UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA   ACADEMIC SENATE
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
TELECONFERENCE MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013

Attending: John Yoder, Chair (UCD), Charles Smith (UCI), Tim Labor (UCR), David Lea (UCSB), Tamara Alliston (UCSF), Tracy Larrabee (UCSC), Seeta Chaganti (UCD), Troy Carter (UCLA), Leslie Carver (UCSD), James Nieh (UCSD), Nicholas Sitar (UCB), Mona Vakilifathi (UCSD), Bill Jacob (Vice Chair, Academic Senate), Brenda Abrams (Principal Analyst)

I.   Announcements

UCOC has asked the UC Riverside representative to serve as vice chair for UCEP for the rest of this year and as the chair next year and he has agreed. The UCSC representative has agreed to be vice chair next year and to help out as needed this year. The order of the agenda will be changed so that Chair Powell can discuss SB 520 with the committee.

At the Council meeting, online education was the main focus of the discussions. The governor is putting $35M into online education initiatives across the three segments of higher education. UCOP issued a new RFP and 120 letters of intent were submitted, and in early May a full RFP will be released for faculty who want to develop a course. The first two UC wide meetings, one in northern California and one in the south, on online education are on April 13th and a follow up meeting will be April 25th. In terms of the allocation of the $10M, funds may go to UCOP for infrastructure as well as to the campuses.

SB 252 is a bill that would basically unionize graduate students, and the governor vetoed a version of this bill last year. The pressure to unionize might be lessened now that UC campuses will offer childcare.

All the three higher education segments, CCC, CSU and UC, have come out strongly against SB 520. A joint statement was prepared by the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates ICAS wrote a joint statement on the role of online education that was shared with UCEP this morning. This letter indicates that there is support for online education but that it must be implemented carefully. The governor has set his priorities for what the budget will be in the May revise which include increased graduation rates, decreased time to completion, increased transfers to the CSUs and UCs and more courses that are required for credit and basic skills.

Discussion: A member indicated that the issue of infrastructure for online courses definitely needs to be addressed. In order to create the online courses, resources should be available locally to the faculty members.

II.   Consent Calendar

Action: The minutes were approved with one correction.

III.   State Senate Bills 520 and 547

SB 520 is the Steinberg bill which would call for the creation of fifty online courses for which UC would be required to give credit. The bill will be discussed by the Senate education committee on April 24th. UC opposes this bill because it mandates that UC accept courses offered by outside, commercial providers.

SB 547 was introduced by Marty Block and asks the three higher education segments (CCC, USC, UC) to create a common set of online courses that could serve all three segments. The goal is to identify 50 online courses that would be matriculated across all segments. Unlike 520, the 547 bill does not mandate the use of outside providers. For this reason, UC supports SB 547 with ammendments.

Discussion: A member recommended that UC should go on the offensive with respect to the legislature. UC should make use of statistics to illustrate how the state has failed the university. Vice Chair Jacobs encouraged people to meet with legislators.

IV.   UCEP Policy for Approval and Listing of Systemwide Courses

Chair Yoder edited the policy for approval of systemwide courses and a committee member has provided additional feedback. There are three criteria that might be used for approving courses: the course has been approved at the divisional level, the course increases accessibility for UC students, and the course maintains UC excellence. UCEP should also discuss the idea of a three year approval and Chair Yoder suspects that the committee may get some push back on this. Renewals of the course approval would be based on the last two criteria.

Discussion: Increasing accessibility to college transfer students should be part of the criteria given the governor's interest in this. The criteria should also mention increased access for individuals with learning differences who could not take courses if they had to physically get to a campus. A member questioned whether the campuses use different criteria for the evaluation of courses that are offered only at the campus level and for systemwide courses. The UCD representative agreed to work on the criteria about accessibility so that it better captures the concept of synchronous versus asynchronous. In terms of the rationale for the temporary approval, anytime something is done for the first time a renewal or sunset clause is often used to provide time to correct errors. The three year period seems appropriate but UCEP might want to have some leeway for a longer approval. It should be understood that individual campuses are aggressively pursuing online education and that the UC systemwide effort is focused on articulation and accessibility. For people who have concerns about a course, requiring a review makes them more comfortable with providing an approval. Courses will also be reviewed again when there are any changes.

More guidance could be provided about what it means to achieve UC excellence. One member recommended against using this criteria because every campus strives for excellence and this would become just a writing exercise for the faculty. The faculty should be asked how an online course will deliver pedagogical quality comparable to a traditional face to face course. The local CEPs should be looking at the content and evaluating excellence, while UCEP should look at the implementation of the course at a systemwide level. The UCSF representative agreed to revise the excellence criteria so that the focus is on implementation. The committee considered whether the re-approval process should be used for all systemwide courses or only the online courses. It was proposed that the language say that the first review will be after three years and after that, depending on the success of the course, a longer approval period can be offered. The committee considered whether UCDC and UC Sacramento will be subject to this criteria and Chair Yoder suggested that new courses offered by these programs from this date forward should be reviewed by UCEP, and programs like UCDC should be informed about this new policy.

V.   Articulation of Systemwide Courses across UC Campuses

A better system is needed to manage articulation and it should take the burden off of students. Chair Yoder indicated that UCOE Interim Director Williams thinks there are three ways to handle articulation. One way is for a campus to approve a course that's offered at another UC campus. A second type would be a program articulation where a department accepts a course offered by another UC. The final type of articulation is handled by each individual student who will ask for credit for a systemwide course.

Discussion: UCEP's systemwide approval could include the articulation of the course through some type of process with the CEPs or the department involved. A member pointed out that this is an administrative issue that requires coordination among the registrars. In this instance there should be a top-down solution. Because of the expected increase in enrollment of non native students, it might be important for campuses to buy in to accepting fundamental required courses available systemwide for more than electives. Vice Chair Jacob reported that articulation will be discussed during the online education meeting on April 13th. The administration has proposed a hub that will speak to each registrar and to UCOE. A member suggested that the system could be set up so that a course is articulated by default and departments will have to opt out of the agreement. Vice Chair Jacob indicated that this is consistent with what the provost is thinking. The onus could be put on professors to identify the courses at other campuses to which their courses would articulate. A member proposed that it would be better to have an opt in option so that campuses are not caught off guard.

Vice Chair Jacob proposed that UCEP create a list of questions that people should consider when discussing articulation on April 13th. One question is whether the opt in or opt out model is preferred. A mechanism that allows for the articulation of general education courses would be helpful.

VI.   State Assembly Bill 944

This item was not discussed.

Meeting adjourned at: 1:10 PM
Minutes prepared by: Brenda Abrams
Attest: John Yoder