# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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May 9, 2014

**AIMÉE DORR**
**PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

**Re: Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP)**

Dear Aimée:

The Academic Council has endorsed a University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) memo commenting on the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Evaluation of Online Instruction Pilot Project (BRP), a special Senate Committee that was charged with evaluating the assessment of the Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP) performed by the UC Educational Evaluation Center (UCEC) at UC Santa Barbara. Although this report concludes a project that began a long time ago, we note that the BRP did not receive the final report it was charged to evaluate until late in 2013. UCEP has incorporated the BRP's comments on the UCEC assessment into a broader framework of advice on UC's expansion into the online education environment, which must necessarily include a rigorous and continuing evaluation component.

UCEP's memo and the Blue Ribbon Panel report are both attached for your reference.

UCEP has endorsed the BRP's main findings, and its conclusion that the UCEC's evaluation report did not provide sufficient information about student performance and learning outcomes for an appropriate evaluation of the OIPP program, now known as UC Online Education (UCOE). Assisted by the insights offered by the BRP, UCEP endorses, in principle, a mechanism to enable central support and coordination of online course development, including support for some courses strategically selected to serve major systemwide needs and goals. It also notes the limitations of that model to meet those needs. UCEP recommends that OIPP/UCOE be integrated into the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) and that ILTI be held to a higher standard than OIPP/UCOE for ongoing evaluation. In addition, UCEP recommends that UC think of online education as a kind of capital investment. It expresses support for online education as one part of an overall educational strategy that is also evolving and requires governance and evaluation mechanisms that are adaptive and flexible to fast-changing models.

Council also discussed your interest in establishing an advisory council to guide next steps for ILTI and UCOE and for a proposed communications "hub" that is intended to streamline cross-campus

registration and enrollment processes for systemwide online courses. The Senate welcomes the chance to engage with your office on the future of ILTI and the hub. I should mention that Council continues to view the hub project with skepticism. Council members noted that the UC Education Abroad Program enrolls 5,000 students across campuses without the benefit of a hub. We also took note of your comment that the Governor's $10 million budget carve-out for online education technologies at UC, which will fund the hub, has an uncertain future after this year. We believe that the hub should be evaluated as a potential strategic technology investment for which a transparent needs assessment and rigorous cost/benefit analysis should be developed in collaboration with UC's Chief Information Officer.

We look forward to continued engagement with you on the future of UCOE, ILTI, and educational technology.


Sincerely,

Bill Jacob, Chair
Academic Council

Encl:   UCEP Memo
        Blue Ribbon Panel Report

Cc:     Academic Council
        BRP Chair Harley
        Director Williams
        Executive Director Winnacker
        Senate Analysts
        Senate Executive Directors

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
Tim Labor, Chair
*timlabor@ucr.edu*

April 17, 2014

William Jacob, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Re: Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP) Final Report Evaluation**

Dear Bill,

At its April 7th meeting, UCEP discussed the evaluation report produced by the Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) on the Online Instruction Pilot Project Final Report.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force was a special Senate Committee that evaluated the academic components of the Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP). This Committee investigated the structure of the OIPP, the structure of the self-assessment component of the OIPP, and other academic aspects of the OIPP pertinent to providing a fair depiction of the Program, its advantages and potential pitfalls. The panel's members were well versed in various aspects of online and traditional college education and assessment. The BRP followed the developments of the OIPP/UCOE program closely, and raised several points of concern that it felt needed to be addressed by the UCOE Program in the context of the course development process.

UCEP thanks the Blue Ribbon Panel for their work.

The Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP) Evaluation Final Report, the BRP notes, was produced by staff at the UC Evaluation Center (UCEC) at UC Santa Barbara, funded by UCOP, and represents the cornerstone of the Academic Senate's demand for accountability from UCOP's 2009-10 initiative in online education. The BRP understands OIPP as an "experiment" (BRP 2, 3, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19) to test the viability of UCOP/UCOE's centralized model of developing cost-effective, high quality, and economically sustainable online courses, and offering them to both matriculated and non-matriculated students.

In February 2013, BRP communicated evaluation criteria for online offerings mentioned in the BRP Report Appendix (BRP, 20). UCEP endorses BRP's consideration of the 5th of these (cost effectiveness) to be necessary in providing the "fair depiction," required by their charge and recognizes that the questions posed on BRP pages 15-16 are important both for overall project accountability and curricular evaluation.

The BRP cautions that "because of its low quality and narrow scope, it [the OIPP Report] should not be used to suggest that the OIPP/UCOE effort has been generally successful, effective, or economically sustainable" (BRP, 15). Specifically, BRP notes that the report more successfully demonstrates:

> "1. Creating courses resulted in significant increases in faculty's time,
>
> 2. Faculty … relied heavily on their own campus support systems,

3. There was dissatisfaction among many faculty with OIPP/UCOE support, and that

4. PIs would prefer a greater degree of support in dealing with local policies for course approval and for departmental support to teach courses."

Overall, UCEP concurs with these findings, and indeed the OIPP was a frustrating group to work with. Their $400K evaluation report arrived over six months later than promised, consisted of enormous amounts of low-level documentation, and failed to adequately address the concerns posed by the BRP. UCEP was distressed that certain issues were not transparent (such as the purchasing of Blackboard), and suggests that a combination of these factors point toward the faulty governance of OIPP. Future attempts to circumvent Senate involvement in centralized curricular development are plainly unacceptable.

The failure of OIPP to adequately interleave curricular software development and an evaluation model should not dissuade UC from endorsing the need for and promoting further development of online education.

Regarding the role of online education in relation to other educational platforms, UCEP endorses Janet Napolitano's description of it as a "tool in the toolbox" in her remarks to the Public Policy Institute of California. She also usefully cautions:

> "It's not a silver bullet, the way it was originally portrayed to be. It's a lot harder than it looks, and by the way if you do it right it doesn't save all that much money, because you still have to have an opportunity for students to interact with either a teaching assistant or an assistant professor or a professor at some level." [1]

UCEP sees online education and especially residential online education (as opposed to MOOCs) as one strategy working in concert with others to improve access, graduation rates, UC quality, and other benefits. UCEP feels that this objective must be more intelligently supported than ever before and that the BRP evaluation of OIPP should not be used to throw the baby out with the bath-water. UCEP examination of systemwide courses that came through OIPP mechanisms (regardless of how they were supported in development) revealed that on the whole the courses were excellent offerings, and fully representative of UC quality. Indeed, UCEP frequently saw excellence in plans for evaluation of online courses, although these plans seemed to be developed by individual faculty on campuses, rather than in response to UCOE guidance. The faculty developing these courses – in almost all cases without adequate compensation for the incredible hours required to do so, and with no assurance of recognition for the research side of their portfolios - should be lauded, their efforts examined more closely in developing next generation curricula, and they should be encouraged to improve and expand their offerings. BRP criticism of the OIPP umbrella under which these courses were partially supported should not be viewed as a criticism of the courses themselves.

In terms of contextualizing this report in terms of overall vision, UCEP makes the following observations:

1. UCEP endorses the principle of centralized support for online course development, but for many faculty, OIPP/UCOE support for course development was not satisfactory. At some campuses, local support for online course development is well developed and faculty made heavy use of this support in developing OIPP courses. However, not all campuses have developed support structures for creating online courses and there is merit to cross-campus interaction in this area with UCOP involvement. The sharing of best practices, interactive design expertise, and infrastructural support are all important factors both in making UC online offerings the highest quality possible, but also

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[1] http://ppic.org/main/blog_detail.asp?i=1485

because that in all cases (hybrid or not), these courses will represent UC as a brand above and beyond physical campus contact.

2.  UCEP acknowledges BRP's connection between OIPP/UCOE and ILTI (BRP 10, 11, 15). Some of the courses involved have shifted in terms of their umbrella, and the concerns for centralized support for divisional offerings are similar. UCEP recommends that ILTI be held to a higher standard for evaluation than UCOE, and for evaluation to be built into the solicitation process. UCEP also suggests this contain a centrally supported component with regard to techniques and technology, and that this reporting be sufficiently non-burdensome to be accomplishable regularly.

3.  UCEP is concerned that the model of grassroots development represented by the combination of incidental centralized support and the "coalition of the willing" admittedly necessary at this time will not produce competitive large scale curricular offerings that represent next generation world-class online education, target UC's educational goals, and adequately emphasize the courses Divisions themselves might choose to develop. Although individualized course development must always be a part of UC online offerings, the chance to take existing courses to a new level should also be matched with a premeditated effort to selectively design and implement extremely high quality persistently supported products with meaningful pedagogical outcomes, especially when such courses are system-wide in nature.

Finally UCEP would like to address the psychological impression of the OIPP Report. 1000+ pages long, delivered late, and containing a majority of undigested information, this impression is one of finality.

UCEP feels this is wrong-thinking. For UC to accept online education, it must institutionally accept the conjoined development of software and curriculum. The process of going from course design to proposal is institutionally invisible in the case of bricks-and-mortar courses. In online education we must incubate and offer products before they are optimal, provide governing mechanisms that are adaptive without being transitory, provide course development based on changing models, evaluate products before, during, and after they are implemented, and find ways to reward faculty. UCEP feels that these are areas in which central funding and central coordination, as opposed to centralized development, are essential.

An investment in online education is not just an investment in software versions of courses. It is like building a new building and should be viewed - and budgeted - as the capital improvement it is. Increased "maintenance needs" must indeed be weighed with a realistic appraisal of its benefits in access, course delivery, and non-matriculated income. It is a "building" unlike those UC has built before, but UCEP feels that UC should have faith that this building is worth having. ILTI's inheritance of UCOE should not taint current endeavors. In fact UCEP endorses the principles underlying this connection and suggests that it go further toward a persistent centrally organized administrative support structure designed ultimately to nurture the divisional creation of sophisticated next-generation offerings, but at the bare minimum provide a framework that outlasts the multi-year development cycle of current products.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment.

Sincerely,

Tim Labor, Chair, UCEP

**Date:** March 21, 2014

**To:** Tim Labor, Chair, University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP); William Jacob, Chair, UC Academic Council; Mary Gilly, Vice Chair, UC Academic Council

**From:** Diane Harley, Chair, UC Senate Blue Ribbon Panel on Evaluation of OIPP/UCOE

**Re:** Final Report by the Blue Ribbon Panel; OIPP/UCEC Evaluation Report.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The UC Academic Senate convened our Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) with the expectation that its expertise, experience, and vantage point would provide a useful and constructive view of those aspects of the UC Office of the President's (UCOP) Online Instruction Pilot Project/UC Online (OIPP/UCOE) program of central interest to the Academic Senate. That is, we were convened to help determine whether online course development throughout UC could and should be successfully centralized at the Office of the President. We were fortunate in the composition of the Panel, whose members are well versed in various aspects of online and traditional higher education and assessment, and are enthusiastic, but measured, about the potential of well-conceived and faculty-driven online education at the campuses. The BRP has followed the developments of the OIPP/UCOE program closely, and over two years we have raised formally several points of concern that we felt needed to be addressed by UC Online Education (e.g., Appendix A). It has been our hope that UCOE would be forthcoming in clarifying these issues. After reading the *UCOE/OIPP Final Evaluation Report*, and absent any additional information from UCOP regarding the program, we can say that the many questions we have raised have not been answered.

The Panel's candid and unanimous memo regarding our conclusions is organized as follows:

**Sections**

**Appendices**

## I. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF THE BRP AND UCOP/OIPP/UCOE INITIATIVE

The Online Instruction Pilot Project (OIPP) Evaluation Final Report (hereafter referred to as "the report") was produced by staff at the UC Evaluation Center (UCEC) at UC Santa Barbara. The Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) received this report in October of 2013. The evaluation was funded by UCOP at the cost of approximately 400K; there was no competitive RFP. The UCEC's research and resulting reports were intended to be the cornerstone of the Academic Senate's demand for accountability from UCOP's controversial move into online education in 2009-10. This move was in response to UCB Boalt Law School Dean, Christopher Edley, Jr.'s public call[1] for online education as a solution to UC budget problems and a way to increase access to paying non-matriculated students via building a "virtual" online 11th campus headquartered and administered at UCOP. It should be noted that, at this same time, many of the individual campuses had successful and long-standing online offerings that preceded the UCOP/OIPP/UCOE initiative.

We emphasize that UCOP originally presented the OIPP evaluation to the Senate as a component of paramount importance to the funded Program (OIPP and UCOE) and its subsequent development. And it is largely because of this that the Senate supported the original idea behind the UCOP's OIPP initiative (this support was granted before the controversial loan arrangement that allocated at least $7 million dollars in initial investment of University funds to UCOE).[2]

In fact, the understanding was that OIPP was an *experiment* to test the viability of UCOP/UCOE's centralized model of developing cost-effective, high quality, and economically sustainable online courses, and offering them to both matriculated and non-matriculated students. The $7 million was to be repaid through revenue generated by selling online courses to non-matriculated students.

Although the report is not an adequate evaluation (see more detailed discussion below), it does suggest that: creating courses resulted in significant increases in faculty time, faculty (N unknown) relied heavily on their own campus support systems, there was dissatisfaction among many faculty with OIPP/UCOE support, and that PIs would prefer a greater degree of support in dealing with local policies for course approval and for departmental support to teach courses.

The report tells us virtually nothing about: objective measures of how well students did in the courses relative to in-person versions, what the courses cost (for both UCOP and the campuses) and how (or if) those and future investments will scale, which courses were "effective" in the broadest sense and why or why not (e.g., there is a complete absence of a detailed analysis of what effect campus vs. OIPP support had on specific good/poor results), whether UCOE or the campuses are the best place for course development, and so on.

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[1] For example, July 1, 2009. "Building a new UC -- in cyberspace." *Los Angeles Times,*
http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jul/01/opinion/oe-edley1; and July 22, 2009, "Online Campus Could Solve Many U. of California Problems, a Dean Says." *Chronicle of Higher Education.* http://chronicle.com/article/Online-Campus-Could-Solve-Many/47432/
[2] See, for example, various 2011 Academic Council memos, one of which suggests a moratorium on development of more UCOE courses: http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/reports/DS_MGYreonlinepilot_May2011_FINAL.pdf
http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/reports/DS_LPreUCOEevaluationplan.pdf

The report should *not* be used as a template for future course/program evaluations. Further, because of its low quality and narrow scope, it should not be used to suggest that the OIPP/UCOE effort has been generally successful, effective, or economically sustainable.

We reiterate the importance of accountability for the entire UCOP OIPP/UCOE/ILTI[3] effort. Especially since UCOP has received an additional $10 million from the State and has expanded its staffing of UCOE to, according to its website[4], at least 11 employees funded from University funds at UCOP. There is particularly a need for comprehensive cost data, including campus in-kind contributions to UCOE courses, that could help the Senate and the Office of the President determine the real per-student costs over time for development, delivery, and revision of UCOE courses compared to campus-based online or traditional courses. Importantly, such data will help to determine how UC online education development and delivery should be distributed organizationally within the system as a whole. (See our 2/19/13 recommendations for what constitutes an adequate evaluation of UCOE/ILTI efforts; Appendix B.) It is our current understanding, however, that no concrete evaluation plans exist for newly funded courses under ILTI.

The report does not respond to the BRP's requests to UCOE in November 2012 and February 2013 for a broader analysis and objective data on costs and student outcomes. In order to determine if UCOE's "experiment" resulted in pedagogically and economically effective delivery of courses, and whether the $7 million loan was spent wisely, we suggest strongly that UCOE/UCOP create a report that addresses the larger questions we asked on Feb 4, 2012 (Appendix A).  Describing initial and ongoing expenditures at UCOP as "start-up" costs, as was done at the January 2013 Regents' meeting, should be avoided until a proper evaluation is conducted.

Additionally, we suggest that the report include answers to the following questions:

- What did the $4 million paid to Blackboard buy and is that organization still involved? If so, for what purposes and at what cost?

- What is the entire cost of course development at UCOE? How do the current UCOE salary costs (UCOE lists 11 employees under its umbrella, including a marketing specialist) compare to support staff on individual campuses? We understand that campus support staff are heavily involved in course development under the UCOE umbrella. How do key faculty and administrators view central (UCOE) vs. campus support of the ILTI effort?

- Why are some of the 19 (17?) original OIPP courses receiving new UCOP/ILTI funds if they have not been evaluated properly for effectiveness? (N.B. There is a discrepancy in the report concerning numbers of courses. Page 5 of the report indicates that there are 17, not 19, unique courses.)

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[3] ILTI refers to the new The Innovative Learning Technology Initiative at UCOP, which was funded by $10 million from the Governor.
[4] http://www.ucop.edu/uconline/staff-and-advisors/index.html

- Additionally, why are some of these OIPP courses being offered by UCOE to non-matriculated students if they have not been evaluated properly? How many non-matriculated students are taking these courses and how much revenue are they generating?

- How has the original $7 million UCOP investment/loan, plus the unknown costs to individual campuses, been used in developing 19 (17?) courses? How will these investments be scaled in subsequent courses?

## II. BLUE RIBBON PANEL REFLECTIONS ON THE FINAL UCEC OIPP EVALUATION REPORT (v. 10/17/13), OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS, AND KEY FINDINGS

**These BRP reflections are based on the version received by BRP 10/17/13. (*Italics* indicate direct quotes from the report, and <u>underlining</u> denotes BRP's own emphases.) This is intended as a summary of the report's key findings (or the lack thereof) relevant to the many questions raised by the Senate since the inception of OIPP/UCOE.**

The BRP received the "final" UCEC report on October 17, 2013. This report was not copyedited and was missing some analyses that we were told would be forthcoming in Nov 2013. BRP has received no new versions. We proceeded with our analysis as we were informed that the 10/17/13 copy would not change substantively beyond copyediting.

If a proposal for this evaluation work was submitted by UCEC to UCOP prior to receiving funding, the BRP does not have a copy. It is clear, however, that the research design and goals of the final UCEC report do not hew to the original Evaluation Roadmap and other documents provided to UCOP by UCEC (dated in 2012[5]). Ostensibly, according to the report, this lack of accordance results from the mercurial nature of UCOE goals, the sudden exit of the two lead administrators, problems with obtaining registrar data, and lack of research funds, as well as other issues.

The UCEC evaluation report is a disorganized, 1000+-page document that is virtually impossible to navigate and evaluate without spending inordinate amounts of time. "Impenetrable," "obfuscatory," "inscrutable," "a giant data dump," were some of the responses our Panel and others had to it. Even when the BRP spent a prodigious amount of time reviewing the report, the lack of clear summaries, missing or shifting Ns, and opacity of course IDs/samples makes interpretation of results problematic at best (see the section beginning on p. 5 for highlights of specific problems). A request to UCEC and UCOE in October 2013 for a more organized report, with concise summaries of results, was met with silence by the former and rebuffed by the latter. Because of its sprawling and disorganized nature, this report will not (and cannot) be read by most people. There are significant shortcomings in the evaluation design and execution, and there is great difficulty in making sense of the data as presented.

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[5] This site at UC Berkeley's I School has archived a number of interesting documents related to the early days of the UCOE effort, which do not appear on the UCOE website.
http://groups.ischool.berkeley.edu/onlineeducation/sites/default/files/OIPP%20Evaluation%20Roadmap%2008%2005%2011.pdf

We caution drawing conclusions derived by the UCEC evaluators in various summary sections (such as the Executive Summary; Assessment of Research Questions; Broad Themes from Analysis; and Summary, Limitations, and Recommendations). We urge this discretion because we are concerned that these generalizations will be used to argue the (unproven) success of the program and as justification, absent any valid data, for increased funding and expansion of UCOP's centralized model for UC online course development.  For example, as stated in the report summary: *"The ongoing and developmental nature of the OIPP makes it difficult to provide a definitive evaluation of the program since it was constantly changing during the period of the data collection."*

If the report itself states that "a definitive evaluation of the program" cannot be provided and there are such inadequate data and analyses, then statements, such as those immediately below—which suggest that various outcomes were generally or overall successful—should be avoided completely. Evidence provided in the report, if it exists at all, does not support these statements.

> *"Based on student responses and faculty impressions, our analysis suggests that the OIPP process has supported faculty in the development of high-quality online courses."*

> *"Overall, the evidence in this final evaluation suggests that the online courses have provided benefits that students value (e.g., flexibility, accessibility, and quality), while—from student perspectives—not sacrificing learning opportunities. In addition, the OIPP appears to have provided adequate, and in some cases excellent, support to faculty in the development of their courses. There are still many challenges related to the development of the technology used by the faculty and supported by UCOE and to the administration and approval of courses across the UC system."* (From section on Summary, Limitations, Recommendations)

> *" Participants (students, faculty, and staff) are generally positive about the potential for the online project despite the problems (e.g., technical, administrative) they have encountered however there were always: 1) significant problems identified even by those who were generally positive, 2) a minority of participants/students who had very negative perceptions of their experiences."* (From section on Broad Themes from Analysis)

### *Summary of Key Findings from the Final v. 10/17/13 UCOE/UCEC OIPP Evaluation Report (i.e., Student Data, Student Ns, Drop Rates, Faculty Perceptions, Faculty Workload, etc.)*

### *A. Student Data*

The evaluation's primary focus is: structural characteristics of courses, effectiveness of specific technologies, and how students "felt" about the various elements of the courses. The report indicates that most students who initially enrolled (~75%) were either first- or second-year students with no previous online course experience (and therefore many did not have much experience with postsecondary courses at the UC level).

**Student Ns**. For 19 (17?) unique courses offered between Spring 12 and Spring 13, the report states that 1697 students initially enrolled, 1015 completed the pre-course survey (p. 59), and 1078 completed the post-course survey (the latter N is derived from the tables describing student responses to survey, not the Methods section where one would expect it to be). The report does not provide clear data on enrollment, and those numbers have to be divined. No numbers are given for total Ns of students who finished the course; drop/completion rates are therefore impossible to calculate (see immediately below).

**Drop Rates/Exit Survey. There are no data on drop rates.** According to the report, 146 students filled out the exit survey but there are no Ns (that we can find) to determine response rates, except a statement that the response rates were much lower than for the pre- and post-surveys (which averaged ~60%, but that figure is questionable; see below). **An absence of these basic numbers makes it impossible to judge the interpreted results of the exit survey analysis.**

**Student Surveys.** The bulk of the report is about students' perceptions of many aspects of the courses based on surveys and some qualitative interviews. A number of surveys were administered by UCEC; students in most courses were offered extra credit for responding to these surveys, but some faculty demurred on this requirement.

These survey responses offer some useful, if limited, feedback on specific components of the courses, such as student perceptions of types of activities and specific technologies. There seems to be the assumption, however, that the primary measurements of effectiveness are determined by the following metrics: if students "felt" the course was effective, they "liked" it, if they would recommend it to other students, or if they would take another online course. **Absent more objective measures of effectiveness, this overemphasis on what students "felt" or "liked" provides exceptionally limited utility in evaluating broadly the OIPP/UCOE efforts.**

**Response Rates to Student Surveys.** As there are no actual numbers provided, we must take on faith that the average response rates to the post-course survey averaged ~60% (range 40-90%, p. 40). On page 40, however, the report states: *"response rates were over-counts since we had no way of assessing the total number of students who added or dropped and were exposed to the link or not exposed to the link. So we chose to measure response rate based on the pre-enrolled student lists."*

**Course Change Analysis/Comparison of Pre- and Post-Survey Results**. Beginning on page 89, the report states, *"A change analysis was performed to measure changes in students' expectations and perceptions of online courses from the pre- to post-survey."* The report continues with this cautionary statement:

> *"It is important to note that nearly two-thirds of all students who took OIPP courses had never taken an online course previously and only 20% of respondents reported having taken a single online course. This may have influenced their perceptions of online education when completing the pre-survey. Thus, caution is warranted when interpreting and discussing these results. It should be emphasized that these findings represent student perceptions of various aspects of OIPP courses, and do not necessarily reflect the quality of these aspects. Thus, caution is warranted when interpreting and discussing these results. It should be*

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*emphasized that these findings represent student perceptions of various aspects of OIPP*
*courses, and do not necessarily reflect the quality of these aspects."*

**Online vs. In-person Comparison of Courses.** In this analysis, beginning on page 102, it is impossible to determine the number of courses being compared and how the Ns were derived (we are told: 82 online students/464 in person students). The lack of these data makes the results regarding demographics, student performance, and student experience useless. Table 5.2.1 reports the grade distribution for online vs. in-person courses but, again, provides no actual data on the specific or total number of courses. The Ns underpinning this analysis are wildly different than the "online vs. in-person survey Ns" (noted immediately above), and there is no indication specifying how they were derived or why they were included in the analysis (2458 for online courses/1034 in-person courses). Again, these discrepancies make it impossible to interpret the report.

> *"While we have used these data in the final analysis, these data must be viewed with some caution. This caution is due to the fact that there is currently no way to control student selection into the online or in-person sections of the courses, thus comparisons between the two courses can not* (sic) *be considered definitive with respect to differential impact of the online medium compared with in-person courses."* (From end of section: Assessment of Research Questions.)

## B. Learning Management System (LMS)/CoLE

The learning management system (COLE) was clearly a wholesale waste of resources as it has been abandoned by UCOE. Students and faculty overwhelmingly rejected it (and the members of the BRP heard numerous complaints about it from campuses). What were the costs to the University, including the time of faculty and support staff on campuses, of this endeavor? And why did UCOE not consult with those UC campuses that had successful learning management systems in place before they began developing COLE?

## C. Faculty Analysis

This is a very short part of the report (< 2% of the entire report) beginning on page 210 (through p. 228). There are two components: faculty interviews and surveys about their courses, and faculty surveys about the workshops run by UCOP at the beginning of the project. We will comment here only on the former. It is important to note that no data on graduate student time or perceptions are presented in the report. All 21 (17?) faculty who developed courses responded to at least some aspects of the survey about their courses, and 19 (17?) were interviewed. Some key tables indicate large missing values, however (e.g., Table 5.5.5, which describes faculty experiences with OIPP support, has only 12 of 21 (17?) respondents which equals 9 missing).

**Faculty Perceptions of Support from OIPP.** The following excerpts from the report (beginning on p. 210) summarize faculty responses to surveys administered by UCEC asking about the quality of OIPP support. **(*Italics* are direct quotes from the report. <u>Underlining</u> denotes our emphases.)**

"<u>However, it is clear that there is still</u> *a great deal of work to do before all of the structural challenges of UC Online are addressed.*"

*"Clearly for every positive experience and strength to the OIPP program there were challenges that made the work of PIs more difficult to navigate."*

*"When asked whether the faculty/PIs believe that their participation in UC Online was a waste of time, or if they would **Not** have participated if they could do it again, 15 and 13 faculty members disagreed with this statement, respectively, suggesting that they would have done it again, and did NOT regard it as a waste of their time. <u>Notably, this suggests that 6 and 8 faculty, respectively, were either ambivalent or agreed that their participation was a waste of time, and they would NOT participate if they had it to do over again. This broad ambivalence is reflected in the general question in Table DD.1</u> (sic) <u>about satisfaction with OIPP. Only 10 of the 21 faculty agreed that they were satisfied, and none of these faculty marked a "7" the highest level of satisfaction.</u>"*

*"Of the 17 PIs who sought technical assistance 12 agreed that they were able to locate the assistance they needed and 4 disagreed with* (sic) *2 strongly disagreeing. This does suggest that on average PIs were able to find support. Whether they were satisfied with the support that they received is a slightly different question. <u>Of those who requested technical assistance only 9 indicated that they were satisfied with the assistance they received (with 5 of them indicating the strongest agreement). A nearly equal number of faculty suggested moderate to mild disagreement with the statement, only one PI strongly disagreed. Clearly there was some dissatisfaction with the type of assistance they received.</u>"*

*"Another source of difficulty organizationally was the lack of consistency across UC campuses in terms of both technical compatibility and policy which put the OIPP staff in the position of either understanding and building structures to support faculty through different systems on all UC campuses or placing the responsibility for dealing with local policy on the local PIs. <u>Clearly the local PIs would prefer a greater degree of support in dealing with local policies for course approval, and for departmental support to teach the course.</u>"*

*"<u>These few PI quotes clearly outline the variation in PI experiences that range from glowing to very critical—the average responses are indicated in Table 5.5.5</u>* **(only 12/21[12/17?] faculty responded to this survey)***, however the specific reasons and thoughts behind the ratings are best captured through these quotations and qualitative descriptions...<u>In addition, some</u>* (N?) <u>*faculty found very willing collaborators on their own campuses and organized their teams locally using largely campus resources—which was impossible on some campuses (which campuses?) who did not have this capacity and is unsustainable since a*</u>

*portion of costs associated with these additional consultations were picked up by the home campuses."*

*"Clearly the variation in services, approaches, and experiences was very large. While it is possible that this flexibility may have increased the individual faculty satisfaction of some project participants it suggests the possibility of a tradeoff with respect to the consistency of support across the OIPP and a the promotion of specific program goals—unless the goal of the program was to promote the creation of the courses that the faculty envisioned and nothing beyond that."*

*"When asked about the key sources of information about online technologies for instruction the source cited by most faculty was their department. This finding make intuitive sense since many faculty discuss issues of pedagogy and more importantly field specific technologies that might be most useful to their field's specific needs. The second most cited source were materials created by UC Online. The rest of the sources (colleagues, students, online, university instructional services, UC Online meetings and personnel) averaged more than one point lower than the first two sources. This finding suggests that the materials produced by UC Online had a broad penetration into the population they were trying to reach."*

**Faculty Time.** The following excerpts from the report (beginning on p. 223) summarize faculty responses to surveys administered by UCEC that asked about time expended in course development and delivery. **(Italics are direct quotes from the report. Underlining denotes our emphases.)**

*" Where faculty believed that there may be some time savings was in several iterations of the course down the line when all the preparations were finished and the course was completely designed. This sentiment was held by the faculty who taught courses that were* (sic) *had a more stable set of content. Others believe that regardless of their courses* (sic) *stability they would want to change lectures and readings as new information became available."*

*"The data that we currently have (self-reported from faculty) suggest that faculty have consistently stated that course design is much more time-intensive than they anticipated, with faculty estimating at least 3 times and up to 20 times the work in terms of course design when compared to their in-person counterparts."*

*"With respect to time allocations when the courses were actually running faculty reported that on average they spend much more time in electronic communication with students, a little more time doing administrative tasks associated with the course, communicating with non-students associated with the course, and more time overall. In terms of the specific tasks, some faculty acted more as managers, directing their TAs and working on providing more extensive feedback to students (which they indicated they could do more efficiently online). Other faculty spent effectively the same amount of time since they incorporated a synchronous lecture session into their courses. Still others focused on analysis of the data*

*that was provided by their courses, and individually addressed the needs that emerged from these data."*

*"Table 5.5.10 suggests that in most cases* (16 of 18 who answered the question) *the course development took more than 50% more time compared with in-person courses. <u>This estimate of 50% more time was a gross underestimate according to many of our interviews and open response questions.</u>"*

### D. Spillover Effects

As noted in the report, "There were some unintended outcomes from faculty participation in the OIPP and from the implementation of online courses at the UC. Some of these outcomes were positive and some negative but all related to implementation of the program." The following excerpts from the report (p. 229) summarize what are described as "spillover effects." (***Italics* are direct quotes from the report.)**

*"Designing the online course and working with instructional designers made some faculty think about their overall pedagogy differently."*

*"Some faculty reported that other colleagues were interested in the design and outcomes in their online courses."*

*"Because students could access the course anytime anywhere students could work simultaneously online and together in small groups widening the types of interactions that students could have."*

*"The problems with integration of data and policies regarding online courses across the UC that emerged in part as a result of the OIPP has stimulated a conversation about how to better manage data and credits across campuses."*

*"The flexibility of the courses encouraged some students to take the courses as an overload, thus depressing their performance in the course."*

### III. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS: BLUE RIBBON PANEL'S RESPONSE TO THE OIPP/UCOE EVALUATION

To summarize key points, UCOP originally presented the OIPP evaluation to the Senate as a component of paramount importance to the $7 million-funded Program (OIPP and UCOE) and its subsequent development. And it is largely because of this that the Senate supported the original idea behind the UCOP's UCOE/OIPP initiative. The understanding was that OIPP was an *experiment* to test the viability of UCOP/UCOE's centralized model of developing cost-effective, high quality, and economically sustainable online courses, and offering them to both matriculated and non-matriculated students.

Despite the original goals, the UCEC/UCOE Final Report (v. 10/17/13) is of limited use for those individuals making decisions about important aspects of current and future UCOP/UCOE/ILTI

funding. The report is not close to an adequate evaluation, nor is it a positive one. It suggests that creating and delivering courses resulted in significant increases in faculty time, that faculty relied heavily on their own campus support systems, there was dissatisfaction among many faculty with OIPP/UCOE support, and that PIs would prefer a greater degree of support in dealing with local policies for course approval and for departmental support to teach the course.

The report tells us nothing about: objective measures of student performance in the courses relative to in-person versions, the cost burden of the courses (on both UCOP and the campuses) and how (or if) the investments will scale, which courses were "effective" in the broadest sense and why or why not, whether UCOE or the campuses are the best place for course development, and so on.

We reiterate the importance of accountability for the entire UCOP OIPP/UCOE/ILTI effort.

There is a need for cost data, including campus in-kind contributions to UCOE courses, that could help the Senate and the Office of the President determine the real per-student costs over time for development, delivery, and revision of UCOE courses compared to campus-based online or traditional courses. Importantly, such data will help to determine how UC online education development and delivery should be distributed organizationally within the system as a whole. The BRP submitted two documents in 2012/2013 to the Senate and UCOP to help guide an adequate evaluation of UCOP efforts (See Appendix A and Appendix B. These documents outline our recommendations for what constitutes an adequate evaluation of UCOE/ILTI efforts as the program continues to expand and increase expenditures. To date, we are not aware that a rigorous evaluation plan that can inform investment and organizational questions is in place or anticipated for the new infusion of $10 million from the Governor.)

**Appendix A. Memo to Senate Leadership: Comments on the UC OIPP/UCOE Program and Evaluation**

**February 4, 2013**

**To: John Yoder, Chair, UCEP; Robert L. Powell, Chair, UC Academic Council; and William Jacob, Vice Chair, UC Academic Council**

**From: Diane Harley, Chair, UC Senate Blue Ribbon Panel on Evaluation of OIPP/UCOE**

**Re: Retransmittal of Blue Ribbon Panel's comments on the UC OIPP/Online Education Program (UCOE) and Associated Evaluation**

In light of the Blue Ribbon Panel's discussions following both the review of UCOE's December 2012 Final Interim Evaluation Report and the recent January Regent's meeting, the Panel is retransmitting its November 5, 2012 report and recommendations. It is clear that the landscape surrounding UC online education is shifting rapidly, perhaps in unpredictable ways, and there is likely to be an infusion of new funds into the system as a whole. We believe that the questions we articulated in our November report, in the first section below, remain highly relevant and critically important to the future of online education within the University of California; some of these questions are even more relevant now because of the apparent recent perspective among the UC leadership that UCOE should be viewed in the broader context of online courses developed and delivered by the campuses. The second section presented below includes our original November analysis and recommendations regarding UCOE. That section makes evident the context at the time it was written (three months ago) and includes opinions and recommendations that the Blue Ribbon Panel unanimously reasserts today. As stated in my January 21, 2013 e-mail to you, the December Final Interim UCEC report does not change the substance of our November stance, despite our being very heartened to see some student attitudinal survey data derived from the first six UCOE courses. Upon reading the final interim report, however, new questions were raised about the methodologies employed, drop-rates and their causes, a lack of data collection on faculty workload, and what appears on the last page to be a significant retreat from the original evaluation goals.

We reiterate the importance of accountability of the OIPP/UCOE effort. There is a need for comprehensive cost data, including campus in-kind contributions to UCOE courses, that could help the Senate and the Office of the President determine the real per student costs over time for development, delivery, and revision of UCOE courses compared to campus-based online or traditional courses. Importantly, such data will help to determine how UC online education development and delivery should be distributed organizationally within the system as a whole.

We are hopeful that the many efforts to develop and deliver online courses, both through UCOE and on the campuses, will result in shared understanding of what practices are most effective pedagogically and fiscally. The Panel looks forward to contributing to the various important conversations that will take place over the coming months regarding the future of online education at UC.

The Senate is interested in determining whether the OIPP/UCOE Program will provide sufficient information and analysis on its effectiveness in a timely fashion so that the faculty, individually and collectively, are able to make informed decisions regarding our support for, and participation in, the on-line educational program being proffered through UCOE. The Panel requests access to the information relevant to this goal, or, if unavailable, a description of the plans for collecting and analyzing it, together with a realistic timeline and associated budgeting. In the event the information is not forthcoming, both UCEP and the BRP would be interested in the rationale for moving away from this central role of the Program. The Blue Ribbon Panel believes that as the program progresses it should clarify the following points.

*General issues:*

- What is the current overall status of UCOE and its relationship to OIPP? Where will it be going in the future given lessons learned, significant changes of leadership (Greenstein and Hancock), and response to Senate concerns?

- The Panel needs more precise information regarding the relationship between OIPP, the second UCOE phase that includes non-matriculated students, and what the ultimate sustainable UCOE model will look like. We continue in our request for accurate and up-to-date tables and descriptive statistics of the <u>entire</u> UCOE effort in real time.

*Educational issues:*

- How will the lessons learned through OIPP/UCOE about tools and pedagogical methods transfer back to the campuses for possible application to campus courses—delivered traditionally, through campus online courses, or in hybrid courses? What evaluation methods and measures used by UCOE courses would be generalized for use by other online courses across the campuses?

- How are the multiple non-OIPP/UCOE online courses and related evaluations at various campuses being inventoried, tracked, and understood? If not, why haven't they been part of UCOE's ongoing scan of the entire UC online environment?

- What is the status of the technological infrastructure and how has it affected course development and delivery? How has it affected faculty and staff resource expenditures? Is there just one CMS platform solution or many? What have been the "costs" to create CoLE, including those to the campuses and faculty employing it or other LMS's.

*Educational issues specific to the UCEC evaluation:*

- What is the detailed status of the effort to understand general pedagogical questions raised in the only two public UCEC documents (2011)? We reiterate our need to see how the original research questions posed by UCEC have been answered and with what specific methods and data.

- What are the characteristics of those students choosing to take an online course and how do they compare with those that did not? What information will be provided about student performance and of the markets for different "kinds" of students?

- What information will UCOE/OIPP/UCEC provide on teaching methodology? Does student engagement with online tools occur in the manner expected by the faculty in the online course? How does engagement with various online tools relate to student performance in the course?

- Has OIPP served as professional development for faculty, i.e., are the online courses created significantly different from what they would have been before taking part in the project and in what ways?

In addition the Panel has questions on the evaluation process. Specifically, will information be obtained on the following:

- Do the courses sponsored by OIPP/UCOE provide, on average, instruction at least as good as traditionally taught course with the same purported content (content being thought of at the catalog-copy level)?

- Do the courses sponsored by OIPP/UCOE work, on average, approximately equally well for recognizable subgroups of students (e.g., resident on campus of instruction students, students at other UC campuses, students matriculated at other four-year institutions, students not yet or not currently matriculated)?

- In OIPP/UCOE courses, is student non-cognitive behavior roughly parallel to traditionally taught courses, e.g. completion rates, requests for extensions, academic integrity behavior, ratings of course utility, enjoyment, etc.?

*Educational issues specific to the UCEC evaluation:*

- What are the enrollment numbers for both matriculated and non-matriculated students in the courses being supported by the Program? How are these numbers being analyzed and by whom? When will the results of such analysis be made available to the Panel and the Senate?

- Has the economic model (at the campus and institutional level) been developed to the professional standards that we hold other fiscal models used in determining University fiscal commitments? How will per student costs of the UCOE online courses be measured and then compared to teaching

in alternative modes (e.g., face to face, hybrid, or other UC online campus courses)? How are the ratios of UCOE support for course development versus the hidden cost of campus in-kind support for development being measured (i.e., technical and instructional design staff, faculty workload, and administrative and technological infrastructure)?

- How will courses be updated or reused in the future? How will a balance be struck between maintaining quality of the courses and exploiting the efficiency of preparing materials once and reusing them multiple times (e.g., what are the costs to such reuse and updates)? Who will actually teach subsequent offerings to non-matriculated students (e.g., GSIs, adjuncts, tenured faculty, other)? Is expecting regular faculty to teach larger numbers of students a reasonable economic assumption given the aversion of faculty to adopt other's course materials without significant and potentially expensive customization?

- It is not at all clear how the current investments in OIPP course materials and faculty labor will be scaled to a large numbers of students both matriculated and non-matriculated.

*Instructor issues:*

- What are the effects of OIPP/UCOE overall on campus participants (faculty, administrators, technologists), and how are problems being overcome? Related to the budgetary issues above, what can be said about the faculty and staff (campus and UCOP) time so far expended on the UCOE/OIPP effort? What can be described about reuse/scaling of materials for UCOE that are being financed currently by the loan/OIPP.

- Is there sufficient support (both financial and availability of "experts") to enable faculty to develop their courses well and to update the courses to reflect new scholarship and lessons learned from the evaluation of initial and subsequent offerings?

- Have the individual short- and long- term interests (particularly intellectual property and control of attribution) of the faculty been fully discussed with, disclosed to, and understood by individual faculty, academic departments, and campus Senates? For example, it is not clear from the contract documents that have been provided to the Senate if there is the potential for faculty to have their intellectual property usurped somewhere in the future.

Finally, the Panel believes it would be in the best interest of all parties to know how UCOE is dovetailing efforts with other parallel activities on the campuses; for example, the manner in which non-OIPP/UCOE online courses at various campuses (including MOOCS), and their related evaluations, are being inventoried, tracked, and understood. This would be consistent with the stated policy that "UC Online's aim is to build on and enhance rather than compete with other online efforts underway at the campus level." (From Keith Williams' July 27, 20120 email).

Information on the above points will help the BRP, UCEP and the Senate better understand the current status of UCOE and the direction that it will take, it will facilitate our being able to help the program

progress and succeed by opening new avenues of educational excellence for our students and increasing knowledge in the area of college online education.

[Blue Ribbon Panel Report and Recommendations](#)

**11.5.12**

**To: Chair, John Yoder, UCEP, Robert L. Powell, Chair, UC Academic Council, and William Jacob, Vice Chair, UC Academic Council**

**From: Diane Harley, Chair, UC Senate Blue Ribbon Panel on Evaluation of OIPP/UCOE**

**Re: Blue Ribbon Panel's comments on UC Online Education Program (UCOE) and the "Interim Summary Report"**

The Senate convened a Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) with the expectation that its expertise, experience, and vantage point would provide a useful and constructive view of those aspects of the OIPP/UCOE program of central interest to the Academic Senate. We were fortunate in the composition of the Panel, whose members are well versed in various aspects of online and traditional college education and assessment. The BRP has been following the developments of the OIPP/UCOE program closely, and over more than six months has raised several points of concern that it felt needed to be addressed by the UCOE Program. It has been our hope that UCOE would be forthcoming in clarifying these issues. What follows is the Panel's candid and unanimous report to you on our progress to date.

As you know, the Blue Ribbon Panel is confused about many aspects of the Program, a sentiment also expressed on various occasions by other Senate committees. Several essential aspects of this Program appear to be in a fluid, if not disarrayed, state with unclear goals and timelines, and it has been difficult to get precise answers about many questions. The BRP realizes that this absence of answers might result from the fact that the Program is in its early stages of development and has lost key personnel. We are nonetheless seriously concerned whether or not an effective evaluation of the entire effort can be completed given UCOE's resources and ambiguous and fluid development timeline. We emphasize that this evaluation component was originally presented to the Senate as being of paramount importance to the Program and its subsequent development, and it is largely because of this that the Senate supported the original idea behind the OIPP (before learning of the controversial loan arrangement). In fact, the understanding was that OIPP was an experiment to test the viability of UCOE's model of developing cost-effective, high quality, and economically sustainable online courses.

The record of UCOE's communication with the Panel has made our job exceptionally challenging, if not impossible. The BRP received some fragmented (and often out-dated) material relevant to an April 2012 conference call with Keith Williams (UCOE) and John Yun (UCEC). That fragmented material left many important questions unanswered, and the Panel submitted those outstanding questions in writing to UCOE on multiple occasions. The Panel insisted that these questions needed to be addressed in writing to reassure the BRP, UCEP, and the Senate of the likelihood of programmatic success and to alleviate continued Senate concerns about UCOE's efficacy. Our effort to get additional information has been put

off by UCOE.   The Panel membership is exceptionally concerned that UCOE intends to continue this pattern of not providing timely, accurate, and comprehensive data and analyses and will continue to discount the importance of our input and charge.

The delay in receiving substantive answers to the Panel's outstanding questions, ostensibly because of limited time and staff for UCOE and UCEC to write up results or present findings, raised an early concern that the entire effort directed at course development and evaluation is underfunded and understaffed. Moreover, the Panel is not alone in being exceptionally concerned that OIPP/UCOE will continue to tap into both the loan funds and stretched faculty and administrative resources at the campuses without the benefit of first reflecting deeply on its activities and results to-date. In fact, some Panel members have received a significant amount of negative feedback from the campuses about UCOE courses. These negative comments include low quality courses, some of which are open to cheating, unusable software in the form of CoLE (which, after great expense, we understand is being abandoned to be replaced by a new costly system), and hidden costs on the campuses to support UCOE courses. These costs include the diversion of significant campus personnel and other resources that are needed to support all faculty in their teaching activities, not just a handful of UCOE experiments with unknown effectiveness and costs.

It was agreed in the April, 2012 conference call with Keith and John that our questions would be minimally addressed in a detailed August 31, 2012 interim report.  That report was not delivered. Instead, in mid-October, the panel received a 16 page "Summary Interim Report" devoid of any description of the status of the larger experiment, devoid of any descriptive data or decipherable analyses, focused on only six courses that were offered in Spring 2012 (even though at least eight more courses were launched in the Summer and Fall of 2012 and more are being planned), and written with a non-scholarly perspective that appears to us to be biased towards proclaiming the success of the program without any evidence to support that conclusion. If it is indeed too early for UCOE to provide meaningful, concrete evaluation metrics, then it is too early to be touting the successes of the program, as the summary interim report attempts to do.

There were also no data on costs of the program to date, nor any indication that UCOE will be collecting good cost data, both from its own internal operations and individual campus in-kind contributions, that could help the Senate and the Office of the President to assess the real per student costs over time for development, delivery, and revision of online courses compared to face to face.

Given the Panel's initial charge and the specific requests made after the April conference call, the interim report should have: (1) Addressed the research questions in the original evaluation documents provided by UCOE/UCEC for the entire set of courses offered through Summer 2012 and some description of the courses being offered in Fall 2012, (2) Provided descriptive statistics, (3) Provided numerators and denominators for all percentages in the evaluation narrative, (4) Provided descriptive statistics about the number of courses considered to be offered online versus those offered face to face; (5) Provided information on the number of courses provided once online and continued to be offered online or not, (6) Provided data on the type of students enrolled in each course by UC campus, non-matriculated, etc., (7) Provided a candid evaluation of faculty workload and explain if and why faculty terminated (or will terminate) their participation in the Program, (8) Provided the total cost of the

OIPP/UCOE budget, including costs of the evaluation, marketing, enrollment, technical support, etc., (9) Provided the updated budget for the present time, and (10) Provided information on whether the benchmarks have changed given the evolving online marketplace (as manifested in individual campus efforts and more national initiatives).

The report that was submitted, and its positive conclusions about UCOE's success, contains none of the data we need to assess the larger experiment's success or failure, nor did it appear to us to be objective or of the quality we would expect from a UC-based research program.

While the October report shares minimal information regarding the true success or failure of UCOE, just as importantly, it does not concern itself with the question of evaluating the costs per student of UCOE versus other platforms or programs or the relative quality of the online instructional experience of the UCOE model versus other platforms. We are perplexed why none of the UCOE documents to date make mention of the significant activities taking place nationwide, including on our campuses, which suggests UCOE may be operating in a bit of a vacuum when it come to understanding sustainable pedagogical and economic models for online education at public research universities (e.g., UMASS Online and Penn State World campus, to name a few). We also think that collecting cost data is critical because we estimate in our own preliminary scan, that the number of online courses independent of UCOE that are being offered at individual campuses exceeds the number offered by UCOE. It is also well known that many more are in the planning stage. At least one campus has affiliated with EdX and others are in conversations with Coursera, EdX, or Udacity. If we had a full evaluation of the UCOE courses and their costs, we could strive to answer the essential question of how these non-UCOE campus courses measure up. The system and its campuses might then be able to assess whether we should create an entirely new model of UCOE that aggregates campus offerings into a shared program rather than creating what might be an exceptionally expensive and cumbersome centralized course-development business. UCOE has apparently not performed even a basic inventory of campus offerings (and associated evaluations, if they exist) that would allow us and it to begin to evaluate such an important question.

In summary, if a central goal of the UCOE Program is to understand best practices in online college education and their possible dependence on the course level and discipline, as the UC academic community was told it would, any delay in dispersing robust and decipherable evaluation results will deprive participating and non-participating faculty of information essential to the development of their courses. Under these circumstances errors in UCOE offerings will be repeated and inefficiencies will be perpetuated unnecessarily. And, as importantly, precious and finite University resources will be wasted.

### Recommendations

Our current knowledge of the state of the evaluation portion of UCOE, as well as the many specific concerns outlined above about UCOE generally, leave us to surmise that meaningful results may not actually be obtained over the course of the UCOE "experiment." The Panel thus recommends that Phase II of the UCOE program be delayed now and that no additional courses under Phase I be offered via UCOE that are not already under development and approved by individual campuses until a fuller

evaluation of results for all courses offered to date has been performed.  That evaluation should include the enumerated points (1) through (10) above.  The questions outlined in the first section of this report provide more detailed descriptions of what the Panel believes is the minimum information necessary to receive from UCOE.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that, as is expected of all research scholars in the University of California system, the Panel members have assiduously kept their minds open about the UCOE experiment. Indeed, many Panel members are actively engaged on online efforts and discussions on their home campuses. Given the limited information provided by UCOE, however, we are unanimous as a Panel that further significant expenditure on UCOE should be halted until there are results from a rigorous evaluation of all efforts to date.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chair | Diane Harley | Center for Studies in Higher Education, UCB |
| Berkeley | Kristie Boering | Chemistry & Earth & Planetary Sciences |
| Los Angeles | Adrienne Lavine | Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering |
| Los Angeles | John Mamer | UCLA Anderson School of Management |
| Los Angeles | Janice Reiff | History & Statistics |
| San Diego | Mark Appelbaum | Psychology |
| San Francisco | Abbey Alkon | Family Health Care & Nursing |
| Santa Cruz | Kip Téllez | Education |

**Appendix B. Memo to Senate Leadership, Recommendations for ILTI Evaluation**

Date:    February 19, 2013
To:      John Yoder, Chair, UCEP; Robert L. Powell, Chair, UC Academic Council; and William Jacob, Vice Chair, UC Academic Council
From:    Diane Harley, Chair, UC Senate Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) on Evaluation of OIPP/UCOE (on behalf of the BRP members)
Re:      UCOP RFP for New Online Courses. Some Recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel.

This short memo is in response to your request regarding the UCOP RFP for new online courses and is the result of a consultation among the BRP members. As requested, it contains only a few bullet points and is an adjunct to, not a replacement for, our list of questions in documents sent to you on 2/4/2013. It is our recommendation that evaluation plans should be embedded in proposals and funds should be provided for those course evaluations. Specifically:

(1) How does student success and overall quality of a course differ between fully online and in-class versions? Objective measures of quality (not just student attitudinal data collected by surveys) need to be made explicit and those proposals that offer concurrently a "traditional" course (even if hybrid) and a fully online course should be given priority in the granting process. This will allow a side-by-side comparison of student academic success and overall quality of the respective courses. The proposals should identify the objective metrics that will be used in comparison.

To that end, the RFP itself should be clear about what metrics are needed. See our November 2012 report for examples of necessary measurements. We also understand that the Chem 1a proposal to UCOE is an excellent example/template of an effective approach to measuring efficacy and comparing outcomes in a fully online and a face to face course, and should perhaps be consulted.

(2) Successful proposals and their associated evaluation should have clearly stated goals. That is, they should provide a concise description of the community to be served, the specific needs of that community, and how a particular online program addresses the needs of that community (such as, but not limited to, reducing time to degree, and/or increasing the availability of over-subscribed courses). Course success should be evaluated based on measurable progress made toward the stated goal(s).

(3) Funded projects should have plans to identify and measure rigorously the most successful elements in the online version (e.g., streaming video, automated quizzing, discussion groups, faculty/student ratio, etc.) that might have the potential to enrich all UC courses, regardless of delivery online or more traditionally.

(4) Proposals should have a plan to measure rigorously drop-out rates and collect good data on why individuals chose to leave the course.

(5) We ask, what are the ingredients to a successful online course, broadly defined by both quality and cost-effectiveness, at the UC? There is evidence to indicate successful UC online courses are the result of significant in-kind contributions from campuses over time. Specifically, how exactly does campus organization and in-kind funding, instructor/faculty workload, Senate approval processes, and technical and human infrastructures, among other factors, contribute to success? Measures of the relative importance of these predictive elements should be provided in proposals, and proposals should make clear how they plan to continue to track rigorously, and then report out on, such inputs over the duration of the course (e.g., accurate measures of faculty/instructor workload, campus in-kind, etc.).