that language about general education being struck is a signal that WASC no longer supports general education programs, and UCEP shall monitor this.

### **Rebenching**

UCEP considered the Rebenching Budget Committee Report in November and provided feedback to Council. Members agreed that bringing historically underfunded campuses to higher levels is a good idea and an important step, but felt that the rebenching proposal was flawed. UCEP concluded that the proposed formula utilized to calculate per-student funding is too simple and that campuses have different funding needs that cannot be quantified at the level of an individual student. The committee felt that students at one campus should not be considered more valuable than students at another UC campus. Additionally, UCEP members were concerned about the ability to conduct long-range campus level planning if a dramatically different budget approach was introduced following a change in UCOP leadership. Members felt that it would be important for campuses to have the ability to undo rebenching if the need so arose in the future.

### **Senate Regulation 760 – Credit in Courses**

In June, the chairs of the divisional Committees on Education Policy were contacted by UCEP regarding a requirement by WASC that all the institutions it accredits must provide a reasonable and transparent formula that describes the manner in which course credits are awarded. Senate Regulation [SR760](#) provides a very broad description of how credits are awarded but it is, however, too vague to meet these new requirements. UCEP discussed this issue and proposed two scenarios for moving forward: 1) UCEP could develop a unit definition that would be applied systemwide, or 2) each division would establish

their own definitions of unit credit. UCEP put these options to the divisional CEPs and three expressed a preference for adopting their own local regulation. UCEP agreed that this will give the division's maximum flexibility and, in addition, more time for implementation for those campuses whose accreditation review comes later in the WASC cycle. Nevertheless Council instructed UCEP to develop a unit definition based on the amount of work committed to a class and be independent of how many weeks the course meets (semesters or quarters). The definition of a course unit will be delegated to next year's committee.

### **Time to Completion**

Following a September discussion by the Board of Regents about reducing time to degree, UCEP was asked by the Senate Chair to discuss potential strategies, some of which UC already does or has prioritized. Committee members agreed that UC is doing well but that it would be worthwhile to look at ways students are moving through and determine if there is anything else that can be done. In December, UCEP members completed an informal poll that identified three areas that progress could be made with time to completion: 1) increase the number of course offerings, 2) increase options for course time and venue, and 3) implement effective transfer of credits across campuses. The committee expects that online system-wide courses may help reduce time to completion by offering more courses at alternative times. The transfer of credits across campuses is currently being worked on by UCOP and divisional registrars.

### **Other Issues and Additional Business**

In response to requests for formal comment from the Academic Council, UCEP also issued views on the following:

- Funding for Undergraduate Aid
- UCOE Copyright Issues
- Compendium changes

UCEP touched on a variety of other issues related to the business of the Academic Council, Academic Assembly, the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates, and the work of campus Committees on Educational Policy.

### **UCEP Representation**

UCEP Chair John Yoder represented the committee at meetings of the Academic Council, and Academic Assembly, and regularly attended meetings of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates. Chair Yoder also participated on the UC Online and Senate Leadership group.

### **Committee Consultations and Acknowledgements**

UCEP benefited from consultation and reports from Hilary Baxter, Associate Director, Academic Planning, Programs and Coordination; Keith Williams, Interim Director, UCOE; Shawn Brick, Associate Director, Transfer Admissions Policy; Monica Lin, Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions; and Nancy Purcille, Transfer Articulation Coordinator.

In addition, UCEP consulted the Academic Senate chair and vice-chair, who updated the committee on issues facing the Academic Council and Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

John Yoder, Chair (D)  
Charles Anthony Smith (I)  
Nicholas Sitar (B)  
Tamara Alliston (SF)  
Jeanette Natzle (D)  
Troy Carter (LA)  
Jonathan Ly (Undergraduate student-M)

Tim Labor, Vice Chair (R)  
Cristian Ricci (M)  
Tracy Larrabee (SC)  
Leslie Carver (SD)  
Seeta Chaganti (D) (alternate)  
David Lea (SB)  
Mona Vakilifathi (Graduate student-SD)

Bob Powell ((D), Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*)  
Bill Jacob ((SB), Vice Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*)  
Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst