

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ACADEMIC SENATE

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

February 7, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Joseph Kiskis, Chair (UCD)

Denise Segura, Vice Chair, (UCSB), Randolph Bergstrom (UCSB), Richard Weiss (UCLA), Pedro Castillo (alt-UCSC), David Bunch (UCD), J. Keith Gilles (UCB), Anne Kelley (UCM), Charles Perrin (UCSD), Henry Sanchez (UCSF), Harry Green (UCR), Eligio Martinez, Student Rep. (UCLA), Rozana Carducci, Student Rep. (UCLA), Julius Zelmanowitz (Vice Provost, Academic Initiatives), Julie Gordon (Director, Intercampus Program Coordination), Gregg Thomson (Director of Student Research, UCB), Michael LaBriola (Senate Analyst)

I. Chair's Announcements – *Joe Kiskis*

In January, Chair Kiskis met briefly by phone with the Information Technology and Telecommunications Policy Committee (ITTP), who are interested in instituting a systemwide Information Technology minor through distance learning and SR 544. At its meeting, ICAS discussed WASC accreditation; proposed legislation concerning a student “academic bill of rights;” accountability in the budget compact; and transfer articulation issues. The Academic Senate's Concurrent Resolution on Graduate Education is going forward to the legislature, and a group of legislators is considering an initiative related to faculty diversity.

Academic Council recently sent a memo to the Provost reaffirming last year's recommendation regarding the alignment of campus calendars. Chair Blumenthal sent a memo to the Provost on behalf of UCEP asking her to collect information from campus Vice Provosts on the resource implications of reducing class size in entry level writing courses. Council endorsed the SciGETC proposal, on the condition that adequate funding is provided for implementation. The senate is reviewing a draft systemwide code of ethics, which was developed in response to a request by the Regents. Academic Council is meeting with the Executive Vice Chancellors on March 31 for a one-day retreat to discuss graduate education and faculty diversity. Davis Law Professor and UCFW Chair John Oakley has been nominated to serve as the next Council Vice Chair. Lynda Goff will brief UCEP on the California Science and Math Initiative at the March 7 meeting.

II. Undergraduate Experience Survey Project – *with Gregg Thomson and Richard Flacks*

UCB Director of Student Research Gregg Thomson and UCSB Professor Richard Flacks joined the meeting to discuss the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey Project (UCUES), a joint institutional/academic effort to collect systemwide data on student experiences as undergraduates at UC. The UCUES research team also includes John Douglass, a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Higher Education.

2004 was the third year for the online survey, and the first in which all UC undergraduates, including transfers, were invited to participate, which has allowed researchers to capture a large and diverse sampling of data. Responses to the survey questions, which dealt with students' academic and civic engagement, as well as social and personal commitments, were also linked to high school grades, test scores, and demographic information. Students were also given the opportunity to write open-ended text to comment on a number of subjects. Survey topics included time and effort spent studying; use of co-curricular services and computers; political activism; work, commute time and family obligations; contact with faculty; and research involvement. UCUES has provided insight into how students balance academic demands with

other obligations, how they interact with student services, and what they consider the value of a UC education.

Director Thomson summarized a few of the survey findings. The data revealed that a majority of the UC undergraduate student population is either first generation American or have recent immigrant origins. The average time students reported studying was considered very low, but more study hours correlated logically with a higher GPA. Transfer students reported studying more than students who entered as freshmen, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to report a higher level of study time and academic engagement. SAT verbal scores also appeared to correlate negatively with undergraduate academic engagement. In some departments, students who study the middle amount of hours within the norms of their departments are the most satisfied, while in others, more study relates to more satisfaction. Researchers are seeking continued funding for UCUES. They want to find ways to encourage a larger response rate and build the survey into the university culture, while maintaining academic research independence of the project.

Members discussed some possible educational policy implications of the data, and noted with dismay that 46% of students had no personal contact with faculty or only email contact, which to them was evidence of the erosion of the student-faculty ratio. Moreover, students who reported higher levels of contact with faculty and exposure to faculty research in the classroom were also more satisfied with their UC experience than those who reported less contact.

Members said if the response rate to the survey becomes large enough, reliable data could be extracted by department and major, which could have implications for program review and academic policy making. Questions could be initiated about grading policies and how academic motivation works in correlation to academic preparation and cultural background. There may also be questions for UCEP to ask related to academic success, professional training, career guidance, advising, and issues of disqualification. How student study habits can be understood, how do they change over time, and what strategies do students use to get through academic requirements? In addition, specific pedagogical questions like how often students are made to produce in a class, could be included as measures of engagement in the survey. UCEP could also recommend certain specific strategies of implementation and utilization on campuses, or perhaps commission a study related to their own interest. Members recommended that each campus have a group of faculty advising the project and coordinating distribution of reports, tailoring survey questions for local relevance and impact.

III. Updates on three UCEP Projects

Academic Integrity. A survey conducted by the UC Berkeley Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Subcommittee revealed that most faculty, students and GSIs at UCB were unaware of or misinformed about policies and formal processes relating to academic integrity. Moreover, academic integrity procedures differ from campus to campus, and there is little systemwide guidance on the issue. The subcommittee made several procedural recommendations, proposed special transcript notations for punitive grades, and recommended that UCB develop policies clearly addressing the authority of faculty, due process for students and the use of anti plagiarism software. UCEP may be in a position to revisit standards and definitions and consolidate campus best practices regarding faculty training, and then go forward with a systemwide proposal or recommendation. The UCEP subcommittee will report more next month.

Program Review. Richard Weiss reported that his UCEP subcommittee is examining the role and value of program reviews, as well as strategies to ensure the significance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the evaluation process. The subcommittee is interested in hearing from campuses where program reviews are thought to be problematic, and in gathering guidelines and best practices.

Quantitative Reasoning Requirement. A joint UCEP/UCOPE subcommittee has formed to discuss a proposal to institute an entry-level Quantitative Research Skills and Methods requirement, analogous to the Subject A writing requirement.

IV. Report from UCOP Consultants – *Julius Zelmanowitz and Julie Gordon*

The Provost has embarked on a new effort to systematically inform the Regents, Legislature and general public about UC's contributions to the state. She made presentations at the January meeting of the Regents on both the [Master Plan](#) and the state of graduate education in California. Since the California Master Plan was enacted in 1960, master's degree production in California has increased, while UC's proportion of that production has decreased. The Provost believes a resource allocation "rebalancing" needs to occur for UC to meet the graduate and undergraduate enrollment needs of the state. At the March Regents meeting, the Provost will discuss graduate and undergraduate student financial aid.

V. Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved the minutes of December 6, 2004.

Action: The committee endorsed the draft policy on Use of Recordings of Course Presentations

The proposed amendment to Senate Bylaw 128 was pulled from the consent calendar for further discussion.

VI. Data on Students in Academic Difficulty

After December's discussion of the students in academic difficulty issue, UCEP members developed a memo and draft data collection template, which Berkeley's Registrar Castillo-Robson forwarded to her campus colleagues in the Registrars offices and the institutional research offices on each campus. UCEP received comments from a number of registrars and associate deans expressing a variety of concerns about the data, their responsibility for data collection, and the project as a whole. UCEP took these concerns into account, and decided to continue pursuing its main charge to help facilitate a systematic mechanism for reporting that would help college faculties meet their responsibilities and talk about the issue more definitively.

The topics of interest include how a campus handles students in academic difficulty; procedures and philosophy of college advising systems; and mentoring, tutoring, and advising. UCEP suspects these systems are successful, however that hypothesis can't be demonstrated without data. Moreover, it would be useful to be able to say data and mechanisms are in place to monitor students in these categories.

Two situations were noted that may not be evident in a data report: first, that some students in academic difficulty are not dismissed, but instead withdraw, and second, that it may be possible in some colleges for students to move out of probationary status by changing majors.

UCEP decided to make the request directly to campuses and add more flexibility to the request.

The committee will write a memo through Council to the campus divisions that will review the history of the issue and summarize last year's "snapshot" data from UCD and UCSB. The letter will emphasize that the issue of students in academic difficulty is a college faculty responsibility; encourage communication between deans' offices and the college executive committees with data reporting; lay out the key questions—e.g., whether there are policies in place and whether those policies are effective in helping students over rough times to academic accomplishment and graduation; ask for a report by spring or fall that includes data addressing these questions or laying out a plan to collect such data; asks for regular, periodic future reports to divisional and systemwide Senate committees and to dean's offices; and sends the Excel template as a possible form for the data.

The letter will go to council and down through the senate structure to the college faculties. The target audience is ultimately the college executive committees, not the campuswide undergraduate council.

VII. UCD Proposal to Reconstitute the Division of Biological Sciences as the College of Biological Sciences

In October, UCEP submitted questions and concerns to UC Davis about a proposal to reconstitute the Davis Division of Biological Sciences as a College. In January, UCEP received a lengthy reply from the Dean of Biological Sciences addressing many of UCEP's specific concerns.

A few members of UCEP said they had lingering concerns about the proposal; in particular, the relationship of the new college faculty with the agricultural experiment stations as well as more generally, the future of the AES structure in the state. There was also reluctance noted from the standpoint of administrative policy, as the proposal was seen by some to create an imbalance among the colleges. Ultimately however, the committee felt that the educational policy questions had been sufficiently addressed and answered.

Overall, UCEP was satisfied that the Proposal was sound and that their concerns had been addressed. In terms of educational policy, forming a single unit out of the faculty engaged in fundamental science on campus will help clear the lines of authority for oversight of educational programs. The new structure will allow the CBS faculty at Davis to organize, revise and modernize their curriculum more efficiently and effectively as a rapidly evolving and changing field moves forward.

Action: The committee will send comments to Academic Council recommending that Council approve the reconstitution in its present form.

VIII. Excess Unit Fee Proposal

In February 2004, UCEP was asked to review implementation possibilities for a legislative budget mandate to charge additional fees for students who exceed by more than 10% the minimum number of credit units required for graduation.

Since then, UCOP has developed a formal policy draft that is believed will have the least harmful impact on students. It follows most of UCEP's Council-endorsed February 2004 recommendations—that the fee structure should apply only to units taken at UC; that extra fees not be imposed before the completion of 8 semesters or 12 quarters (pro-rated for transfers); that

exceptions be made based on specific major unit requirements; and that extra fees should not be imposed on students in legitimate pursuit of a double major.

The committee agreed that the disproportionate effect of the fee on students enrolled in Education Abroad programs is not adequately addressed. By one measure, students in EAP and other off campus academic programs like UCDC and UCCS would be three times more likely to be assessed the fee. EAP programs would be damaged if there were an incentive to take EAP from other universities. Students should not be discouraged from participation in off-campus and international education programs, and it seems reasonable that participants in these programs can easily be separated out and their off-campus units counted so as not to hurt them financially.

Members noted that the concept of “pedagogically legitimate” double majors discussed in their February 2004 letter was not explicitly included in the policy, and the committee worried that the double major exemption would be an incentive for students to falsely declare a double major to avoid of extra fees. Members discussed whether the committee wanted to retract its original recommendation about double majors. The administrative cost to implement and effects on impacted majors could also be reasons to reverse position. Others said double majors should be exempt from extra fees only if students fulfilled the unit requirements within 4 years. Encouraging breadth of education and intellectual exploration is good educational policy, but without careful attention to the possibility of abuse, the double major exemption could become a hindrance to fair implementation.

The committee noted a few relatively minor points they felt need clarification. First, is “the marginal cost of education” referred to in point b) on page 1 of the policy a reference to the UC contribution per unit? In addition, the transfer student piece of the policy was said to be unclear.

The University should consider adding a clause allowing for an appeal process in difficult situations such as one in which a class is full and the major does not allow substitutions. Petitions for exceptional cases like this should be endorsed by a faculty member, and honored by the administration.

The committee will reiterate its view that the excess fee proposal is bad educational policy. After administrative structures are in place, net revenues are unlikely. UC has a responsibility to ensure that necessary advising services are provided to support students and help them achieve the major they set out to achieve. As such, any fee revenue gained from the policy should be returned to the campuses to augment budgets for student advising.

Action: UCEP will submit comments to Academic Council.

IX. Student-Faculty Ratio

The Regents and the Office of the President have included a \$10 million line item in the 2005-06 budget for restoration of the student-faculty ratio. UC has already fallen substantially behind comparison institutions in this area. The individualized interaction and instruction that comes with students and faculty meeting together in smaller groups is beneficial to education and research. A favorable student-faculty ratio also affects national rankings, such as the list compiled by US News & World Report, in which it is one measure in the ranking formula. Research evidence also demonstrates the benefits of a smaller ratio to educational delivery. UCUES data shows a direct correlation between student engagement and faculty contact. UCEP believes this is a significant educational policy issue and wants the Senate to emphasize that they

support the UCOP/Regents perspective on the importance of maintaining a favorable student-faculty ratio. \$10M being provided does not go very far, considering the \$70 million in cuts from over the last two years, and the university can't sustain further erosion.

Action: Chair Kiskis will send a memo to Council expressing UCEP's view on this issue, and asking Council to communicate with UCOP and possibly other entities in support of the Regents budget line item for the restoration of the student-faculty ratio.

X. Proposed Amendment to Senate Bylaw 128

The proposed amendment to Senate Bylaw 128 would require the University Committee on Committees to appoint any member of a subcommittee who is not already a member of a standing committee of the Assembly.

Overall, members did not support the amendment, viewing it as an inappropriate and needlessly bureaucratic control mechanism. It was also noted that UCOC does not meet often enough to make this procedure work efficiently. However, UCEP decided that it would be appropriate for a subcommittee to report back through its parent standing committee. If UCOC noted a problem, it could then consult with the current or incoming Chair of the committee. Such a procedure would provide a sufficient measure of accountability without introducing additional inefficiencies and delays into Senate operations

Action: The committee rejected the amendment and will submit comments to Council.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola

Attest: Joe Kiskis