

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Videoconference Minutes

Monday, April 1, 2024

Attending: Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI), A. Katie Harris, Vice Chair (UCD), Darlene Francis (UCB), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Nitin Nitin (UCD alternate), Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Lopes (UCI), Catherine Sugar (UCLA), Christopher Viney (UCM), Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR), Madeleine Norris (UCSF), Ben Hardekopf (UCSB), David Cuthbert (UCSC), Megan Chung (Undergraduate Student Representative), Mike Dennin (Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, UCI), 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), Steven W. Cheung (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I. Consultation with Senate Leadership

- *Steven W. Cheung, Vice Chair, Academic Council*

During the last Regents meeting, Chair Lieb announced that Nancy Lee, the chief of staff to the chief executive officer of the Walt Disney Company, has been appointed to the Board and Regent Perez was reappointed, both for 12-year terms. President Drake's remarks highlighted difficult campus climate issues including violent activities that violate principles of community. The president reported the launch of experiential learning opportunities for undocumented students to mitigate the effects of deferring Regents policy 4407. Chair Steintrager's remarks to the Board highlighted the unfair treatment of the Senate as it relates to Senate Regulation 630.E, the campus experience requirement for undergraduate students. The remarks described the degradation of shared governance and raised the possibility of faculty unionization.

The meeting included another discussion about the Regents policy on public and discretionary statements by academic units. This updated policy is modeled on a UCLA draft policy, which has not yet been endorsed by the division's Senate. There is a distinction between public statements and discretionary statements, the latter being unrelated to day-to-day operations. The updated policy will be sent out for expedited review and the Regents could vote on it in May. Chair Steintrager was joined by the chair of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and the chair of the Area C Workgroup for a presentation about mathematics preparation for UC and the three most popular high school data science courses. BOARS supported the Workgroup's conclusion that the data science courses do not validate algebra II. The second phase of the Workgroup's effort will involve identifying essential elements of algebra II required to revamp data science courses to meet validation criteria.

Numerous state assembly and senate bills would amend the constitutional right of UC including one that would impose state labor standards on the University. The Senate and President Drake are vigorously fighting this as it would impair how faculty and graduate students organize their time and labor. The Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities has assessed the hazards of online education and identified principles for piloting a fully online undergraduate degree program. However, progress beyond this is proving elusive, and Vice Chair Cheung and the task force co-chair, Vice Provost Haynes, will attempt to find ways to balance the differing opinions of task force members. Last week, Academic Council voted on the Senate's vice chair-elect for 2024-2025 and the Assembly will approve the appointment in April. Council also discussed extending Senate membership to the health sciences clinical series and the adjunct series, which would completely change the composition of the voting members. The proposed

revision to Academic Personnel Manual policy 285 to change the lecturer with security of employment (LSOEs) title to teaching professor or professor of teaching will undergo review. This proposal is separate from a proposal to give LSOEs equal voting rights in departments.

Discussion: Chair Cocco suggested that the Area C Workgroup's phase two report should include examples of what is learned in algebra II versus in data science. The Regents seemed to believe that Senate faculty are responsible for how algebra is taught in high schools. Vice Chair Cheung asserted that the Senate could recommend that high schools teach algebra in innovative ways to make it more accessible and easier to understand.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved today's agenda.

Action: The March 1st and March 18th, 2024 minutes were approved with one abstention.

III. Chair's Updates

Academic Council endorsed sending the proposed new regulation for awarding degrees posthumously out for systemwide review in the fall. During Council's visit with Academic Personnel consultants, the idea of having a group of faculty available to provide advice during the next negotiation of UAW contracts was floated, but Chair Cocco doubts this will happen.

IV. AP African American Studies Exam

- *Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD)*

Undergraduate Admissions has asked UCEP to decide if the Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies exam should be approved for systemwide credit. The College Board piloted the exam and revised it after conservative critics alleged the exam aims to indoctrinate students. The exam has four sections: the origins of the African diaspora; freedom, enslavement, and resistance; the practice of freedom; and movements and debates. There is a fifth, optional section that covers topics like critical race theory. The College Board states that the exam is designed to be the equivalent of one introductory university course in African American Studies and related fields. Penn State offers three credits for the AP African American Studies exam if students receive a score of four or five and Duke awards one credit for students who score four or five. UC confers different amounts of credit for various AP exams, and UCEP should consider if four or eight quarter units should be awarded for the exam. UC awards eight quarter units for AP World History and four quarter units for Government and Politics. When compared to other AP exams, it would be appropriate to confer four quarter units based on the contents of the AP African American Studies exam.

Discussion: The members support basing the credits awarded on the depth and intensity of the content rather than on the chronological breadth of the exam. It was noted that honors courses vary in how demanding they are, with eight units being conferred for the more intense courses. There is a concern about the expanding reach of AP into UC, and being conservative about awarding credit is appropriate. The cut score for AP exams is typically a three.

Action: A motion was made, seconded and approved to send BOARS a recommendation that four units should be awarded for the AP African American Studies exam for a score of three or better.

V. Criteria for Senate Review of Certain UC Online Courses

- *Ben Hardekopf (UCSB)*

UC Online will need to commit to making data available annually if UCEP is to review these courses, and the committee has started identifying the criteria to be used to determine which courses should be reviewed. Chair Cocco remarked that UC Online does not have a mechanism for removing courses that are no longer offered. UCEP must put forward a strong rationale for why it should review UC Online courses and explain why courses should be removed when they have not been taught for a period of time. Campuses will continue to be responsible for approving courses funded by UC Online, and Chair Cocco noted that the campuses have disparate policies for review and approval of online courses. The committee's proposed review criteria should not ask for something outside the scope of what it was approved to do. For example, not all campuses ask if online courses will involve substantive interactions. UCEP's criteria should refer to Senate Regulations 760 and 772 which are related to federal workload requirements.

Discussion: Executive Advisor Greenspan commented that UC Online does not own the courses so while the program will have enrollment, drop and completion data, the campuses need to be asked for information about academic performance. The initial goal of UCEP's reviews will be to identify egregious examples of courses that are not meeting the bar. Vice Chair Harris posited that once the most problematic courses are dealt with UCEP might start looking at typical courses to ensure they are meeting the committee's standards. But it was argued that the divisions are responsible for monitoring course quality and UCEP would be overstepping its authority if it tries to review courses that are not obviously deficient, especially if members lack the relevant subject matter expertise.

The committee's long-term focus should be ensuring that problematic courses that have been delisted are not reintroduced and that non-compliance with federal regulations is corrected. The goal is not assessing if the content of a course is good or bad. Executive Advisor Greenspan reported that compliance with federal regulations only occurs during the WASC Senior College and University Commission accreditation process, but this review would not reach the degree of granularity UCEP is contemplating. Members will discuss the idea of reviewing UC Online courses with their campus committees and this issue will be on the May agenda.

VI. Review of Systemwide Senate Regulation (SR) 634

- *Mike Dennin, Vice Provost (UCI) & Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Lopez (UCI)*

UCI's Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) discussed systemwide SR 634 which states that a student must have a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) for all courses attempted and the division's regulation stipulating that students must complete 180 units. The UCI CEP considered whether the 2.0 GPA should apply to all courses attempted, to only the number of units needed to graduate, or to all courses making up the 180 units. Faculty in the social sciences were concerned about the unintended consequences for students who fail a lot of courses but are not worried about being kicked out UC, believing they will eventually graduate if they complete 180 units with a 2.0 GPA. Vice Provost Dennin is aware of specific cases where students have a hard time completing their degrees and will never graduate because failing a course requires that they retake the same course again to raise their GPA even if the student is no longer pursuing that major. UCI's committee also pointed out that the regulations say "completed," "attempted," and "passed" and this varying language should be clarified.

An advisor at UCI indicated that any student continuously failing their courses who reaches 180 units will be on probation and disqualified from UC. However, Vice Provost Dennin is concerned

about a case where, after trying for ten years, a student had enough Fs that their total GPA was about a 1.8 who will never get the number of As needed to raise their GPA to 2.0 on all units, but keeps paying UC to take courses. There are philosophical questions about UC's message that, if a student learns what is expected by faculty, after earning 180 units a degree will be awarded. The vice provost reviewed other universities' policies, finding that some require students pass a certain number of units with a 2.0 and others that require a 2.0 GPA on all courses attempted.

With UC's commitment to learning and the encouragement that students explore and take chances in their first year, it may be worth reconsidering SR 634. SR 634 refers to all the units taken, but not to receiving passing grades on 180 units. Vice Provost Dennin would like UCEP to consider changing the regulation so students are required to pass a set number of units with a 2.0 GPA to graduate, believing that students should not always be held responsible for receiving Fs and should have a chance to make up those grades in a straightforward way and receive a degree. Chair Cocco explained that this is an opportunity for the members to start thinking about this matter and at a subsequent meeting the committee will contemplate if a revision to SR 634 should be proposed.

Discussion: It is not clear how many students are being negatively impacted by this regulation or how many students dropped out of UC specifically because of it. If it is a small number of cases, they could be addressed using the retrospective withdrawal policy. Vice Provost Dennin speculates that every few years one or two students ask to appeal SR 634 and are denied. A member wondered if changing this regulation would change how academic probation works and also negatively impact time to degree. Students in this situation started in one major and after not doing well, switched to a different major, so UC is making students retake courses in the original major they will not be pursuing. Poor grades earned before a student transfers to UC are not included in the GPA calculation for courses taken at UC.

Vice Provost Dennin asserted that loosening this requirement will not significantly reduce the number of challenging courses UC students have to take. Executive Advisor Greenspan will explore if there is data on stop-outs which includes GPA and number of units. Chair Cocco will send an email to the members with specific information for the divisional committees to debate. Any proposed revision to SR 634 will have to be sent out for systemwide review. Members expressed concerns about changing a regulation for a small number of students without understanding the consequences as well as issues related to grade inflation and administrative pressures to decrease time to degree.

VII. Member Items/Campus Reports

There were no Member Items or Campus Reports.

VIII. New Business/Executive Session

There was no New Business or Executive Session.

Videoconference adjourned at: 1:00 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: Melanie Cocco