UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Minutes of Videoconference
Monday, October 5, 2026

In attendance: Jason Duque, Chair (UCSB), Susan Varnot, Vice Chair (UCM), Andrew Marks (UCB), W. Martin Usrey (UCD), Luke Yarbrough (UCLA), Eric Cheng (UCM), Gene Brewer (UCR), Leo Porter (UCSD), Brian Shearer (UCSF), Tengiz Bibilashvili (UCSB), Amanda Rysling (UCSC), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor for 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), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Duque welcomed everyone to the first UCEP meeting of the 2026-2027 academic year.

II. Major Topics for UCEP in 2026-2027

UCEP will consider a variety of topics over the course of this academic year, including efforts to promote the flexibility that will allow students to complete their education more quickly. Some of these efforts are connected to an emphasis on career preparation, raising questions for faculty about the purpose of an undergraduate education. The committee will contend with ongoing issues related to UC Online's governance and data. As one example, UCEP may consider the need to cap the number of units students can earn using credit by exam or through dual enrollment.

Discussion: UCLA's divisional Senate is concerned about having authority over the Degree Plus initiative that has been piloted at the campus Extension program. Chair Duque noted that UCEP has questioned the relationship between the Senate and administration and the lack of consultation on some matters. Divisional Senate processes are used to approve UC Online-funded courses and to monitor their quality.

III. Reminders for Members

Analyst Abrams explained that Senate leadership will join future UCEP meetings to provide updates on systemwide Senate activities. Committee members were reminded about confidentiality and briefed on the plan for in-person meetings.

IV. 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

Analyst Savage reported on the end of degree completion programs based at several UC Extension campuses and that the California Community Colleges have submitted to IRAP a batch of seven proposals for new baccalaureate degree programs which will be checked for duplication with UC programs. Director Corona described this issue highlighted in UC's official comment letter about the proposed federal accreditation regulations, and Executive Advisor Greenspan offered an update on undergraduate enrollment growth.

V. Volunteers to Represent UCEP on Other Committees

Jason Duque, Chair

Members are needed to represent UCEP on various external groups.

Action: The UCLA representative agreed to serve on the UC Education Abroad Program Advisory Committee but will need an alternate for the last meeting and the UCSC representative agreed to serve on the UC Online Advisory Council. Analyst Abrams will connect the representatives to the contacts for these programs.

VI. New UCEP White Paper

Jason Duque, Vice Chair

Chair Duque led the discussion of the prospectus for a proposed white paper examining and defining educational quality across different instructional modalities, including in-person and online education both synchronous and asynchronous, and the effects of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI). The paper originated in response to concerns that UC discussions about expanding online education had become overly polarized—framing the issue as either supporting online instruction for access and equity or opposing it out of resistance to change. The goal is to develop a more nuanced, faculty-informed framework for understanding how instructional modality shapes the educational experience.
Chair Duque invited members to consider the purposes of, and concepts addressed in, the new white paper.

Discussion: Participants strongly supported continuing the work. They emphasized that the paper should articulate a distinctive UC perspective, draw on systemwide evidence, and provide concepts that faculty and academic leaders can use in policy discussions. The discussion established broad support for the proposed white paper and clarified several ways to strengthen it. The paper should explain how educational quality emerges from relationships among students, instructors, disciplinary knowledge, and educational tools; show how those relationships vary across modalities; and examine the implications for learning, assessment, equity, and research experience. The strongest proposed direction is to combine a clear conceptual framework with credible UC systemwide evidence. Rather than declaring one modality superior or reducing quality to a single numerical measure, the paper should help the UC community understand what different educational settings make possible, what challenges they introduce, and how universities can evaluate whether students are genuinely learning and developing disciplinary capabilities.

VII. Member Reports/Campus Updates

UCLA: Significant budget shortfalls and changes associated with the graduate student union contract are reducing the availability of graduate teaching assistants, changing how undergraduate

courses are taught. The administration integrated Google Gemini into undergraduate Google Suite accounts without substantial faculty consultation. Faculty are working to finalize AI principles and develop policy. An estimated 80–90% of summer courses are online. Faculty are considering whether to rebalance online and in-person offerings and how extensive online delivery affects campus life and the appeal of UCLA to international students.

UCSF: The committee has not had its first meeting of this academic year yet but topics that will be addressed include recording in classrooms, AI use in teaching, and risks to education. Old business that will be addressed includes UCSF's response to federal accreditation changes.

UCD: The campus AI task force is considering whether students should have access to an AI interface directly within Canvas courses. Faculty face additional work to meet accessibility requirements for public-facing documents and instructional materials. Demand for testing accommodations has overwhelmed the Student Disability Center, exceeding its current capacity.

UCB: The Disabled Students' Program and its testing capacity are under significant strain, affecting both students and faculty. Faculty face challenges making course materials accessible, particularly mathematics lecture notes and PDFs. The Undergraduate Council is addressing AI issues within its area of responsibility while other campus groups handle additional aspects of the issue.

UCR: The committee's first meeting will be this Friday.

UCSD: The Education Policy Committee is experiencing an increase in student grade appeals. The campus has established a requirement that syllabi explain appropriate AI use in each course, including what is and is not permitted. Summer and online courses are also under discussion, although the update provided few additional details.

UCM: Faculty are finding it increasingly difficult to determine individual student capability from conventional online homework and assignments because of AI tools. Paper-based exams and quizzes may become more important for evaluating what students genuinely know and can do. Existing homework practices may need to be reconfigured to remain meaningful indicators of learning. Faculty are monitoring how AI developments may affect laboratory and experimental coursework in the future.

UCSC: Financial constraints are affecting the availability of teaching assistant positions. Requiring AI statements in syllabi has not been sufficient. Faculty leaders are holding departmental listening sessions to identify concerns and needs. The Teaching and Learning Center is offering to test faculty assessments against AI tools, report vulnerabilities, and suggest revisions. The Disability Resource Center is overwhelmed by demand for testing accommodations. Administrators are considering streamlining advising and moving advisors out of departments; faculty representatives are pushing back. Cuts to language programs are prompting consideration of general education reform, including the challenge of maintaining language study without dedicated funding. Faculty are reviewing how the financial aid office interprets and communicates recent federal guidance to students.

UCSB: The campus anticipates substantial debate about standardized tests. Faculty raised concerns that students entering STEM fields may lack foundational algebra and geometry skills

when their prior schooling has not adequately emphasized them. The Academic Senate is considering whether to cap enrollment in majors across the College of Letters and Science, as is already done in the College of Engineering. Without limits on admissions to individual majors, departments such as physics face considerable uncertainty about future enrollment and their ability to plan instructional resources.

VIII. New Business/Executive Session

No New Business was introduced and there was no Executive Session.

The meeting adjourned at: 11:46 AM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst
Attest: Jason Duque, Chair