

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Videoconference Minutes

Monday, May 20, 2024

Attending: Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI), A. Katie Harris, Vice Chair (UCD), Darlene Francis (UCB), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Lopes (UCI), Jeff Maloy (UCLA alternate), Christopher Viney (UCM), Eric Schwitzgebel (UCR), Madeleine Norris (UCSF), Ben Hardekopf (UCSB), Geoff Cook (UCSD), David Cuthbert (UCSC), Megan Chung (Undergraduate Student Representative), Rolin Moe (Executive Director, UC Online), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning & Policy Development, Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)), Carmen Corona (Director, Academic Planning & Policy, IRAP), Ethan Savage (Academic Planning and Policy Analyst, IRAP), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate)

I. Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved today's agenda.

II. Chair's Updates

The recent meeting of the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) included discussions about the Board of Admissions and Relations with School's Area C Workgroup phase one report on math preparation and a proposal for new transfer pathways from the Academic Council Special Committee on Transfer Issues. The goal for these new transfer pathways is to minimize general education (GE) requirements taken before transfer so students are able to focus on the more difficult courses needed to be prepared for the major once they are at UC. However, the state legislature wants students in the California Community College system to complete all GE requirements before transferring to a California State University (CSU) or UC campus. Chair Cocco informed ICAS about UCEP's decision to limit credit by exam to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate (IB). The chair sent the committee an article about students cheating on the IB exams that underscored concerns about academic integrity and online exams. UCEP's proposal to change the wording in Senate Regulations 900 and 902 from "academic probation" to "academic notice" will be considered by Academic Council on Wednesday.

III. Consultation with Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)

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

Executive Advisor Greenspan shared a summary of the governor's May Revise with the committee. UC is still bound by the compact because Governor Newsom has said the state will pay the University the 5% increase promised for 2024-2025 in 2025-2026 plus the next 5%. Due to the fiscal crisis, the May Revise includes a 7.9% cut to most State agencies this year except for UC. The CSU will receive a \$75M one time cut in 2024-2025 and UC will be cut by \$137M in the current year. There is still some hope that if the State budget recovers, the \$137M cut will be restored but the 7.9% cut will be applied to UC's base budget beginning in 2025-26.

UCOP has indicated that UC will adhere to the compact with the governor which guarantees a 5% increase per year if the University meets certain goals. The 2024-2025 budget includes a

major cut to the middle-class scholarship program which will make it difficult for UC to achieve the affordability goals. UCOP will not fill vacant positions and the campuses are supposed to maintain current vacancy rates. President Drake remains committed to the 4.2% increase to staff salaries and at present there is no discussion about reversing this decision. Compared to past budget crises, UC now has the tuition stability plan which provides regular increases. Unlike other state agencies, UC has other revenue sources although there are restrictions against using these for core operations. Some short-term gaps might be filled with loans from the retirement system or the short-term investment pool, and UC also has large reserves that may help with weathering one or two tight budget years.

UC had a goal to grow by 8k FTE in 2023-2024 and the data for this spring shows that most campuses have returned to or are above pre-pandemic levels for course taking so enrollment is around 7650 undergraduate students. At present campuses do not think the problem with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid will impact 2024-2025 freshmen enrollment growth plans. Graduate enrollment will be well below the goal in the compact which was to add 4500 FTE.

Director Corona reported on the year-long audit of UC's use of online program management (OPM) companies. The final audit report is due June 6 and there are no findings related to undergraduate programs. Guidelines and policies for working with OPMs are being created and IRAP is convening with different committees this might impact. The director is on the California Career Education Master Plan career pathways workgroup and noted that other workgroups focus on transfer acceleration, completion supports, E-transcripts. The career pathways workgroup is looking at potential ways to create more career pathways for students and there are several bills related to career and internship opportunities for students. The group's initial meeting revolved around identifying goals and the testing and scaling of those goals.

IV. Review of UC Washington Center (UCDC)

- *David Cuthbert (UCSC) & Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD)*

The committee was reminded that UCDC's original response to the self-study was inadequate, however the reviewers agree that the revised report is a definite improvement. There is more detail about the undergraduate program which affords 200 students per term a residential experience. UCDC is a systemwide academic program administered centrally by UCOP and it engages students and faculty from all the campuses. The program is a minimum of 12 credits organized so students can complete their class work on a single day and then have 24 to 32 hour per week internships along with opportunities to explore the D.C. area. Students who participate in UCDC are primarily political science majors but they are also in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; sociology; arts; English; and history. Concessions are made for each individual campus so students have access to courses that fulfill upper division major requirements.

UCDC indicates that before 2010 faculty visiting from UC campuses coordinated their own programs. When campuses began sending fewer faculty, UCDC had to find their own faculty but the program is now trying to recruit more UC faculty having made offers to ten faculty from various campuses to teach next year. UCDC provided detailed information about their diversity, equity, and inclusion activities along with data about the students and the available internships. The UCSC representative remarked that the contents of the report are more aligned with what reviewers expect to find in external reviews and recommends that UCEP approve the review. The program reports challenges related to recruitment, student preparedness, affordability, and course articulation. The main complaint is that the campuses are not doing enough to support

UCDC. One staff member at each campus is responsible for recruiting students and that position has high turnover. UCEP should recommend that UCDC better train the campus coordinators so they have the knowledge required to help students prepare for the program. Another issue is the huge disparity in the majors students are in with 40% being in political science, and the committee might recommend active recruitment from more diverse majors.

Discussion: Rather than relying on the campus coordinators to prepare students, there could be an advisor at UCDC who students contact directly. The program should take a more active role in outreach and education about the Center and develop resources with the indepth information coordinators need to understand UCDC. Although current budget constraints make it unlikely that more campus coordinators can be hired, UCEP can also say that the size and complexity of this program justifies campuses adding more dedicated staff when the budget allows, and that each campus should have a compensated faculty director. The committee discussed the small number of students from each campus who participate in UCDC.

A variety of costs associated with participating in the program including travel, appropriate business attire, and other expenses (especially in an area with a high cost of living) are challenging for students, so the committee could recommend that campuses create scholarship funds or solicit corporate gifts for an endowment for UCDC participation. It was also noted that enthusiasm for going to Washington, D.C. has diminished in recent years. The reviewers will send draft language for a memo to Chair Cocco and members will be invited to add comments. The chair commented that, while expensive, UCDC is a unique experience not offered by most public universities and it provides a unique opportunity for lawmakers to interact with UC's student interns.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to endorse the seven-year review of UC Washington Center and the committee voted unanimously in favor of the recommendation.

V. Consultation with UC Online

- *Roline Moe, Executive Director, UC Online*

Chair Cocco welcomed Executive Director Moe to the videoconference and explained that the committee is interested in course completion data. Executive Director Moe indicated that the annual report will not be available until Fall, but stated there has been remarkable growth in the number of students enrolling in and completing cross campus courses. In 2022-2023, 3166 individual students were enrolled post-census (after the add deadline) in a UC Online course offered through the cross-campus enrollment system. For the 2023-2024 academic year, 4850 individual students were enrolled post-census. UC Online considers students enrolled in the course at the post-census date to have completed the course regardless of whether they have passed or failed. In both of these academic years, only 41% of students who enrolled in a course ultimately completed it.

Executive Director Moe explained that UC Online is the only entity tracking enrollment from initial registration rather than starting at the third week and students are considered to have completed the course if enrolled at the post-census date. There are discrepancies between how IRAP and UC Online define enrollment and completion, the program is trying to improve its data collection in order to understand what is occurring. Chris Furgiuele, a director in IRAP, is on a small working group developing a strategic plan for UC Online which will include a focus on data infrastructure. Executive Director Moe indicated that this codified relationship with IRAP begins the process of establishing data transfer agreements. An executive dashboard will be created that provides data on all online courses including those offered through UC Online and this will

allow key people on campus to pinpoint relevant data. A prototype of the dashboard will be shared with UCEP after the summer.

The UC Online Advisory Council has discussed the July 22 UCEP memo about problems with the program's data collection and reporting the data elements. The executive director commented about the need to address academic integrity as a system and this might include in-person testing centers and alternative forms of assessment. UC Online will be the space that focuses on the convergent elements of online education such as infrastructure and the campuses can handle the divergent elements. The program wants to ensure that faculty understand how to not just meet minimum requirements but to be bold when thinking about what education looks like. Reportedly, there is interest in workshops or communities of practice on how to build an infrastructure for online education in the same robust and holistic manner as in-person instruction.

The program is considering if it can streamline the work related to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement so individual campuses do not have to create their own agreements with all the other states. Another issue is whether the process for registration and course approval can be improved for everyone involved including students. Finally, each campus uses different learning management systems and the executive director wants to explore new ways of thinking about data so it can be more widely shared and more accurately engaged with at the campus or systemwide level.

Executive Director Moe reported that UC's partnership with the National Education Equity Lab is designed to provide UC courses at the high school level and will begin with a pilot of a climate justice course from UCM which builds on work on climate justice at the other campuses. The hope is to offer two or three classes to high school students that are developed and taught by faculty who are interested in this project. This will be outside of the faculty member's normal teaching load and UC Online is figuring out the mechanism for compensation.

Discussion: Asked how UC Online might be involved with a course that is not available for cross-campus enrollment, the executive director explained that the program will figure out how it can support the campus which might include helping with federal regulations or infrastructure. A member noted that the teaching evaluations vary based on the student's home campus and wondered if UC Online has considered standardizing them. Executive Director Moe asserted that it does not make sense for the program to overregulate what the campuses are doing with evaluations but might point out common elements that ought to be measured. Currently, the learning management systems used by the campuses are also not standardized but there may be an opportunity to utilize Canvas so that a new record does not need to be created each time a student takes a cross-campus course.

There are concerns that some classes might have very large enrollments due to lapses around academic integrity or lower grading standards, and it would be valuable to know if enrollment numbers are driven by a few large classes or a wide array of classes. The executive director shared raw data with UCEP that suggests the ten most popular courses are responsible for 25% of the enrollment and indicated that high enrollment courses will obviously be under more scrutiny. However, certain courses have large enrollments because they have been regularly used to meet gaps around the system or because students needed a course to maintain their financial aid. Future reports to UCEP can include a breakdown of the number of students versus the number of courses. Another important question is whether UC Online or the home campus is responsible for addressing problems with the quality of a course and determining if deficient courses should not be offered across campus. UC Online does not want to police courses and

Executive Director Moe wants to respect the Senates and campuses so the program might provide feedback on improvements that could be made.

A member inquired about the potential for the UC Online Advisory Council to serve as an intermediary to help with the issues related to the courses that are underperforming and if the new executive director is facing pressures from senior administrators that differ from what was laid out during the hiring process. Executive Director Moe wants to celebrate the potential of online education and appreciates the need for resources and attention regardless of modality. The Advisory Council meets four times a year to consider the program's direction. The executive director stated that the Quality Matters rubric is imperfect but still helpful since UC does not have its own rubric.

VI. Campus Information and the Possible Revision of SR 634

Chair Cocco has started making a diagram with the campus data members have provided on undergraduate grades and units earned. It appears that only a small number of students are affected by systemwide Senate Regulation (SR) 634. However, the data does show that faculty awarded 20% more As in 2022-2023 than in 2015-2016 which suggests that the committee's concerns about grade inflation are warranted. Given the apparent grade inflation, proposing a revision to SR 634 to loosen the rules would be problematic and the retroactive withdrawals mechanism which already exists can be used for specific cases. A memo from UCEP to Academic Council will encourage the use of retroactive withdrawals and indicate that academic advisors should not permit students who should be on academic notice (probation) to take more units.

Discussion: The data on grading at UC should be considered in the context of what is happening nationally. The UCM and UCSC representatives will provide their campus data within a week.

VII. Debrief: Discussion with UC Online Executive Director

Chair Cocco asked what members think about the prospects of UCEP reviewing UC Online courses in light of the discussion with Executive Director Moe.

Discussion: Members expressed concerns about how difficult it has been to get data from UC Online and about the information that was presented this morning. The committee is also confused by the executive director equating the number of students enrolled in a course with the number who complete a course. The chair noted that state funding is being used to support the cross-campus enrollment system even though it is not meeting the needs of most students. Executive Advisor Greenspan explained that the state funding is not a per student allocation but goes to the student's home campus for the FTE and the campus offering the course does not receive any funds.

Executive Director Moe did not provide any substantive information the committee can work with and members are disappointed that UC Online is unable to manage its own data. Chair Cocco believes that UCEP will never get the data for the review of UC Online courses that has been under discussion. The committee considered how to proceed given that trying to engage with UC Online in a spirit of cooperation has not been effective, and suggestions include approaching this as a program review like the review of UC Washington Center or having UC Online present to the Academic Planning Council so that group is made aware of the

problematic data. If the committee reports its concerns to a broader audience, UCEP needs to be clear about the specific data that has been requested.

One of the recommendations in the Deloitte assessment of UC Online included an option to dissolve the program and, according to Chair Cocco, the Advisory Council's vote in favor of this action has seemingly been dismissed. When Advisory Council members inquired about this, the group was informed that a strategic planning committee had been established. In addition, the current draft strategic plan indicated that UC Online will develop online degree programs possibly in response to a request from a Regent. Since UC Online courses are approved by divisional Senate committees, perhaps UCEP should notify the divisional chairs about the problems with the program. The analyst suggested that the committee submit a memo to Academic Council reporting that UC Online has still not provided meaningful data in response to the July 2022 letter. It would be valuable to include a timeline of UCEP's involvement and efforts to work with the program beginning with the Blue Ribbon Panel in 2012.

VIII. Member Items/Campus Reports

UCLA's Senate has discussed relaxing regulations on grading given the wildcat strike. The other campuses are having similar conversations about moving to online instruction and regarding how finals should be administered. Even though campuses are going in different directions, it is unclear if UCEP can do anything about this at a systemwide level but Chair Cocco believes this is an issue of shared governance.

IX. 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