UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Minutes of Videoconference
Monday, October 19, 2026

In attendance: Jason Duque, Chair (UCSB), Susan Varnot, Vice Chair (UCM), Andrew Marks (UCB), W. Martin Usrey (UCD), Arvind Rajaraman (UCI), Luke Yarbrough (UCLA), Gene Brewer (UCR), Li-Tien Cheng (UCSD alternate), 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), Susannah Scott (Chair, Academic Senate), Amani Nuru-Jeter (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Susannah Scott, Chair & Amani Nuru-Jeter, Vice Chair, Academic Senate

Chair Scott provided updates on key UC system-wide initiatives including the ongoing search for a new provost, the expected November release of the UC Adaptations to Disruptions Plus Task Force report, a forthcoming report from the Task Force on the Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs, and UC's opposition to proposed federal accreditation reforms. The Senate is reviewing whether standardized testing should be used in admissions, with a recommendation expected to reach the Regents for a July 2027 decision. Chair Scott highlighted the President's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Steering Committee and the urgent need for clear, responsible, and ethical guidance on AI in research, instruction, assessment, and course design.

II. Proposed Joint M.A. Degree Program in Contemporary Philosophy between UC Santa Barbara and the University of Athens

The Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) will consider questions related to a proposed Joint M.A. program with students enrolled through UCSB's Graduate Division taking courses taught by UCSB faculty, with all instruction and study occurring in-person at the University of Athens. The University Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction opined that the proposed program is inconsistent with the current requirements of Senate Regulation 694.2. One or two members of UCEP are asked to join the CCGA subcommittee to work through the various issues identified to date.

Action: The UCSF and UCR representatives volunteered to participate on the subcommittee.

III. Online Instruction at UC

Chair Duque would like UCEP to define the scope and focus of its work on online instruction, emphasizing that the discussion should move beyond a pro- or anti-online position to examine how online modalities can best support effective course and program design and instruction. The areas of concern are establishing a shared understanding of instructional quality beyond student

performance and learning outcomes alone; addressing the evidence available to assess the relationship between online modalities and instructional quality; and improving access to comprehensive, campus-level data from UC Online. While Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) has been responsive to data requests, UC Online's reports appear more promotional than analytical. The discussion was intended to clarify the issues UCEP should prioritize and inform the development of a white paper on instructional quality in online education.

Discussion: Remarks focused on defining UCEP's priorities for online instruction including clarifying UC Online's academic mission, governance, accountability and attaining reliable data. Members raised concerns about financial incentives driving online course expansion, inconsistent campus policies and oversight, limited monitoring of course quality over time, and potential risks to student success and educational equity particularly when students lack adequate advising or technological resources. It is important to distinguish UC Online from campus-based online education and to evaluate the relative strengths of online, asynchronous, synchronous, and in-person instruction based on their educational purposes and learning experiences rather than assuming one modality is inherently superior.

The group identified two primary areas for further work: engaging UC Online leadership to clarify its responsibilities, transparency, and responsiveness to faculty governance, and gathering campus-level information on online course offerings, enrollments, incentives, policies, compliance, and quality review practices. Members also highlighted the importance of defining access and equity in terms of not only who can enroll, but also the quality of the educational experience and students' ability to succeed. UC Online serves both an administrative role in coordinating cross-campus enrollment and course articulation and a broader role in online education, raising questions about its academic mission and relationship to campus programs. Course quality should be evaluated consistently across instructional modalities and members noted concerns about incomplete enrollment data and the pressures driving online course demand. IRAP is monitoring summer online enrollment and has found anomalies at one campus in particular but limited evidence of widespread student over-enrollment.

IV. New UCEP White Paper

Jason Duque, Vice Chair

Members were asked to review historical documents related to the new white paper and prepare a summary to be shared during UCEP's November 2nd meeting explaining its connection to the issues described in the prospectus. Chair Duque also invited feedback about whether testing and academic integrity should be addressed in the new white paper and on the components of UCEP's Statement on Characteristics of Undergraduate Educational Quality which might help frame the committee's thinking about instructional modalities.

Discussion: Members expressed concerns about academic integrity, but this topic could shift the direction of this white paper. Academic integrity will be the focus of a future UCEP conversation. Members identified which historical document(s) they will review or agreed for Chair Duque to assign the reading.

V. Member Reports/Campus Updates

UCLA: The representative reported on efforts to coordinate between divisional Undergraduate Council and the campus administrative Teaching and Learning Center.

UCSC: The representative asked if other members are hearing from financial aid offices about compliance with federal financial aid guidelines related to students pursuing double majors. Members look into how this is being handled at their campuses and report out at a later meeting.

VI. New Business/Executive Session

The Global Languages Network (GLN), an initiative led by systemwide humanities deans to expand online language course availability, has raised significant concerns, including reductions in courses offered at home campuses, particularly Santa Cruz, and unforeseen impacts on Unit 18 lecturer employment. The initiative proceeded without formal committee oversight, and Academic Senate representatives' early efforts to address concerns were largely ineffective, as discussions focused primarily on promoting enrollment rather than evaluating broader academic and employment implications. Senate faculty in the Department of Comparative Literature and Languages at UCR submitted a proposal to Chair Scott requesting the creation of a new standing systemwide Academic Senate committee to provide leadership and oversight for the Global Language Network. Rather than a new systemwide committee, Analyst Abrams has suggested to Chair Scott and Chair Duque that UCEP establish a subcommittee on Global Languages. UCEP will consider the issue in December, with additional information provided before the committee decides whether to endorse the forming a subcommittee.

The meeting adjourned at: 12 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst
Attest: Jason Duque, Chair