

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

November 6, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Richard Weiss, Chair (UCLA)

Keith Williams, Vice-Chair (UCD), Pierre Keller (UCR), Kim Griest (UCSD), Jaye Padgett (UCSC), Benson Tongue (UCB), Omer Blaes (UCSB), David Kay (UCI), Henry Sanchez (UCSF), Lowell Gallagher (UCLA), Cynthia Pineda (Student Rep-UCLA), Martin Kohan (Student Rep-UCB), Igor Tregub (Student Rep-UCB), Michael LaBriola (Committee Analyst)

I. Announcements

UCEP Vice Chair Keith Williams reported that a consortium of Senate and administrative leaders has asked each campus to present a five-year plan for the implementation of the Science and Math Initiative (SMI) including enrollment targets and a budget to meet those targets. Campus [faculty representatives](#) from SMIG, the Senate's SMI work group, are available as a resource to local undergraduate education committees wanting information on the SMI.

II. Task Force on Undergraduate Education

Provost Wyatt (Rory) Hume and Special Assistant Carol Copperud joined the meeting to discuss the mission and composition of UCEP's proposed Academic Planning Council (APC) planning group on the future of undergraduate education at UC.

The provost said the group (tentatively named the Undergraduate Education Planning Committee (UGEPC)) would fit well into the framework of other systemwide planning efforts and would complement the recommendation of the president's Long Range Guidance Team for campuses to engage in academic planning more openly as a system rather than in isolation. He said the system as a whole would benefit from individual campuses having greater access to and understanding of each other's planning efforts. The two processes of examining undergraduate education and sharing academic plans across campuses could mutually inform each other.

He said that despite UC's increasing financial challenges, the University of California remained uniquely positioned to continue functioning as both a world class research university and world class educational institution. The University could best maintain its excellence by thinking, planning, and acting more like a system.

Provost Hume noted that the APC coordinates several other systemwide academic planning efforts: the Planning Group for Professional and Doctoral Education (PDPE), which was formed to consider strategies for reversing a decline in graduate and professional students at UC; the Advisory Council on Future Growth in the Health Professions, which was planning UC's response to California's future health care needs; and the Information Technology Guidance Committee, which was examining how the systemwide technology resources of the University could be shared more effectively. He suggested that UCEP's proposed group focus not only on undergraduate curricular issues, but also on the environment in which students learn.

Chair Weiss noted that the proposal for UGEPC sent by APC to UCEP in October differed from what UCEP had originally proposed. UCEP's vision was for a small task force to explore how UC should adapt to the changing circumstances of undergraduate education in a transforming

society, taking into consideration topics such as the role of research, international education, technology, and capstone experiences in undergraduate education. He said UCEP was concerned that the consideration of ancillary issues by an expanded group would dilute this educational focus as well as the group's effectiveness. Finally, UCEP was unsure how the charge of the UGEPC would interact with and affect the authority of UCEP.

Special Assistant Copperud noted that the undergraduate deans had proposed an alternative structure—a small Steering Committee composed of faculty, deans, and UCOP administrators, which would identify the leading topics and establish ad hoc work groups to discuss those topics in-depth, calling in outside experts if necessary. In this way, it would be possible by mutual agreement for undergraduate life issues to be addressed by an individual focus group without marginalizing the discussion of topics identified by UCEP or eclipsing the main curricular focus. She said APC was hoping to assemble a functional group by early 2007.

UCEP Chair Weiss noted to UCEP members that UC's educational mission has to involve a partnership between the faculty and administration to be successful, that shared governance benefits the University, and that the faculty are also well represented on the APC. He asked UCEP to consider options that would best serve the academic mission of the university.

UCEP members supported the deans' model. They felt the ad hoc groups could focus on specific issues and provide input into a larger vision administered by the Steering Committee. Members decided to submit a draft vision/charge to the APC based on its original proposal document. A clear charge would guide the group and ensure that the educational focus remained primary.

UCEP decided its recommendation would be for the Steering Committee to consist of between 6 and 10 total members, including a minimum of two UCEP members, the chair or vice chair of the Academic Senate, two undergraduate deans, and representation from UCOP. UCEP supported student involvement at least at the level of on the ad hoc work groups. The student representatives and some UCEP members felt student representation would also be valuable on the Steering Committee. UCEP felt the appropriate Academic Senate agencies should have the opportunity to vet any of the Steering Committee's proposals prior to APC action.

Finally committee members identified several additional issues for the Steering Committee to investigate: nationwide assessments, the crisis in California K-12 education, and the student faculty ratio.

Action: UCEP will communicate its views to the APC and develop a draft charge/vision.

III. Consent Calendar

Action: UCEP approved the minutes of the October 9, 2006 meeting.

UCEP decided to remove the [Proposed Policy on Stewardship of Electronic Information](#) for further discussion. UCEP felt the document should be clearer about what the faculty's legal obligations for protecting student information would be under the new policy.

Action: Representative David Kay (Irvine) will compile a list of specific questions and concerns to include in UCEP's memo to Council.

IV. Proposed UCEP/CCGA/UCAF work group

UCEP discussed a recommendation from the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) for members of UCEP, CCGA, and the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) to form a work group to discuss the intersections between the UCAF's [Student Freedom of Scholarly Inquiry Principles](#) document and the CCGA/UCEP report on the [Role of Graduate Students in University Instruction](#), to ensure the documents are consistent and aligned. UCEP decided the proposed work group was appropriate.

Action: Chair Weiss volunteered to serve as UCEP's representative.

V. C-ID Proposal

The Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) was seeking input from UCEP on a California Community Colleges (CCC) Academic Senate proposal for "C-ID," a common course numbering system for lower division major preparation courses. C-ID is designed to help CCC students identify clear transfer paths into courses and majors that have been approved by UC and CSU campuses as meeting articulation standards.

CCC Treasurer Jane Patton joined the meeting to discuss C-ID. She noted that the California Articulation Number system (CAN) was another attempt to implement a common course numbering system, which failed when UC and CSU ended their participation. CAN was viewed as ineffective by both UC and CSU, and incompatible with the CSU Lower Division Transfer Pattern (LDTP). LDTP was legislation that mandated the alignment of major preparation patterns across CSU campuses. (The legislature agreed not to force commonality at UC; UC responded voluntarily with "Streamlining"—SR 477.)

Treasurer Patton said C-ID would facilitate the SR 477 goal of identifying common lower division degree requirements across UC campuses; it would supply an inventory of UC-articulated courses; it would help identify commonality in course content; and it would aid in the development of course descriptions for catalogs. C-ID would not replace UC's internal numbering system. She said she was seeking assistance from faculty at all three segments of California higher education in developing a more detailed proposal.

UCEP expressed general support for C-ID. They felt that potentially it could contribute to the larger goal of clarifying the process of transfer across segments. UCEP also identified a number potential problems and concerns with the proposal:

- It should include a description of the mechanisms that will account for subtle course differences and exceptions as well as semester and quarter course equivalency.
- It should outline a system of evaluation to account for changes in courses and curricula on an ongoing basis. It should also be specific about who will manage that system.
- It should outline the specific role and responsibility of faculty in all areas of C-ID development and maintenance.
- It should outline the expected sources of ongoing funding for C-ID.
- It should align with the efforts of ASSIST and the Streamlining coordinators at UCOP to ensure that there is no overlap or duplication.

Action: UCEP will send comments directly to ICAS.

VI. Proposed Systemwide Cap on Entry Level Writing Class Size

Council asked UCEP to obtain estimates on the status of average class size for the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) on each campus along with updated projections on the cost of implementing a 20-student cap for the ELWR. Council also asked UCEP and UCOPE to propose a Senate Regulation to codify the cap.

The UCSB representative reported that cost estimates for UCSB were similar to those obtained last year. UCSB was also the campus reporting the largest average ELWR classes last year.

One member noted that it was unclear why the Senate would consider a cap for only ELWR classes if all writing classes would benefit from fewer students. Moreover, the erosion of the student faculty ratio was making class size a concern in all disciplines. There was additional concern about grade inflation and the effectiveness of UC's writing programs generally. Students who had received high marks in writing classes were still not proving to be competent writers.

Some UCEP members felt the proposed cap was an appropriate target based on national standards, pedagogical studies cited by UCOPE, reasonable cost estimates, and members' own experiences with writing instruction. It was noted that writing instruction involved a unique pedagogy requiring highly individualized interactions between instructors and students beyond just copyediting.

The majority of the committee felt the evidence for the efficacy of smaller ELWR classes and the class size cap was too weak to merit an endorsement of the proposed regulation change. It was unclear that the pedagogical rationale for a specific cap of 20 was decisive, or that a reduction in class size from 25 to 20, for instance, would necessarily have a significant impact on the writing skills of students that was equal to the cost. UCEP wanted compelling evidence that a change would be effective before endorsing a change to SR 636. If no evidence existed, UCEP felt, the faculty should take a closer look at UC's writing programs. It would be irresponsible for the Senate to mandate the reallocation of campus resources to fund smaller ELWR classes if there was no sound academic ground for doing so.

The committee noted that they, along with other faculty members, were concerned about undergraduate writing skills. Writing programs were facing many challenges, not least of which was a growing population of freshmen who grew up speaking multiple languages, or who did writing in a language other than English. UCEP noted that undergraduate writing, class size, and the student faculty ratio might be pursued more broadly and systematically by the APC Undergraduate Education Steering Committee.

Action: UCEP will send comments to Council. UCEP Chair Weiss will contact the UCOPE chair.

VII. Proposition 209 and the University

Chair Weiss reported that the Board of Regents had empanelled a Study Group to conduct a comprehensive assessment of University diversity, ten years after the passage of Proposition 209. The Senate leadership (the chair and vice chair) are members of the Study Group. They believe the faculty should help lead the study or at least contribute to it in a significant way. They developed a list of possible research questions that fall under the charge and expertise of various

Senate committees, including UCEP. It was suggested that UCEP help examine how different student groups experience academic engagement, civic engagement and satisfaction with regard to diversity and inclusion.

UCEP noted that the topic of Proposition 209 was an appropriate one for the Senate, because faculty are among those best positioned to understand how diversity impacts the academic mission of the university. The faculty possess the expertise either to conduct the study itself or to make sure its design is consistent with the norms of academic expectations and excellence. The faculty should be significantly involved in the Regents' study. At a minimum the Senate should ensure that the proper questions are asked and the study is done at a professional level.

UCEP noted that UC already has the necessary talent and competence to conduct such a review. They hoped The Regents would look within the system for expertise rather than to outside consultants. They said UCEP could help mobilize the effort by consulting campuses to identify the relevant expertise

UCEP noted that the information gathering would be a massive undertaking and without administrative support and funding, it would not be successful. They noted that if UCOP was prepared to provide appropriate resources UCEP was prepared to participate in the study insofar as its expertise was relevant. Finally, they noted that the Administration should be seen as an ally in the effort, and the study should be as independent of politics as possible.

Action: UCEP will send comments to Council.

VIII. UCAP's Proposed Modifications to APM 220-18b, Advancement to Step VI and Above Scale

UCEP reviewed the University Committee on Academic Personnel's (UCAP) [proposed modifications](#) to APM language criteria for advancement to Step VI and Above Scale.

UCEP supported UCAP's intention, stated in its cover letter, to strengthen previous Step VI requirements for University teaching from "excellence" to "sustained excellence." But the committee felt the proposed wording itself did not match that intent. They noted that the structure of the wording in the third sentence of the section covering the Step VI criteria was grammatically misleading. The *or* in "scholarship or creative achievement" confused the parallel structure of the series, and it was not clear whether "sustained excellence" was modifying "teaching" in addition to "scholarship or creative achievement, and service."

UCEP suggested the following alternative to add clarity (emphasis added): "Advancement to Step VI usually will not occur after fewer than three years of service at Step V, involves a career review, and will be granted on evidence of sustained excellence in scholarship or creative achievement, *in* University teaching, and *in* service."

UCEP also suggested the addition of a comma after "higher" in the sentence "Service at Professor, Step VI or higher, may be of indefinite duration."

In the penultimate sentence of the Above Scale section UCEP suggested replacing "Continued good service" with "Continued good *performance in the three categories*" to distinguish it from the CAP definition of "service."

Action: UCEP will send comments to Council.

IX. UCAP's Report - "Synopsis of the Present Status of the UC Merit and Promotion System and Principles of and Policy Recommendations for UC Faculty Compensation"

UCEP reviewed UCAP's [report](#) recommending changes to the salary scale system. UCEP was particularly interested in UCAP's assertion that the rising student-to-faculty FTE ratio was being exacerbated by the expanding use of off-scales. Members noted that FTE funds intended for new faculty hires were being used instead to fund off-scale salaries, which are increasingly necessary to attract and retain faculty because UC salaries are uncompetitive. The result is a further deterioration of the student faculty ratio. In addition, lecturers are now more frequently teaching introductory classes, which used to be taught by ladder faculty, and students are having more difficulty getting into the classes they want, especially if the class is outside their major.

UCEP noted that there is no simple way for UC to return to a meaningful, rational salary scale. The difficult budget situation often presents a campus with the choice of cutting administrative support services, academic programs, or losing faculty to competitors. The University shouldn't have to make the choice of either hiring top quality researchers or having a good student – faculty ratio. An increasing student faculty ratio is just as repugnant as the idea of privatization.

UCEP endorsed UCAP's principles and supported continuing efforts by the Senate and others to improve the situation. UCEP noted that the people who present the UC budget to the legislature must communicate more clearly what is happening to the University of California as a consequence of current funding levels and current FTE allocation practices.

Action: UCEP will send comments to Council.

X. Campus Reports and UCEP Member Items

Berkeley. The Berkeley CEP discussed systemwide policies for grading and assigning GPA credit. Most UC campuses do not allow instructors to award extra GPA credit for an A+ versus an A, and not all campuses allow the A+ to be given to denote extraordinary achievement. Other universities offer the extra credit. Why do these divergent policies exist?

Action: The committee analyst will research the question.

Santa Cruz. The UCSC CEP has been seeing more requests for capping the enrollments of certain majors and is considering how to implement caps equitably. The undergraduate population at UCSC is up 30% over the last five years, but the number of classes offered is only up 7% and the number of faculty rose by only 20%. Increased enrollemnts should have been accompanied by increased funding, more faculty and no change to class size. If UCSC received funding for enrollment growth— where did it go?

Other members noted that their campuses were facing similar problems. UCI is considering requiring each of its School to offer at least one unrestricted major.

Los Angeles. The UCLA Undergraduate Council has been concerned with the case of a commercial website successfully suing the University for the right to post the average GPA

given in every course at every campus by specific UC instructors. UCLA has also posted the information on its own website. There is concern that students will begin to “grade shop,” and also about the often dramatic extent to which faculty grading appears to differ by individual and by discipline. Although grade inflation is a national problem, not just a problem at UC, UC seems to effectively have two separate grading scales – A to F and A to B.

Some UCEP members said UC should put up more legal resistance to the Pick-a-Prof website. Others felt there was no harm in making the information public and it was the responsibility of the faculty to come up with better grading policies. The website will also give faculty the opportunity to see what their colleagues are doing. The graduate student representative noted that such websites are also useful for students who want to find good professors.

It was noted that UC should begin noting on student transcripts the class mean and class rank along with the grade, although this is more complicated with courses using less quantitative evaluation systems.

The committee decided UCEP should pursue recommendations about how to deal with the public availability of grades and the resulting realization of the differences in grading policies. Before the next meeting, the committee will consider with their CEPs what information should be collected from the campuses to help illuminate the situation and what should be done.

Action: Members will bring this up at their local Council and develop a list of survey questions.

Minutes prepared by Michael LaBriola
Attest: Richard Weiss