

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Videoconference Minutes

Monday, June 3, 2024

Attending: Melanie Cocco, Chair (UCI), A. Katie Harris, Vice Chair (UCD), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Lopes (UCI), Catherine Sugar (UCLA), Christopher Viney (UCM), Sara Lapan (UCR alternate), Geoff Cook (UCSD), Madeleine Norris (UCSF), Ben Hardekopf (UCSB), David Cuthbert (UCSC), Megan Chung (Undergraduate Student Representative), Carmen Corona (Director, Academic Planning and Policy, Institutional Research and Academic Planning (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 Senate*

During the May Regents meeting, Janet Reilly and Maria Anguiano were appointed as chair and vice chair of the Board respectively. The discussion about the Regents' policy on discretionary statements on department websites was postponed again. The Board decided that UCLA will pay UCB \$10M per year for three years to make up for the latter losing revenue due to UCLA's move to the Big 10 football conference. The payment plan will be reevaluated after three years, and the payments may be paused or reconfigured if UCLA's revenue drops by 10% or expenses significantly increase. The Finance and Capital Strategies Committee approved the proposed UCM medical education building and the preliminary plan for the San Benito housing project at UCSB. Although the state budget will decrease UC's base budget by 2.9%, President Drake remains committed to the 4.2% range adjustment to the faculty salary scales which will help mitigate some inflationary pressures as well as rising health insurance premiums.

During the most recent Academic Council meeting, feedback from the systemwide review of the proposed revision to systemwide Senate Regulation (SR) 424 was discussed. The Board of Admission and Relations with Schools proposed the revision to SR 424 to establish Area H, an Ethnic Studies Requirement. Since there were a number of questions regarding implementation that require further deliberation, Council will consult with subject matter experts and articulation staff at UCOP before taking any action. The Academic Council Special Committee on Transfer Issues has devised new transfer pathways for seven majors in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). These new pathways and relevant transfer model curricula will next be reviewed by the Assembly Bill 928 Implementation Committee. The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates met last week and there were discussions about creating California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) for STEM and partial Cal-GETC certification with the deferral of general education.

The associate vice provost for Academic Personnel and Planning announced his retirement but is committed to continuing as the co-chair of the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modality and UC Quality Undergraduate Education. The task force's four subcommittees have provided interim reports, and Vice Chair Cheung is hopeful that the final report will be ready to submit to the president by the September deadline. The graduate student worker strike has now spread from UCSC to UCLA and UCD and will expand to UCSB, UCSD, and UCI later this week. The strike is set to end on June 30th but it has been very disruptive. The academic labor unit at UCOP filed a request for injunctive relief with the California Public Employment Relations Board and the UAW and UC were ordered into mediation. Faculty are worried about how grades will be submitted especially for large enrollment courses and there are questions about the administration of finals.

Discussion: Chair Cocco noted that systemwide Senate regulations stipulate that a final exam is required, and many students count on the final to redeem themselves if they performed poorly during the term. Faculty may need to create alternatives to final exams that does not rely on teaching assistants or graders. UCLA has been discussing a number of options for faculty to provide students with flexibility and minimize grading burdens, including no-harm finals and UCSB is investigating how final exams differ by course.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved today's agenda.

Action: The May 6th and May 20th, 2024 minutes were approved.

III. Chair's Updates

Academic Council discussed the memo regarding the California Community College (CCC) baccalaureate degree duplication process and the analyst explained that this memo has not been distributed because there is confusion about the details of UCEP's proposal. Analyst Savage will ask the campus vice provosts and deans for undergraduate education about the most efficient way to involve Senate faculty in the review of the CCC's proposed degrees. Council enthusiastically approved the committee's proposed revision to SR 900 and SR 902 and decided it should be sent directly to the Academic Assembly for a vote, deeming a systemwide review unnecessary.

The executive director of the UC Washington Center (UCDC) provided the additional information about the Design Your Life course that was requested by UCEP. The committee approved the course for two units and Pass/No Pass but the executive director would like it to be offered for a grade. UCEP also questioned the workload hours and UCDC has added more readings for the course. Chair Cocco would like the members to decide if its decision about the course being offered for Pass/No Pass should be reversed or not and will send a poll later this week for a vote by email.

Discussion: Members firmly believe that, based on the level of rigor, the Design Your Life course merits only two units. One idea is to give students the option of Pass/No Pass or a grade.

IV. Next Steps: Systemwide Review of Statement on UC Quality

Council would like UCEP to consider the feedback from the systemwide review of the statement on UC quality and Chair Cocco proposes that the committee work on this by email in June. While some of the comments are irrelevant, most of the feedback is positive. Reviewers suggested that the committee should do a deeper dive which would be difficult without becoming discipline specific. Another recommendation is that the statement should address online education but Chair Cocco prefers to leave that to the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modality. The language in the cover memo will be added as a preamble and it will be fine to add an additional page to the statement.

Discussion: Members agreed to work on the statement over email.

V. California Assessment Center Network Vision Document

- *Tricia Bertram Gallant, Director, Academic Integrity & Triton Testing, Academic Affairs, UCSD*

Director Bertram Gallant is leading a small ad hoc systemwide group studying whether computer-based assessment centers would be helpful to not only UC students but CCC and California State University (CSU) students as well. The group is comprised of representatives from every campus except UCM

who are responsible for testing in disability offices or utilize computer-based testing. Assessment centers administer secure assessments on behalf of faculty in a way that provides convenient and consistent experiences to students. Administering assessments of learning is a critical component in ensuring students have the knowledge and skills that faculty certifications promise but the current way of administering assessments, and summative tests in particular, is unsustainable. There are issues related to increasing class sizes, the inability to accommodate all students at the same time, and scheduling conflicts. In addition, faculty are dealing with academic integrity violations because exams are not proctored and students are allowing contract cheating providers to remotely control their computer and complete the assessment for them during class. Rather than spending time interacting with students, faculty and teaching assistants have to prepare and administer tests.

Assessment centers are a 21st century solution to enhance equity, learning, and assessment validity. The centers employ professional staff and well-trained proctors and administer assessments on behalf of faculty with security and consistency. Students appreciate having the same experience regardless of the exam they are taking and they know exactly what to expect which reduces test anxiety. With computer-based testing, faculty can create tests that are individualized, which means asynchronous testing could minimize integrity problems. Individualized mastery-based assessments are available with the right software. The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign created Prairie Learn, an assessment platform which allows individualized mastery-based testing and offers instant feedback. They have 130 seats and 2 labs and are able to administer 70k to 85k tests per semester. However, exams during the term can only be 50 to 60 minutes long and final exams are limited to two hours. Having a standard testing schedule within the computer-based testing center would allow UC to better utilize space.

The benefits of these centers to students include reduced test anxiety; enhanced agency through flexible scheduling; mastery learning which reduces equity gaps; and reduced temptations and opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty and act against their own values. Faculty benefit by making better use of class time; a reduced administrative load; and assistance with universal design for learning which is good for students. If the CCC, CSU and UC systems have an assessment center network with locations students can reach within a 45-minute drive and students are required to take a test at a center or use a remote proctoring service, faculty may be more willing to teach online courses. This could lead to increased summer enrollment, enhanced degree integrity, and reduced litigation risk. Students who need accommodations have disparate testing experiences depending on the campus or department, so having a consistent testing environment would be helpful. Currently, the UC disability resource centers that offer testing services are over-burdened, and the assessment center network could decrease the demands on them.

Director Bertram Gallant is advocating for the establishment of an assessment center on each UC campus. UCSD has a center while UCB, UCR, and (possibly) UCD are working on creating them but the other campuses only have testing services for students with disabilities. It may be necessary to formalize a systemwide UC workgroup instead of continuing this ad hoc approach and to invite the CCC and CSU systems to participate in these conversations. Combined with UC's ten campuses, the CCCs 116 campuses and the CSUs 23 campuses, there could be almost 150 sites across the state where students could take exams. Chair Cocco indicated that the ability to have computer-graded assessments could help alleviate some of the problems UC faculty face. The centers might be a good way to deal with artificial intelligence (AI).

Discussion: When students are using their personal devices, the Respondus Lockdown browser in Canvas will not prevent them from sharing their screen or allowing a third-party cheating provider to remotely control their computer. AI applications are being developed that will be an extension in Chrome that can easily read and answer questions on a student's screen. UCSD is piloting Prairie Learn which can be used for short- and long-form answers but does not automatically grade them, and

there are other software platforms that assessment centers could use. Director Bertram Gallant thinks that eventually there will either be specific exam or testing platforms that are better than Canvas, especially for high-stakes exams. The director acknowledged that assessment centers will not meet the needs of every single class and each type of assessment because there are limitations with the technology. Although there are many types of exams that the centers would not be able to handle or could not be automatically graded, there are some exams that could be accommodated. There is also a concern with asynchronous testing that once a class starts, word gets out about the type/scope/difficulty of the exam which can be advantageous to those who test later, even if the questions are individualized. Regardless, cheating and academic integrity are problems that have become severe and need to be addressed moving forward. Members agreed that UCEP should write a memo expressing support for the creation of an assessment center network that could be useful by instructors with exams where this format would be a good fit.

VI. Campus Information and the Possible Revision of SR 634

The committee has previously discussed systemwide SR 634 which defines the minimum grade point average (GPA) required for graduation and there was a desire to review data related to grade inflation before proposing a revision to the regulation. Chair Cocco analyzed campus data for the 2015-2016 and 2022-2023 academic years submitted by members and found that the number of A grades awarded increased at every campus. On average, the percentage of A grades increased by about 14%, the percentage of Bs and Cs given has decreased, and the percentage of Ds and Fs remained about the same. Data provided by an Academic Planning member showed the GPA for students who entered UC in 2000 was 3.28 when they graduated and the GPA for students who entered in 2018 was 3.53. Data from the UC Information Center dashboard indicates that the GPA for all UC students in Fall 2016 was 3.127 and the GPA in Spring 2023 is 3.297. This data strongly reveals that there has been grade inflation at UC. In addition, campuses reported the number of A grades has increased by an average of 15% for each campus when comparing the years 2015/6 to 2022/3 (selected since neither were affected by COVID limitations).

Discussion: A member pointed out that GPAs between Winter 2020 and Spring 2021 were very atypical because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be helpful to have data about the specific students effected by SR 634 and it was noted that other factors that get students into trouble is not reflected in the GPA data. The information from the campuses shows that an incredibly small number of students would benefit from changing the regulation, although it could make a big difference for those students. Students in this situation need more support and better academic advising about which courses they should be taking. There are existing mechanisms, such as retroactive withdrawal, that can be utilized when students have over 180 units and GPAs below the 2.0 minimum.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to not change SR 634 but to encourage the campuses to improve advising practices and use alternative mechanisms such as retroactive withdrawal. The motion was approved with nine votes in favor and one abstention.

VII. Finalize Proposed Revision to [Senate Bylaw 170.B.3](#)

Chair Cocco explained that Senate Bylaw (SB) 170.B.3 establishes that UCEP is responsible for approving systemwide courses but “courses” and “programs” are used interchangeably in various documents. The committee will propose a revision to SB 170.B.3 to clarify UCEP’s responsibility for approving and reviewing (every seven years) systemwide courses as well as systemwide programs. This proposal will be submitted to Council at the same time as the committee’s memo about its review of UC Online since that is also a systemwide program. If endorsed by Council, the proposed revision will undergo systemwide review next fall.

Discussion: The memo should note that UCEP will review the UC Center Sacramento and indicate that this applies to systemwide courses and programs that confer credit across the system.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to send the proposed revision to SB 170.3.B to Academic Council. Members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

VIII. Possible Goals and Priorities for 2024-2025

Next year the committee might want to consider how to assess the efficacy of online courses but individual campuses would be responsible for conducting any studies. UCEP will have an opportunity to recommend substantive changes to the Compendium revisions which may include instructing campuses to ensure that it is easy for reviewers to locate responses to questions or feedback about the pre-proposals.

IX. Member Items/Campus Reports

There were no Member Items or Campus Reports.

X. New Business/Executive Session

Chair Cocco has started drafting a memo about UC Online but is frustrated about the poor quality of data the program has shared with UCEP. It should be kept in mind that the executive director took over a program that was struggling as documented in the Deloitte assessment report. The memo to Council will include a proposal that UC Online is a systemwide program that should be reviewed by the committee. UCEP will ask that Council transmit the memo to Provost Newman.

Discussion: There are concerns about UC Online's lack of transparency and it is important to ensure the provost is aware of the problems identified by UCEP. The committee might recommend a financial audit of the program. The analyst suggested that the divisional Senate chairs should be responsible for making sure the UC Online courses approved at their campuses are of good quality, rigorous, and compliant with Federal regulations.

Chair Cocco expressed her high regard for the committee members and acknowledged how much UCEP accomplished this academic year.

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