

## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

## Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 4, 2023

**Attending:** Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI) (videoconference), A. Katie Harris, Vice Chair (UCD), Darlene Francis (UCB) (videoconference), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Lopes (UCI) (videoconference), Catherine Sugar (UCLA), Heather Bortfeld (UCM), Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR) (videoconference), Geoffrey Cook (UCSD) (videoconference), Madeleine Norris (UCSF), Ben Hardekopf (UCSB) (videoconference), David Cuthbert (UCSC) (videoconference), Megan Chung (Undergraduate Student Representative), Rolin Moe (Executive Director, UC Online), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning and Policy Development, Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP)), Ethan Savage (Academic Planning and Policy Analyst, IRAP), James Steintrager (Chair, Academic Senate), Steven W. Cheung (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

**I. Consultation with Senate Leadership**

- *James Steintrager, Chair, Academic Council*
- *Steven Cheung, Vice Chair, Academic Council*

A focal point of the recent Regents meeting was campus climate issues related to Israel and Palestine. President Drake's remarks about educational programming that would entail a viewpoint neutral history of the Middle East raised concerns about academic freedom and objections from some faculty. In addition to making the case for competitive total remuneration, Chair Steintrager spoke to the Board about academic freedom and freedom of expression in an academic context. The Regents have a renewed interest in not allowing political statements to be posted on department websites. The University Committee on Academic Freedom produced recommendations for how departments interested in posting political statements on their websites should proceed. However, departments are not following those recommendations, and Chair Steintrager indicated that the Regents intend to establish an informal workgroup to study political statements being posted on department websites.

Vice Chair Cheung is the faculty advisor to the Regents Finance Committee which discussed a 4.2% increase to the faculty salary scales as a way to help mitigate recent spikes in insurance premiums. Employees will not be required to increase their contributions to the UC Retirement Plan (UCRP) this year, but the Regents will continue discussing UCRP including the proposal to achieve full funding in 25 years. The Regents approved plans for the UCM Medical Education Building and the UCLA Gayley Towers redevelopment. There is a project to build a 60 room facility for short term visits by faculty and staff to the national labs.

Chair Steintrager announced that the Senate will form an ad hoc workgroup on artificial intelligence (AI) that should include a UCEP representative. Meanwhile, the provost is sponsoring a congress on AI in February 2024 which will not take up issues of interest to the Senate including academic integrity. The Senate will conduct a systemwide faculty survey on labor relations and the new labor landscape to gather information about how faculty are being impacted and ideas about what should be done.

**II. General Updates**

Vice Chair Harris shared that the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate's (ICAS) subcommittee on California Community Colleges' (CCC) baccalaureate degree duplication has met several times. The subcommittee is tasked with setting the criteria for determining what constitutes duplication and creating a process for examining the proposed degrees. The subcommittee was given a framework agreed upon following bilateral discussions between the CCCs and California State University Chancellor's Office which does not mention UC. Vice Chair Harris thanked Analyst Savage for flagging problems with the framework and the rubric the subcommittee developed and reported that Vice Chair Cheung was able to get those issues addressed. The subcommittee's recommendations were approved by ICAS last week.

Vice Chair Cheung explained that the framework was amended to make it clear that the CCCs bear the burden of coordinating the reviews. If the segments do not agree, a neutral third party will make recommendations to the Chancellors. The process will also utilize a more holistic or qualitative approach to assessing if programs are more alike than different. The proposals will first be submitted by the CCCs to IRAP and that office will bring in the relevant UC faculty discipline experts to assess if proposed degree programs have certain features.

### **III. Consent Calendar**

**Action:** The committee approved today's agenda.

**Action:** The November 6, 2023 minutes were approved.

### **IV. Consultation with UC Online**

- *Rolin Moe, Executive Director, UC Online*

Executive Director Moe joined UCEP for the first time to briefly touch on a number of issues including the Deloitte report on UC Online and the questions in the committee's July 2022 memo. The executive director will give a presentation on the program to the Regents in January and expects to have more comprehensive data at that time on things such as course enrollments. Executive Director Moe is visiting the campuses and has seen the benefits UC Online offers along with multiple challenges. The cross-campus enrollment system is intended to make enrollment in courses across the campuses as frictionless as possible but it is not effective. The campus visits have involved conversations about professional development, educational technology, cross-campus initiatives, and initiatives with the state and around the nation. The new executive director's goal is for UC Online to play a foundational role in those conversations and assist with expertise and facilitation. Proposed revisions to the program's mission, vision, and values are being vetted by its Advisory Council and Graduate, Undergraduate, and Equity Affairs at UCOP. Executive Director Moe remarked about the importance of keeping students at the center of what is happening with online education and about access and inclusivity.

The provost's congress on online education in April will be an opportunity for different individuals and groups to come together to discuss the role of online education. In collaboration with the CCC and California State University systems, UC Online is working on an initiative called the Campaign for Transfer Excellence to identify how to directly address obstacles students face at two-year institutions. Another collaboration with the National Education Equity Lab involves offering online courses at Title I high schools where students may not have had any exposure to college or university with the goal of helping them recognize their potential to succeed in a university setting. UC's contract with Examity, the online proctoring software, is expiring at the end of December and it will not be renewed due to concerns related to ethics and privacy. Questions related to this include what UC Online can do to ensure sound proctoring of

exams along with success in online courses, and information about what the campuses are doing is being gathered to help determine if UC could develop its own system.

Regarding UCEP's 2022 memo about UC Online's data collection and reporting, Executive Director Moe wished to acknowledge the areas where the program has fallen short in terms of data, indicating that the program is committed to ensuring data is appropriately collected, secured, and analyzed. The executive director is working with Director Furgiuele in IRAP to codify a relationship for the collection and analysis data so when UCEP sees UC Online data in the future, the committee will know it has been verified by IRAP. The number of students who have enrolled in UC Online courses has not been entirely clear and IRAP will adjust when and how enrollment is documented to enable precise reporting of the unduplicated total enrollment during a specific period of time. Data about students enrolled on the first day of the course, at census (third week for quarter campuses and fifth week for semester campuses), and in the course at the end of the term will also be more accurate. The executive director remarked that the census number is the most important data point for UC Online because it is used across the system.

The different agreements UC Online has with each campus about the demographic data the program is able to collect makes strategic planning difficult. However, IRAP should be able to reconstitute a lot of demographic information once they have the campus data, and Executive Director Moe wants to codify uniform agreements with the campuses about the data that will be reported going forward. The current data agreements also establish that the program will not receive information about courses that are only available to students at their home campus. The executive director was excited to report that the Advisory Committee is working with IRAP to create an executive dashboard that will enable campuses to access data and generate reports. Once the dashboard is launched by mid-spring the program will establish regular assessment and reporting cycles, which will include annual reports. In terms of how UCEP can help, UC Online hopes the committee will help advocate for streamlined data processes and policies between the program and the campuses.

Executive Director Moe described the problems identified by Deloitte, which are consistent with issues pinpointed by UCEP, and the changes that will be made to address them. UC Online is shifting how funding is provided so it is aligned with the campuses' strategic priorities and supports courses that help students graduate on time instead of boutique courses. The program is investigating why enrollment decreases between registration and the census date. The executive director shared data on grades, noting that UCM has a larger number of students failing UC Online courses than other campuses, although errors in how grades have been coded make it difficult to know exactly what is occurring. General problems with data and transparency have prevented the program from showcasing its value and what it can do at UC and beyond. The executive director agreed to share his slides and an evaluation of a UCSC course (which looks at performance in downstream courses) with the committee.

**Discussion:** A member remarked that online courses may have outcomes as good or even better than in-person courses when they are highly resourced and taught by well-trained faculty, but the average online courses consist of a professor uploading videos and lectures. The executive director is more optimistic about online courses, asserting that outcomes depend on the type and purpose of the course, and agrees that good online courses require more engagement and investment than traditional courses. Chair Cocco would be interested in seeing the grade point averages for the UCM students to understand if the failing grades they received in UC Online courses are aberrant and asserted that the number of A's shown in the executive director's slides was disproportionate.

The chair welcomed the news that some faculty are considering requiring students take exams in person and recommends that UC should set up testing centers to help alleviate some of the concerns about academic integrity in online courses. As UCEP pursues creating a mechanism for reviewing UC Online courses and ensuring they are legitimate, Executive Director Moe hopes that there are comparable evaluations of in-person courses. The executive director reported hearing concerns that campus processes for getting online courses approved are different from the processes for in-person courses, and these differences should be codified so the reasons for disapproval are clear. Chair Cocco pointed out that online courses have different federal requirements for engagement and interactions.

The syllabi for UC Online courses indicate how assessments be conducted and if students are expected to be on campus at certain times. The program will figure out what is needed to work with professionals, parents, people with disabilities, and others with access issues. Executive Director Moe is having conversations with people at the campuses and UCOP about ensuring the needs of individuals with disabilities are met, which includes faculty having what they need to support these populations in the online modality. It was noted that creating alternate educational experiences for disabled students is antithetical to the Americans with Disabilities Act which specifically states that in-person experiences need to be inclusive whenever possible, and the executive director agreed that more outreach will be done to determine the options that disabled students would like to have. Chair Cocco proposed that Executive Director Moe should meet with UCEP again in May if the program's annual report will be ready.

#### **V. Consultation with Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)**

- *Todd Greenspan, Executive Advisor, Academic Planning & Policy Development, IRAP*
- *Ethan Savage, Academic Planning & Policy Analyst, IRAP*

IRAP is preparing presentations on the annual accountability report and on diversity for the January and March meetings of the Regents Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and there will be updates from the task force on transfer and on the compact. Presentations planned for May include updates on campus efforts to improve timely graduation including UCM's degree completion pilot program and the annual report on undergraduate requirements and comprehensive review. IRAP is reviewing the enrollment plans for 2024-2025 and UC has made a major effort to reach the undergraduate enrollment goals set by the legislature and governor so monies will not be returned to the state. This means that UC must add another 3k students over the current year to achieve those goals next year. Some growth in undergraduate enrollment will be achieved through reducing non-resident student enrollment. Enrollments in the CCCs have declined over the last two years but are now rebounding. IRAP is seeing decreased graduate student enrollment, but the numbers are not definitive at this time. The committee was reminded about the provost's upcoming congresses.

**Discussion:** Members expressed concerns about the decline in graduate student enrollment. Each department has to determine how to cover the increased costs associate with the new contract with graduate student workers and this causes a good deal of uncertainty. Chair Cocco remarked that undergraduate enrollment has decreased by 15% nationally and there are a number of small colleges in the North East that closed because they could not meet their minimum enrollment. Low birth rates and immigration policies will have an impact on the number of college students in California in the near-term. Since the congress on AI may only tangentially deal with academic integrity, UCEP should continue advocating for solutions such as testing centers.

## **VI. Updated Statement on UC Quality**

- *Catherine Sugar (UCLA) and Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR)*

The UCLA and UCR representatives have been updating the statement on UC quality created by UCEP over a decade ago, which notably does not address online education. Components of the original statement have been reorganized to provide greater context at the beginning of the document, but this section could be expanded to discuss the residency requirement. The revised statement does not focus heavily on online education but highlights concerns raised about the online modality. The representatives made significant changes to the section on the oversight of quality and incorporated language about adapting to a rapidly evolving world, including technology and new social paradigms.

This statement can be used to underscore that important elements could be missing if online education is not implemented in a thoughtful way. To this end, more explicit information about the value of informal interactions and the campus experience has been added. There is also a new emphasis on the necessity of training, course development, and resources for faculty related to pedagogy and different modalities. The representatives wanted to underline that resources must be invested to provide a UC quality education. Members were invited to offer feedback on the revised document.

**Discussion:** One suggestion is to create overarching categories of the pillars of a quality UC education which would help isolate the specific standards a given program does not meet. The analyst reminded the committee that Chair Steintrager has stressed the need for data to support the Senate's position about UC quality, but there are concerns about the length of the document. Members suggested various types of data that could be useful including data from the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey on participation in a research lab or community project. Chair Cocco noted that over 40% of UC graduates go on to attain a graduate degree, so faculty should be teaching at a level which will enable students to succeed in graduate school. UC's graduation rates range from 94% at UCB to 71% at UCM, illustrating that UC not only offers a quality education and degree but enables students to complete rigorous programs. This is in stark contrast to many fully online undergraduate degree programs that have graduation rates at and well below 50%. Data might be included in a separate document.

The UCLA and UCR representatives will edit the statement based on today's input and it will be sent to Academic Council with a request for comments before UCEP approves it. This updated statement on UC quality will likely be read by the upcoming Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modality and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs and it may eventually be seen by the Regents.

## **VII. Regional/Institutional Accreditation Terminology**

Chair Cocco explained that the federal government previously maintained two lists of accrediting agencies, one with regional accreditation agencies and the other with national accreditation agencies. The second list includes a large variety of different accreditation agencies. The Department of Education combined the two lists, and the CSU system has decided to accept any classes from any school accredited by any agency on the new list. Whereas the regional agencies look at how a university or college determines course content, some of the other accreditation agencies approve courses which may not prepare a student for a UC program. Chair Cocco proposes that UCEP approve the new names of the seven previously regional accreditation agencies with which UC has previously worked and that

students will petition to transfer credit from a school that was accredited by one of the other agencies. The names of the regional agencies will be changed where they are identified in UC policy documents.

**Discussion:** Although it will result in differing policies, UC should not follow the CSU's lead by accepting accreditation from all agencies on the combined list. A member suspects that UC's peer institutions and R1 schools use the regional accreditation agencies. In the suggested petition process, it should be evident if a student is asking for transfer credit from an institution that is not on the approved list of accreditors, particularly if they are not transferring from a major university or college. The process should entail an evaluation of the courses by the UC admissions office which may include asking faculty in the department to approve granting transfer credit. The new California General Education Transfer Curriculum will require UC and CSU to accept the same general education credits, but UC will have the discretion to decide what courses shall count toward a major. Members expressed concerns about potentially granting transfer credit for courses taken at schools not accredited by approved agencies. Chair Cocco acknowledged the difficulty of this situation and concluded that at this point the best option is to stipulate that any classes that get transferred in toward a degree program have to be vetted if they are not from a CCC or CSU.

**Action:** A motion to endorse the new names for the regional accreditation agencies was made, seconded, and approved by a unanimous vote.

#### **VIII. Next Steps: Credit by Examination**

UCEP has had two recent discussions regarding credit by examination and a written policy is needed regarding the entities for which UC will provide this type of credit. The current list of entities is short but there are new for-profit companies. Chair Cocco asked for two volunteers to draft the policy statement providing guidance for how credit by exams is granted on the campuses. This statement will summarize what is accepted right now.

**Discussion:** The committee discussed concerns about the use of credit by examination and members agreed that there is no desire to expand its use.

**Action:** The UCSF and UCSD representatives volunteered to work on the credit by exam policy statement.

#### **IX. UCSF Variance to SR 740 and SFR 745**

- *Madeleine Norris (UCSF)*

UCSF's Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) identified discrepancies between how courses are classified at the systemwide level versus at UCSF. Since UCSF does not have an undergraduate program, the courses do not follow systemwide Senate Regulation (SR) 740 for numbering lower-level courses from one to 99. For example, the physiotherapy program has first- and second-year courses that are at the 200 level, whereas there are anatomy courses for medicine which are all 100 level but some of them are first year and some are fourth year courses. There is no alignment with the systemwide classification, and one reason for this is to make the courses identifiable for licensing exams. The COCI is proposing that each school at UCSF be given the ability to write their own regulations for their course numbering and that UCSF be granted a variance to SR 740. Chair Cocco thinks the request is straightforward but if UCSF should ever contribute courses to UC Online it is recommended that different course numbers should be used to avoid confusing undergraduate students.

**Action:** A motion to approve the request for the variance to SR 740 was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**X. Executive Session**

Minutes were not taken during Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 4:00 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams

Attest: Melanie Cocco