



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Minutes of Videoconference
Monday, February 2, 2026

In attendance: Catherine Sugar, Chair (UCLA), Jason Duque, Vice Chair (UCSB), Darlene Francis (UCB), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Maia Young (UCI), Susan Varnot (UCM), Gene Brewer (UCR), Lily Hoang (UCSD), Giuliana Perrone (UCSB), Tanner WouldGo (UCSC), Azalea Han (Undergraduate Student Representative), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning & Policy Development, Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)), Carmen Corona (Director, Academic Planning & Policy, IRAP), Ethan Savage (Academic Planning & Policy Analyst, IRAP), Ahmet Palazoglu (Chair, Academic Senate), Susannah Scott (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Consent Calendar

Action: Today's agenda items and their priority were approved.

Action: UCEP's December 15th and January 5th videoconference minutes were approved.

II. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair & Susannah Scott, Vice Chair, Academic Senate

The Regents January meeting included a presentation by Chief Financial Officer Nathan Brostrom on Governor Newsom's January budget proposal of almost \$250B for UC in general fund expenditures. Among several bonds advancing in the California Assembly and Senate is Senate Bill 895 (Weiner) that would establish a foundation to support health, agriculture, and climate research. Record-breaking enrollment of more than 200K California undergraduate students and total student enrollment exceeding 300K for fall 2026 means that UC is exceeding goals established in the compact with the governor for access, affordability, and student success. The Regents unanimously approved the revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) policies 015 and 016, the Faculty Code of Conduct and Administration of Faculty Discipline.

Provost Newman is hosting a congress on science, technology, engineering and mathematics preparation on March 9 and 10. UAW Local 4811 plans to hold an authorization vote from February 5 to 13 for an unfair labor practice strike. Chair Palazoglu and Vice Chair Scott are drafting a communication to faculty regarding strike preparation and more detailed guidance will follow if a strike is authorized. Senate leadership is monitoring the national debate about whether syllabi should be public, an issue that UCEP and the University Committee on Academic Freedom may be asked to consider.

III. Chair's Announcements and Updates

The report from the UCSD Senate Administration Workgroup on Admissions was discussed by Academic Council and it has been cited by Louisiana Senator Cassidy, chair of the Health,

Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, in an announcement of an investigation into the decline in math preparedness at 35 schools including UCB and UCLA. Provost Newman advised Council that the Degree Plus program pilot at UCSB and UCSD is going well and may already be oversubscribed. The program is arranging internships for the participants, and the provost is trying to secure financial aid funding for this effort. President Milliken talked to Council about waning confidence in higher education and the need to identify how to better communicate to the general public that UC is a sound investment. This might include faculty showcasing how their scholarly activities have a direct impact on the lives of the people of California. Council endorsed the joint memo from the Board on Admissions and Relations with Schools, the University Committee on Preparatory Education, and UCEP on the College Board's Evidence-Based Standards Setting process. The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates met last week and topics included the work of the California General Education Transfer Curriculum Review Subcommittee and dual enrollment.

Chair Sugar, the UCLA representative, and Analyst Abrams discussed UCLA's proposal to discontinue its Design Media Arts Bachelor of Arts degree and to establish three separate Bachelor of Arts degrees, concluding that UCEP does not need to opine on this matter. The UCLA proposal was approved by the division's Undergraduate Council and Legislative Assembly. The committee has the opportunity to comment on a proposal to establish a systemwide Academic Senate Committee on Climate Change and Sustainability. The UCSD and UCSF divisions initially had separate proposals which were combined into the one now under consideration. The proposal cites the urgency of climate change and the need for a dedicated faculty body to participate in systemwide policy development and review, serve as a hub for exchanging information and action ideas, and to maintain a critical role in shared governance around these issues.

Discussion: Members agreed that climate change is a pressing and serious matter, but there are reservations about adding a new general education (GE) requirement, although reportedly, students at UCSB are advocating for a climate change GE requirement. Deliberations regarding GE requirements are squarely in UCEP's purview and having a second committee simultaneously creating policy on undergraduate education would be redundant and confusing.

IV. Ideas for New UCEP White Papers *Jason Duque, Vice Chair*

Chair Sugar explained how a variety of initiatives (e.g., Degree Plus; Global Language Network; UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD) and UCAD Plus; and Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs) have touched on questions of educational quality, teaching modalities, evaluation and learning outcomes, and the impact of different factors such as disruptions and artificial intelligence (AI). It is important for UCEP to shape these discussions and Vice Chair Duque has been thinking holistically about these issues, which may lead to one or more white papers. These white papers might serve as foundational documents for work going forward and provide the administration with insight into the Senate's thinking about these matters.

Vice Chair Duque remarked that various discussions regarding educational quality in the context of different modalities as well as the current economic situation have highlighted areas in which a guidance framework from UCEP would be valuable. Across many of the current initiatives, administrators seem intent on utilizing online instruction and standardizing credit reciprocity to ensure students can take courses at any UC campus and that those courses will count at their

home campus not only for general academic credit but also towards general education or major requirements. Standardization across the UC, California State University, and California Community College systems is another part of the context. Additional themes regularly coming up are innovation and progress, flexibility and resilience, equity and access, along with the threat of financial insecurity and the prevalence of AI.

In these conversations, there are questions about UCEP's authority and how it is understood by others. Online education is discussed in ways that make it seem inevitable and are dismissive of concerns from UCEP (and other bodies) about ensuring quality in this modality. Current thinking about modalities and student and program learning outcomes needs to take additional variables into consideration such as synchronous versus asynchronous, in-person versus remote, and mediated engagement in remote and synchronous settings. Vice Chair Duque indicated that accreditation agencies are moving away from measuring quality by seat time to measuring quality by learning outcomes. It is timely to consider how teaching modality and AI shape student learning and the intellectual experience. UCEP could think about a set of shared questions that can be used to assess the appropriateness of a particular design feature of a course and whether there is a need for a framework for figuring out how different modalities impact the educational experience of students.

Discussion: One divisional Undergraduate Council has contemplated not adding more courses during the academic year and there is concern about the lack of control over how many online courses students take during the summer. This UGC has also reflected on the value of UC education, noting that some of the key elements include engaging with the faculty, having access to a learning community, and that the UC system must be a leader rather than following what other universities are doing. Monetary pressure is forcing education to be a certain way when instead UC should find ways to offer education in different ways. The director of UCLA's summer session presented data to the division's UGC on summer course-taking and the trends are troubling.

Vice Chair Duque underscored that the idea is to have a common framework that allows the Senate to engage in debates and decision-making with administrators. Chair Sugar posited that a framework will be helpful when debating about which changes should be made and what resources are needed in order to teach well in different modalities. UCEP's statement on UC Quality Education does not address the implementation steps necessary to ensure quality in a variety of modalities. Indeed, it is not clear how to assess whether even an in-person course is valuable and meets the quality standard. Therefore, faculty who teach both in-person and online courses should be asked to explain the problems they have encountered in the different modalities and report whether the training they received led to the desired outcomes. UCEP should be proactive about communicating the Senate's concerns about pedagogy to help shape discussions with administrators pressuring faculty to move everything online. A member suggested that existing frameworks created by national organizations might inform UCEP's work in this area.

V. Three-Year Degree Attainment
Catherine Sugar, Chair

Chair Sugar shared the history of an effort to identify pathways by which students could complete their degrees at UC in three years that began under former UC President Janet Napolitano. Recently, there has been an uptick in students attempting to finish in three years, and Provost

Newman is interested in reviving the initiative and considering whether students should be actively encouraged to finish in this time frame. UCEP will be asked to comment on this project and the committee will be joined by Institutional Research and Academic Planning Vice President Pamela Brown on March 2nd who will share data pertaining to three-year degree attainment. Potential questions for the vice president could include how many students are finishing in three-year degrees and in what majors; how much prior credit students typically have and of what type; whether there is any evidence that students who take this pathway do better, worse, or the same in terms of achieving their career endpoints overall, and how quickly they do so; and whether students who follow this pathway participate in things like study abroad or research at similar rates to their peers.

Discussion: It would be valuable if this project involved a systemwide initiative for internship placement for students on both three and four year pathways. Encouraging completion of a degree in three years puts a lot of pressure on students and predicting the benefits could be difficult. While this pathway could make a degree more affordable for students, the students who would most benefit from the cost savings may have the most difficulty completing in three years. A member is concerned about whether three year degrees will negatively impact educational quality and student learning outcomes. Chair Sugar proposed that members think about how both how UC can best support those students who want to earn a degree in three years and how we can minimize the number of students who take longer than four years among those who do not wish to accelerate.

Executive Advisor Greenspan indicated that the number of students finishing in four years has been increasing naturally as they have access to more courses in the summer. It is unclear when students are made aware of three year degree pathways but it is critical that it be early on so they can receive appropriate advising. Many students do not have the luxury to take their time in college including those who must work or handle other responsibilities; however moving through quickly should not be at the expense of experiencing a UC quality education. Another important question is how a three year degree pathway is related to accreditation.

VI. Preparing for March 2nd Consultation with UC Online

On March 2nd, UCEP will be joined by the director of UCSD's Academic Integrity Office, Tricia Bertram Gallant and UC Online's Executive Director, Rolin Moe, who will report on the assessment center network task force. In addition, Executive Director Moe will report on UC's partnership with the National Education Opportunity Network on the Equity Lab project. Chair Sugar provided background information about these projects.

VII. Member Reports/Campus Updates

This topic was not discussed.

The meeting adjourned at: 1:01 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Catherine Sugar, Chair