



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
Minutes of Videoconference
Monday, March 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), 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), 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 February 2nd videoconference minutes were approved.

II. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership
Susannah Scott, Vice Chair, Academic Senate

In January, the Regents received a detailed overview of the governor's budget for UC. A number of general obligation bonds are advancing in both the Assembly and Senate including an affordable housing bond for \$10B from which UC hopes to benefit as well as the \$23M California Science and Health Research Bond sponsored by Senator Weiner. State Government Relations at UCOP is coordinating with campuses to showcase research efforts across the system and connect with local legislators to stress the importance of this research funding and the value and impact of graduate education. The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against UCLA last week charging the campus with Title VII violations and, unless it is settled, this could lead to a jury trial in a federal court. The feedback from the systemwide review of the proposed Policy on Information Technology Accessibility was shared with the policy owners who met with Academic Council last week. Senate leadership is asking the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools to undertake a study of admissions policies and academic preparation and Chair Palazoglu is finalizing a special charge that will task the committee with developing a roadmap for this work. Senate leadership worked with Academic Personnel to develop guidance for faculty if the UAW goes on strike.

III. Preparation for Assessment Center Network and the Equity Lab Project Discussions

Chair Sugar provided background information about the Assessment Center Network Task Force led by Dr. Tricia Bertram-Gallant, UCSD Academic Integrity and Triton Testing Center Director. The task force is advocating for the creation of centers at each of the 10 campuses plus a network with the California State University (CSU) and California Community College (CCC) systems.

Discussion: UCM is the only campus that is not represented on the Assessment Center Network Task Force and the need for such a facility is a topic that comes up repeatedly on this campus.

IV. Consultation with Institutional Research & Academic Planning
Pamela Brown, Vice President, Institutional Research & Academic Planning & Ethan Savage, Academic Planning & Policy Analyst, IRAP

A recent uptick in the number of students attempting to finish their undergraduate education in under four years due is driven by factors like increased credit for prior learning and expanded summer session as well as the rising costs of education. The Provost's Office would like to encourage and support students who want to take this route; however, there are concerns that the students who might benefit most from this, especially financially, are the ones least able to take advantage of it. Vice President Pamela Brown explained that IRAP attempted to address questions that came up about the data on who is graduating in three years, issues related to equity, and what three-year degree attainment looks like at other institutions.

Analyst Savage indicated that three-year graduation rates have increased over time, with the rate for entering freshman cohorts increasing from 1.8% in 1999 to 7.6% in 2022. Rates vary across student groups and Pell and first-generation students are less likely to graduate in three years. UCSC is ahead of the other campuses with a rate of 10.3% which the division attributes to multiple factors, including a concerted effort to promote three-year pathways, the summer edge program, and a degree audit system that helps students track outstanding requirements. The accumulation of pre-UC credit is the strongest predictor of early graduation and this is driven by access to Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment coursework in high school. Students who are continuing generation, non-Pell, and not underrepresented are more likely to have had access to advanced coursework in high school, familiarity with college requirements and planning, and the economic flexibility to manage heavier course loads or summer enrollment. The students who graduate in three years have somewhat lower average debt and higher average post-college earnings than students who graduate in four or more years. While UC can influence some marginal contributions to acceleration, three-year graduation cannot be scaled broadly without addressing upstream educational opportunities.

Discussion: A concern is that promoting three-year degree attainment will exacerbate issues of equity, racism, and justice rather than remediating them, and the opportunity to graduate in three years should be available to all students. Vice President Brown remarked that the increase in three-year degrees coincided with the effort and focus on improving rates of four-year degree attainment for Pell, first generation, and underrepresented students. The vice president would like to see continued focus on improving efforts for timely graduation for all students. Since the students who attain three-year degrees already have certain advantages when they enroll at UC, one question is whether they would have been successful without extra support. UCEP members indicated that some additional data breakdowns would be helpful in understanding who is engaging in and benefiting from 3-year degree pathways, to further inform decision making, which they would be happy to share with IRAP. However, it is not clear if UCEP has the ability to engage with and influence this initiative, particularly with respect to how it is framed.

V. Reports on the Assessment Center Network and the Equity Lab Project
Tricia Bertram Gallant, Director, Academic Integrity & Triton Testing & Rolin Moe, Executive Director, UC Online

Assessment Center Network: Director Bertram Gallant shared the charge given to the ACN Task Force by Provost Newman and the goals of this effort. The director delineated the reasons why

current models of test administration are not sustainable which include the faculty workload crisis, risks related to academic integrity, and student equity concerns. The centers are staffed to administer secure assessments on behalf of faculty and provide all students with consistent, predictable, and flexible testing experiences. The centers have benefits for faculty and teaching as well as for students and learning. The vision is that a California Assessment Center Network connects UC, CSUs, and CCCs to enable any California student to take a secure exam near their home or work. Six UC campuses (UCD, UCI, UCR, UCSD, UCSB, and UCSC) have agreed to participate in a summer pilot of the assessment centers for students who are taking courses at a campus other than their own. UCEP is asked to encourage divisional senates to discuss assessment center models and provide feedback on strategies that will engender faculty trust, ease faculty workload, and provide consistent and secure test experiences to students.

Discussion: A UCEP member asked about the financial model for the ACN. Director Bertram Gallant indicated that an executive vice chancellor provided the funding for UCSD's testing center, and that human resources are the most expensive portion of the budget. Depending on the layout of the facility, the number of tests administered can be scaled up without the need for additional staffing. Chair Sugar commented that there are logistical benefits for students and faculty but also logistical costs associated with utilizing assessment centers, along with potential integrity/security concerns around flexibility of scheduling. She asked how those issues would be addressed and what kinds of exams would be supported. The director noted that the pilot will allow faculty to use paper exams, Prairie Learn, or Canvas since one platform will not work for every exam and said it is important to balance the logistical hurdles for faculty so there is a consistent testing and proctoring experience for students. Director Bertram Gallant also noted that she would like to shatter the myth about final exams needing to be three hours long and that allowing more flexibility would enable more students to take exams at the centers, so it would be helpful for the Senate to give this some consideration.

Equity Lab Project: Executive Director Moe explained that, in 2023, former UC President Drake entered UCOP into a three-year pilot partnership with what is now known as the National Education Opportunity Network (NEON). The Equity Lab project gave UC the opportunity to serve historically under-represented high schools that do not have the mechanisms needed to engage with colleges and universities. UC Online received \$350K in supplemental funding to retool four existing online courses for the high-school setting. UC faculty members designed the course materials and they or graduate students led synchronous sessions twice a week. On the other three days, the high school faculty helped with reading assignments and discussions, using the UC developed resources to engage with their students as they worked on the cumulative assignments for the course. Students were allowed to drop the course up to the day of the final to avoid a situation that might harm their college applications. About 700 students completed these courses with a grade of C or above (eligible for college credit); half of those students were California residents. The project hosted a summit at UCLA attended by 300 of the California students to give them exposure to a college campus.

An old process for working with non-matriculated students was used to provide transcripts for this pilot. In the future, a new procedure would need to be created to enable each campus registrar's office to provide transcripts while not burdening their offices. The Equity Lab project costs were higher than expected in part because the compensation for participating faculty members varied and because UC could not employ undergraduate students to help run the courses. UCOP will not

continue the partnership with NEON but an individual campus could assume the financial, procedural, and operational aspects of the work with some infrastructure support from UC Online.

VI. Chair's Announcements and Updates

Chair Sugar shared the highlights from February 11th Academic Planning Council meeting which included updates on the UC Adaptations to Disruptions Plus Task Force, the Performance of Undergraduate Degree Programs Task Force, and from the graduate and undergraduate student associations. The provost indicated that since costs are rising faster than revenue significant restructuring will be required, and there will be ongoing discussion about the value education programs contribute to UC. The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates met on February 20th and discussed common course numbering templates, the plan for Legislative Day on March 12th, and dual enrollment.

During the Academic Council meeting on February 25th, Chair Sugar raised concerns about a UC Davis proposal for a Master of Engineering in Water Resources that would be entirely asynchronous, noting that the impact of asynchronous versus synchronous programs on UC quality needs to be debated. Council had an extended discussion with Provost Newman about the Degree Plus program for which she is seeking federal funding. Members of Council had a number of questions and concerns about the program, particularly around the lack of faculty involvement, oversight, and the handing over of components of the initiative to Extension. The provost pushed back against these concerns, stating that faculty are not knowledgeable about what employers want and therefore have no place in reviewing the quality of that part of the program.

VII. Guidelines for Approval and Review of Systemwide Courses *Jason Duque, Vice Chair*

The committee received an updated draft of the guidelines for the approval and review of systemwide courses. The guidelines begin by citing Senate Bylaw 170.B.3 which grants UCEP authority to approve systemwide courses.

Discussion: The updated guidelines clarify that systemwide approval of a course does not mean students are able to receive general education, pre-major, or major credit as these decisions are made the campuses. Members suggested changes to the draft.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the guidelines for the approval and review of systemwide courses and members voted unanimously in favor.

VIII. Member Reports/Campus Updates

UCI: The Committee on Educational Policy approved a mechanism for submission of online majors which includes questions departments should address.

IX. Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

The meeting adjourned at: 12:53 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams, Principal Policy Analyst
Attest: Catherine Sugar, Chair