



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY  
Minutes of Videoconference  
Monday, March 16, 2026

In attendance: Catherine Sugar, Chair (UCLA), Jason Duque, Vice Chair (UCSB), Darlene Francis (UCB), Gerardo Con Diaz (UCD), Maia Young (UCI), Jeffrey Maloy (UCLA), Susan Varnot (UCM), Gene Brewer (UCR), Lily Hoang (UCSD), Giuliana Perrone (UCSB), Todd Greenspan (Executive Advisor, Academic Planning & Policy Development, Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP)), Carmen Corona (Director, Academic Planning & Policy, IRAP), Brenda Abrams (Principal Policy Analyst)

I. Consent Calendar

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

II. Chair's Announcements and Updates

Chair Sugar reported on the Legislative Day held by the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) in Sacramento on March 12<sup>th</sup>. ICAS met with a legislator, legislative staff, representatives of the Legislative Analyst's Office, and the consultants to the Assembly Higher Education Committee. The messaging from ICAS touched on ensuring accessibility to and success of students in higher education through cross-segment collaboration; the critical role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic freedom; and transfer alignment including associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) and the common course numbering (CCN) project. ICAS emphasized that there has been significant progress on CCN and articulation since legislators are proposing new legislation.

The talking points spoke to the need for continued system funding and student support along with the need to increase awareness about preparedness and requirements for transfer among both students and their advisors, including specifically greater funding for the ASSIST system. Members of the Assembly and Senate are focused on career success for students and would like to see data on programs that support student success, including retention, academic performance, and eventual career placement. Visitors also commented about updating the California Education Code and the Master Plan, which raises concerns about homogenization that will dilute the particular strengths of the three segments. In response, ICAS members stressed the importance of consulting with the segments in advance of any work on such fundamental changes and recommended taking a holistic rather than piecemeal approach to these efforts.

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

*Todd Greenspan, Executive Advisor, Academic Planning & Policy Development & Carmen Corona, Director, Academic Planning & Policy*

Director Corona explained that nine proposed bills call for incremental structural changes to degree-granting authority across the public higher education segments. The authors point to

legitimate regional workforce needs, but the bills raise broader concerns regarding mission differentiation, looking at the Master Plan, duplication of academic programs, and who has the ability to grant doctoral degrees. Some of the proposed legislation, including Assembly Bill (AB) 2693 and AB 2694 (both authored by Assemblymember Alvarez), are of serious concern to UC because of the fundamental changes to the authority to offer degrees. UC has not taken official positions on the bills yet. Executive Advisor Greenspan remarked that the most recent California Community College proposals for baccalaureate degrees raise a basic question about what constitutes a Bachelor of Arts degree. The Legislative Analyst's Office is projecting higher state revenue than was anticipated in November. The three campuses required to decrease non-resident enrollment continue to discuss potential approaches in the future. The current compact will expire in 2026-2027 and there might be an opportunity for a new compact with the new governor.

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

The committee will continue a discussion that began in February about learning outcomes, quality of education, and metrics of success with particular attention to how that might vary across modality, subject area, or location. The goal of these conversations is to identify the right focus areas of which the most urgent problem is seen as the push to expand the modalities of instruction within UC, not just for online courses but online programs. UCEP has heard about the Global Languages Network and other initiatives coming from the systemwide administration that revolve around increasing online offerings. Questions include whether this is a problem UCEP should attempt to address and how, as well as whether the committee will produce a white paper or some other work product about the online modality. Vice Chair Duque posits that a framework of concepts and principles is needed to help UC move into this increasingly multimodal instructional world while still fulfilling the promise of a UC-quality educational experience, in particular the special promises of attending a research university. A framework would include concepts for talking about pedagogy, instructional design, and learning in relationship to success.

Discussion: The draft report from the Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs (PUDP) Task Force builds on the statement on UC quality and the report from the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities (IMOD) and offers new principles and thoughts on assessment. Chair Sugar explained that the work of the PUDP and IMOD task forces underscored how important it is to have concrete statements from relevant faculty committees on the record as evidence that faculty have opined on these matters. A white paper could provide the theory and research basis to facilitate the development of principles. A member noted that much existing research about online education does not apply to the students UC attracts and remarked on how some elements of online education are already determined by the Department of Education and accreditation agencies.

One department at UCSD has been asked by campus administrators to offer classes with a minimum of 200 students without teaching assistants to cut costs and the faculty decided those classes will be online without any consideration about what would be required to teach them well in person or whether use of the online format would better achieve the stated goals. Vice Chair Duque remarked that what happened at UCSD is an example of when it would be valuable to have a shared way to respond to such demands from the administration that makes clear what is being sacrificed by moving away from face-to-face synchronous instruction. A widely held assumption is that online courses are not expensive but a study conducted by UCB estimated that it costs \$160K

to produce one high-quality online course. Members talked about the various costs associated with online courses; however, the main question might be about the affordability and constraints of different modalities. UC has developed successful, robust hybrid and online programs that started with significant upfront investments. One of the main concerns of UCEO members is related to the various types of engagement essential to fostering a quality UC education, including student engagement with the material, their peers, and the faculty. For the next discussion of this topic, Vice Chair Duque will have a prospectus for a white paper that includes purpose, audience, and content along with a collection of relevant background documents from UC.

#### V. Assign Reviewers for Systemwide Review Items

1. Systemwide Senate Review of Proposal to Establish a Systemwide Academic Senate Committee on Climate Change and Sustainability. Comments are due April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Chair Sugar described the proposal to establish a systemwide Academic Senate Committee on Climate Change and Sustainability including the goals and some of the challenges. If the committee decides to opine, the feedback would focus on the education piece.

Action: The UCD representative volunteered to lead the review of this item.

2. Systemwide Senate Review of Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 192 and Senate Regulations 636 and 761, regarding the University Committee on Preparatory Education and its areas of purview. Comments are due May 19<sup>th</sup>.

Action: The UCM representative volunteered to lead the review of this item.

#### VI. Credit by Exam

Chair Sugar summarized recent discussions by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) and the University Committee on Preparatory Education about credit by exam. The governor's office, legislators, and students and their families want students to receive college credit for work done in high school or at another college as a way to get ahead on their UC education and save money. Current sources of credit by exam include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), A levels, and other advanced high school exams that can be used to fulfill A-G course requirements for admission and earn credit for UC courses. Exams are reviewed by BOARS for admission credit and by UCEP for college credit. In 2024, UCEP issued a position statement pushing back against expanding the list of testing agencies whose exams can be used for credit. This memo expresses confidence in AP exams, but changes made by the College Board to the way those exams are scored have raised questions about this endorsement.

High school students can also receive credit for prior work through direct enrollment in courses at community colleges or via participation in the College and Career Pathways (CCAP) Dual Enrollment Program which sponsors classes on high-school campuses. This CCAP dual enrollment is one of the fastest growing categories of prior learning, but it lacks the systematic oversight and standardized national exams that the AP, IB, and A levels have. The various uses of credit for prior learning include admission, placement into course sequences, and meeting general education (GE)--and occasionally pre-major and major--requirements. UC needs a coherent policy on how the different kinds of credit are going to be granted, but there are a number of questions to be

considered first: how well should students perform in a prior learning context to earn UC credit; how many courses or exams do the faculty want to evaluate; how can individual dual enrollment courses be overseen since there is no standard curriculum; how frequently should sources of external credit be reassessed; and should there be caps on the amount and types of things for which students can receive prior credit. The increasing number of courses students take prior to arrival at UC impacts enrollment in campus courses and students who finish GE requirements before they arrive and only complete their major may miss out on opportunities to do other UC quality-related activities, like research and study abroad. An essential question is whether doing college work in high school, even if the courses are rigorous, is equivalent to taking a UC course.

Discussion: Concerns include that, in the absence of standardized test scores, there is an over reliance on scores on external exams which are not available to all students equitably; that the content of these exams is not what UC faculty consider to be standard curriculum; and that the scores do not reflect students' actual level of competency and do not correlate to the work they are asked to do at UC. Members agree that external exams can set students up for failure because they are not acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for UC courses. If BOARS and UCEP establish a policy capping the number of credits students can earn for external exams, Analyst Abrams recommends that a public-facing white paper that explains the rationale behind this policy will be needed. Chair Sugar remarked that it would be important to have as much data as possible to show where students struggle to make it clear why a cap policy would be intended to support student success. This is also an opportunity to clarify that UC values the work students do in high school and community college but that this work will not necessarily count the same way at UC. In addition, it is critical to acknowledge how receiving credit for prior learning intersects with the increasing unaffordability of higher education.

#### VII. Member Reports/Campus Updates

Members did not offer any campus updates.

#### VIII. Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

The meeting adjourned at: 12:57 PM

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Catherine Sugar, Chair