

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Videoconference Minutes

Monday, November 2, 2020

Attending: Daniel Potter, Chair (UCD), Mary Lynch, Vice Chair (UCSF), Tony Keaveny (UCB), Katheryn Russ (UCD), Charles Smith (UCI), Megan McEvoy (UCLA), Matthew Hibbing (UCM), Juliann Allison (UCR), Geoffrey Cook (UCSD), Mary Brenner (UCSB), Tracy Larrabee (UCSC), Anne Marie-Martin (Graduate Student Representative), Zoe Hayes (Undergraduate Student Representative), Todd Greenspan (Director, Academic Planning), Ethan Savage (Analyst, Academic Planning), Ellen Osmundson (Director, ILTI), Mary Gauvain (Chair, Academic Senate), Robert Horwitz (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I. Announcements

Chair Potter attended a recent meeting of the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS), and the agenda topics included articulation, concerns about mental health resources for students and faculty, and programs for students who are currently or formerly incarcerated. The "[Principles for Four-Year Undergraduate Education of Incarcerated Students](#)," created by UCEP and endorsed by Academic Council in June, were well received by ICAS members.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: UCEP's October 5, 2020 videoconference minutes were approved.

III. Consultation with the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI)

- *Ellen Osmundson, Program Director, ILTI*

Director Osmundson shared that the report on the restructuring of ILTI, completed in 2018, was sent to the Senate in August. However, Chair Gauvain was concerned that the report was out dated and asked Provost Brown to add information about current and future ILTI activities. The updated report will be transmitted to the Senate shortly. The director commented that campuses are taking different approaches to proctoring remote exams, and mentioned that the UCI Paul Merage School of Business is using the Canvas learning management system (LMS) that integrates tools that support interactivity and interaction and helps with developing communities of practice. ILTI can arrange a demonstration of this instance of Canvas for UCEP. Information Technology units at each campus are able to integrate tools into the LMS.

ILTI is working on a technical solution for the taxonomy to track the specific reasons that students or advisors drop a cross-campus online course. ILTI's technical team is also working on a formal process to verify that students have met prerequisites for online courses. About 10% of ILTI courses have prerequisites and advisors have to manually confirm that prerequisites have been met. Director Osmundson will follow-up with the analyst to get the committee current information about the taxonomy for drop reasons and prerequisite verification.

IV. Systemwide Review: Report from the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

UCEP discussed the report from the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (OUDTF) in October and Vice Chair Lynch provided a set of questions for members to discuss with their divisional committees. Members are asked to indicate if their divisional committees support any of the three options put forth by the Task Force.

Discussion: Members repeated concerns about ILTI offering degrees. The Senate's purview over online degree programs should be clearly delineated, and it was noted that, because of the pandemic, administrators are making decisions about how remote instruction is delivered. One suggestion is that UCEP should consider policies related to how online degree programs will be approved and the analyst noted that the policies could be added to the Compendium. A member believes that aspects of the on-campus experience can be replicated in an online platform. Administrators assert that online courses will save money, but high quality online courses are expensive. Some administrators are suggesting that offering online degrees will address equity issues, but evidence from other universities shows that students from underrepresented groups do not succeed in online programs. Furthermore, campus administrators seem to have taken the OUDTF report as a signal to begin developing fully online undergraduate degree programs.

The UCSC divisional committee is in favor of the second option in the OUDTF report. UCI is not in favor of top-down systemwide policies on online degree programs. UCSB's committee is not supportive of any of the three models in the report and questioned whether students are interested in online degrees. Several Senate committees at UCLA have discussed the OUDTF report and there is not much enthusiasm for online undergraduate degree programs. Concerns include creating a second tier of students and exacerbating inequities for certain students. UCR's committee agreed that the first option might be acceptable if three quarters of the courses for the degree are taken on campus but emphasizes the importance of investing in online degree programs to ensure they are equivalent to traditional courses. The UCSD committee rejected the third option in the report and is supportive of the second option, but believes that development of online degree programs should be department driven. A member suggested that it should be acceptable for students to string together online courses to get a degree organically.

Chair Potter remarked that the OUDTF was an Academic Senate task force and should not be conflated with ILTI or the Office of the President. Members will forward their written feedback to the analyst and UCEP will finalize its response on December 7th in order to meet the December 9th deadline for comment.

V. Updating Systemwide Senate Regulations

Chair Potter asked members to report on the divisional committee discussions about systemwide Senate Regulations that could be updated. This consultation with divisional committees will help determine support for proceeding with any of the possible revisions. As a result of the pandemic, it became apparent that the various regulations related to grading are inconsistent. At some campuses, a C is a passing grade whereas a C- is a passing grade at others. The chair asks if campuses could agree to either a C or C- for the passing grade or to eliminating the plus and minus from letter grades.

Discussion: UCI has established that Senate Regulation (SR) 610, the residency requirement, does not mean physical presence, and the courses approved and offered by UCI faculty meet the requirement, including online courses. At least one campus would resist making any major changes to grading in the midst of a pandemic. Senate Regulation 782 limits the percentage of courses that can be taken on a Pass/No Pass basis, and this could be changed so the grade point average (GPA) is only calculated if some percentage of the students' credits are taken for letter grades. This would remove the limit on the percentage of courses that can be taken for Pass/No Pass, but if more than 50% are taken for Pass/No Pass students would effectively not have a GPA. UCEP members will continue to gather perspectives from their divisional committees about possible changes to regulations, including SR 780.C.1 and SR 312.

VI. Intercampus Recognition of Transferable Minors

Members were asked to gather informal feedback from their divisional committees about intercampus

recognition of minors, a topic first discussed in October.

Discussion: UCD has a policy on establishing majors and the divisional committee would prefer to continue evaluating minors on a case by case basis. UCSB's committee has concerns about the logistics involved but believes that recognizing minors would be advantageous for students. Chair Potter would like members to continue to get input from their campuses.

VII. Consultation with the Academic Senate Office

- *Mary Gauvain, Chair, Academic Senate*
- *Robert Horwitz, Vice Chair, Academic Senate*

During Academic Council's meeting last week, President Drake's proposed curtailment plan was the major topic of discussion. Council believes that the plan lacks sufficient detail and the Senate's response to the plan is being prepared. The Committee on Preparatory Education is considering proposing a task force to look at the Entry Level Writing Requirement, and UCEP may be involved with this effort. Chair Gauvain looks forward to UCEP's comments on the report from the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. Senate leadership joined a meeting of the Global Climate Leadership Council (GCLC) which was established by former UC President Napolitano. The GCLC may be expanded to include Agriculture and Natural Resources. UCEP should think about ways to integrate the educational enterprise into activities related to the climate crisis and climate justice issues could be viewed as an interdisciplinary effort. Campuses might consider changing their General Education requirements to include a course on the climate crisis.

Discussion: A member suggested that the climate crisis effort should involve Native American Studies scholars who have expertise in Native American land management techniques but are often overlooked in these conversations. The Senate needs a better understanding of the ways faculty and students are already engaged with climate crisis activities throughout the system. Members expressed concerns about the discussion with ILTI earlier today. The ILTI director mentioned the task force report on online degrees and seems to expect that the Initiative will have a central role if such programs are developed. Chair Gauvain noted that the Senate could offer more guidance to ILTI regarding the types of courses it supports. The committee described recent discussions about assessment, grading and stressors on students as well pedagogy, remote instruction and the pandemic.

VIII. Consultation with the Office of the President

- *Todd Greenspan, Director, Academic Planning, IRAP*
- *Ethan Savage, Analyst, Academic Planning, IRAP*

The Regents would like a presentation on technology in the classroom and it will not be limited to just online courses. In January, the presentation will be "Outcomes & Equity: The future of instruction: Designing equitable classrooms and technology-enhanced learning at UC" and the second part of this topic, planned for March, is "Redesigning curriculum to address equity gaps." Director Greenspan reported that enrollment of non-resident students will be down in the fall, but the number of California residents enrolling will be an increase over last year. UC is not seeing what is occurring nationally with enrollment at other universities. New data about the pandemic from the Undergraduate Experience Survey is available here: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/ucues-longitudinal>.

Discussion: A member suggested that presentations for the Regents should underscore the expense associated with offering high quality online courses. According to Director Greenspan, some Regents think that online instruction is scalable and, therefore, a viable alternative to fixed sized classrooms and large lecture halls.

IX. New Business

Concerns about Pass/No Pass and grading flexibility:

Faculty at UCB are discussing continued flexibility for Pass/No Pass grading and students are campaigning for Pass/No Pass to satisfy degree requirements. The Undergraduate Council sent a proposal to Berkeley's Divisional Council on grading being considered today. Administrators are not genuinely acknowledging students' concerns or what they are experiencing, whereas faculty are empathetic in general. Many policies related to degree requirements are only applicable to students heading to graduate school and might be unnecessary. Decisions about instruction being made right now seem arbitrary and there is significant misinformation circulating, so guidance from UCEP may encourage recalcitrant faculty to be more open minded. The committee should collect information about what campuses are planning for winter and spring,

A member would like UCEP to immediately issue a statement emphasizing that things are not back to normal as the pandemic continues to impact students, and that being flexible is good educational policy. Academic Personnel committees are recognizes that nothing is business as usual for faculty in terms of their research, but there is a disconnect when it comes to students. One member observed that the dire economic and social consequences of the crisis being felt by 30 to 40% of the student population are not being experienced by most faculty. UCD's Office of Undergraduate Education has started gathering testimonials from students so faculty have data on what is happening and the Undergraduate Council is asking for campus statistics on the economic and mental health distress among UCD students. Students' mental health has severely worsened during the pandemic and support services are inadequate, especially for international students. Faculty are sympathetic to the situation students are in but also do not feel that they can pass students who do not know the material. The committee will consider writing a white paper describing the issues under discussion and outlining the flexibility that campuses are offering or planning to offer.

X. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 1:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Dan Potter