

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE
ON
EDUCATIONAL POLICY
2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) met by videoconference 13 times and one time in-person in Academic Year 2023-2024 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.

REGENTS' DISAPPROVAL OF THE CAMPUS EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT

Last year, Academic Council and Academic Assembly approved UCEP's [proposed revisions to Senate Regulation \(SR\) 630.E](#) to require undergraduates to complete six units of in-person courses during a quarter/semester for one year. In January 2024, Chair Steintrager and Vice Chair Cheung received [a memo](#) from the Chair of the Board of Regents and the Chair of the Regents Academic and Student Affairs Committee indicating that the establishment of the systemwide in-person campus experience requirement falls under the Regents reserved authority over the conferral of undergraduate degrees. The Regents viewed the regulation as equivalent to a recommendation to the Regents rather than a ratified policy, and the proposed revision to SR 630.E was presented to the full Board on February 15th. Chair Steintrager explained the motivation behind the campus experience requirement and emphasized that the regulation would allow faculty to develop online majors, minors, and other programs but not fully online undergraduate degrees. Fully online degrees could have been allowed upon Senate approval of a variance (as defined in SB 80.D) to the regulation.

During the brief discussion, individual Regents raised questions which Chair Steintrager was not given the opportunity to answer and one Regent mischaracterized SR 630.E as a categorical ban on online degrees. The Board disapproved the regulation and reaffirmed campus autonomy to determine requirements for undergraduate degree programs. The Senate subsequently sought, and received, clarification from Chair Lieb and Chair Park that the Board was not suggesting a broader assertion of campus autonomy beyond the current restricted case of undergraduate degree approval. On March 20th, Chair Steintrager delivered pointed remarks to the Regents about how the February 15th presentation of the campus experience requirement unfolded, asserting that Senate faculty believed that the Board's apparent resistance to engaging in thoughtful discussion presented a serious problem for shared governance.

PROPOSED REGENTS POLICY ON AWARDING DEGREES POSTHUMOUSLY

In 2018, UCEP began devising a systemwide policy to regulate the posthumous awarding of baccalaureate and graduate degrees which was ultimately endorsed by Academic Council and Academic Assembly in spring 2019. The [Senate recommended](#) the proposed policy to the president as a Regents policy, however, the policy was put on hold while the provost solicited feedback from campus administrators. After the administrators' feedback was sent to the Senate's executive director, the proposed policy did not move forward. In October 2023, UCEP's chair and the chair of the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs agreed to resume working on the policy. Representatives from the two committees incorporated the feedback from the administrators into the policy and also drafted language for a new

systemwide Senate regulation to be added as a new Article 4 in Part III, Title II Chapter 1. UCEP approved the draft proposed Senate regulation on March 4th and on March 27th Academic Council agreed to distribute the proposal for systemwide review in fall 2024.

STATEMENT ON UC QUALITY

Originally developed in 2009-2010 by the UC Commission on the Future's Education and Curriculum working group, a revised statement on the characteristics of educational quality at the University of California was approved by UCEP and Academic Council in March 2011. In October 2023, Senate leadership asked the committee to update the statement with the goal of establishing a clear, shared agreement upon how "quality" is defined. Over the course of several months, two members of UCEP led the effort to overhaul the statement which was submitted to Council in January and disseminated for systemwide review. The draft quality statement was also shared with the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modality and UC Quality Undergraduate Education to inform its deliberations. In May, [Council asked UCEP](#) to address the questions and concerns raised by the divisional and systemwide Senate committees. The committee edited the statement in June and July and forwarded the revised document to Council. On July 24th, Council decided that the systemwide feedback was adequately incorporated and agreed to endorse the modified document which will be submitted to Academic Assembly.

REGIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION TERMINOLOGY

At the beginning of the academic year, UCEP was notified by Undergraduate Admissions at UCOP that UC was using outdated terminology to refer to accrediting institutions and that the new accrediting agency distinctions should be adopted to avoid a situation where course articulations are rejected for using outdated names. The committee consulted with the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and the University Committee on Preparatory Education and in December, UCEP members agreed that UC should continue to accept courses only from institutions accredited by the formerly labeled "regional accreditors." The [committee's recommendation](#) was endorsed by Council in January and communicated to the provost.

CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

In the past, Undergraduate Admissions looked to BOARS for decisions about whether students should receive credit by exam for prior learning by demonstrating mastery of course outcomes by taking a course or exam prior to college matriculation. This year, Undergraduate Admissions informed UCEP that many exams that have primarily been international, like Cambridge, are now being offered in the United States and have been increasingly taken by students who come to UC. However, Admissions is less familiar with these exams than the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB), and there is no uniform process for reviewing them. UCEP contemplated a systemwide policy on awarding college credit to students who earn a specific score on an external course or exam, and the committee also consulted with the chair of BOARS. There was firm agreement that taking one exam is no substitute for the robust educational experience offered in the classroom. In a [June memo](#), UCEP notified Undergraduate Admissions that it does not approve vetting and adoption of exams administered by outside entities beyond the AP and IB, organizations whose offerings UC currently accepts.

This spring, the committee reviewed the AP Pre-Calculus and the AP African American Studies exams to determine if college credit should be conferred for either of them. Since [SR 621](#) establishes that BOARS is responsible for determining if credit from an external standardized exam can be transferred to UC, UCEP reported its recommendations to that Board. In the case of the AP Pre-Calculus exam, UCEP found that the exam is not a direct replacement for introductory math because it includes some material that many campuses offer in their introductory math courses as well as material considered remedial. Therefore, UCEP recommended against conferring systemwide course credit for the AP Pre-Calculus exam. Following a careful review and thoughtful deliberations, the committee did recommend to BOARS that course credit should be conferred to students with a score of 3 or better on the AP African American Studies exam.

SYSTEMWIDE COURSES AND PROGRAMS

Proposed revision to [Senate Bylaw \(SB\) 170.B.3](#): SB 170.B.3 indicates that UCEP shall “Approve UC undergraduate courses as systemwide courses to be listed in Divisional catalogues.” Elsewhere, “courses” and “programs” are used interchangeably, as in SR 630.D which states “...a student in the Education Abroad Program, the UC Washington, D.C., Program, the UC Center in Sacramento Program, or the NRS California Ecology and Conservation Course, which are systemwide courses...” The committee agreed to propose a revision to SB 170.B.3 to clarify that UCEP is responsible for approving and reviewing both systemwide courses and systemwide programs and that reviews will occur every seven years. This proposal will be submitted to Academic Council in September.

In 2009, UCEP adopted [a policy on the approval of systemwide courses](#) which was revised in 2011. The committee’s [2014 guidelines for systemwide course approvals](#) established that systemwide course/program status will be reviewed every seven years. UCEP approved the Natural Reserve System (NRS) California Ecology and Conservation course in 2015 as the first systemwide course under these guidelines, and its [2022 review](#) is UCEP’s first for a systemwide course. The review of the NRS field course informed the committee’s systemwide course and program self-study report template which was finalized in 2023.

Review of the UC Washington Center program (UCDC): UCEP started laying the groundwork for the first-ever academic review of UCDC in 2020. This involved partnering with Senate leadership to communicate the committee’s intent to review the program to the provost which was documented in [a formal memo in May 2023](#). UCDC submitted a preliminary report to UCEP in December 2023 which lacked sufficient detail for assessment. UCEP leadership and the subcommittee met with UCDC’s executive director to clarify the committee’s expectations, and a more detailed revised self-study report was submitted in April. In May, the members of UCEP voted to approve and close the review of UCDC. The [review was endorsed](#) by Academic Council in July and the report was shared with the provost with a request that it be distributed to campus administrators.

Review of UCDC’s Design Your Life course: In addition to the review of the entire UCDC program, UCEP reviewed the Design Your Life course proposal. In March and May, the committee discussed the course which UCDC plans to offer in the summer. Members expressed concerns that the workload did not match the requested number of units or awarding a letter grade. UCEP members voted to designate this course as a 2-unit, graded Pass/No Pass course that is not allowed for repeat.

UC Center Sacramento (UCCS): The UC Davis Senate's Undergraduate Council's Special Academic Program (SAP) subcommittee has exercised administrative oversight for the systemwide undergraduate UC Center Sacramento program since 2010 and the program was scheduled for a review by the SAP in 2023-2024. In the fall, the SAP reviewed the report provided by UCCS and found it to be insufficient. In January, UCD's Undergraduate Council recommended to the UCD Senate chair that UCCS should be reviewed at the systemwide level by UCEP every seven years and this recommendation was forwarded to the systemwide Senate chair. UCEP considered the request from UCD in March and members voted unanimously to assume responsibility for the regular review of UCCS. The provost was notified of this decision in a [May memo](#) which indicated that UCEP's review would be conducted in 2024-2025.

Criteria for Senate review of certain UC Online courses: Throughout the year, a subcommittee of UCEP developed criteria for evaluating certain UC Online courses that are available for cross-campus enrollment. This effort was prompted by concerns related to UC Online courses with very high enrollment that lack rigor and for which many students receive As. Even more significant are concerns that UC Online courses may not be meeting federal guidelines for financial aid or WASC Senior College and University Commission requirements. Presentations from UC Online in December and May, as in past years, have not offered basic data in spite of [UCEP's July 2022 memo](#). Although the executive director indicated that UC Online would provide an annual report by the end of the 2023/24 academic year, this was not completed. The committee is concerned that the program has a history of evasive responses and has failed to deliver the substantive, reliable data needed for a thorough evaluation of the courses. A memo formally requesting that UC Online share its annual report with UCEP each year was transmitted to Academic Council for its September agenda. This memo outlines the committee's longstanding interest in the evaluation of this program and the persistent difficulties with acquiring meaningful data.

CCC BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROPOSALS

Assembly Bill (AB) 927, instituted in 2021, allows campuses within the California Community College (CCC) system to offer up to thirty new bachelor's degree programs each year, with the stipulation that the proposed programs may not duplicate existing programs offered either by the UC or the California State University (CSU) systems. UC's [internal process](#) entails Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) at the UC Office of the President sending the proposals to the divisional vice provosts and deans for undergraduate education (VPDUEs) for review. Since IRAP's process did not specifically or formally involve Senate faculty, UCEP agreed to codify a role for the Senate in the internal process by requiring divisions' Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) or Undergraduate Council (UGC) to sign off on the administrators' review.

The committee's proposal was considered by [Academic Council in May](#) and generated concerns about CEP/UGC workloads and duplication of effort. IRAP consultants shared the proposal with the VPDUEs who expressed concern that involving the Senate would prevent the administrators from completing the work in 30 days as required by AB 927. Based on the feedback from Council and the VPDUEs, the new plan is for IRAP to send the CCC's proposals to the UCEP analyst to forward to UCEP members for their records. All steps delineated in IRAP's internal process remain unchanged.

SYSTEMWIDE SENATE REGULATION 634

In April, the committee considered a request from UCI's CEP to review the minimum graduation requirements specified in SR 634, specifically the cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirement of 2.0 and this included consulting with UCI's Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning. The vice provost described the case of an individual student who, over a ten-year period, attempted 222 units and passed 183 units (including passing all degree requirements) but whose GPA fell below 2.0. Based on the campus data members gathered about the average GPA and the number of students who might benefit from some level of grade forgiveness, UCEP members felt that the requirement for a 2.0 GPA for graduation has essentially been lowered due to grade inflation. It was also noted that subpar advising can contribute to students' running afoul of SR 634, so divisions should review the internal processes that could prevent such situations. The committee voted to maintain the existing language and 2.0 GPA requirement in SR 634 and concluded that retroactive withdrawal from specific courses is a mechanism that can be used on a case-by-case basis.

PROPOSAL TO REMOVE "PROBATION" FROM SYSTEMWIDE SENATE REGULATIONS

In April, UCEP discussed a request from the UC Undergraduate Academic Advising Council (UCUAAC) to consider replacing the word "probation" in SR 900 and SR 902 due to its negative connotation and resultant stigma. Members appreciated UCUAAC's position, trusting the judgement of people who work closely with and know students and their academic circumstances better than anyone else. After debating possible alternatives to "probation," the committee agreed upon "academic notice" as a term that conveys the action is serious. In June, Council enthusiastically approved UCEP's proposed revision to SR 900 and SR 902 and decided the proposal should go directly to Academic Assembly for a vote in the June 21, 2024 meeting. Assembly overwhelmingly approved the wording change to SR 900 and SR 902.

CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT CENTER NETWORK VISION DOCUMENT

The director of UCSD's Academic Integrity Office met with the committee in June to report on the work of a systemwide ad hoc group studying the creation of computer-based assessment centers located at UC, CCC, and CSU campuses. The presentation included an overview of the challenges faced by UC students and faculty and the potential benefits of assessment centers. Although there are situations that the centers will not address, members agreed that UCEP should support the creation of an assessment center network and a memo will be on Academic Council's September agenda.

OTHER ISSUES AND ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

In response to requests for formal comment from the Academic Council, UCEP issued reviews of the following:

- UC San Francisco Variance to SR 740
- UC Irvine's School of Population and Public Health proposal
- UC San Diego's School of Computing, Information and Data Science proposal

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

UCEP REPRESENTATION

UCEP Chair Cocco represented the committee at meetings of the Academic Council and Academic Assembly. Chair Cocco also participated on the Provost's monthly budget briefing teleconferences, the Academic Planning Council, ICAS, and the UC Online Advisory Council. UCEP was represented by David Cuthbert (UCSC) on the UC Washington Center's Academic Advisory Council and by Geoff Cook (UCSD) on the UC Education Abroad Advisory Board.

COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UCEP benefited from consultation with and reports from: Todd Greenspan, Executive Advisor, Academic Planning and Policy Development, Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP); Carmen Corona, Director, Academic Planning and Policy, IRAP; Ethan Savage, Academic Planning and Policy Analyst, IRAP; Han Mi Yoon-Wu, Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director, Undergraduate Admissions, Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs, (GUEA); Chase Fischerhall, Director, A to G and Transfer Articulation Policy, GUEA; and Rolin Moe, Executive Director, UC Online, GUEA. In addition, UCEP consulted the Academic Senate chair and vice chair, who provided updates on issues facing the Academic Council and Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

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