



Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Assembly of the
Academic Senate
Faculty Representative,
UC Board of Regents
Academic Senate

Office of the President
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Oakland, CA 94607

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

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February 12, 2025

Michael V. Drake, M.D.
President

RE: Academic Senate Office Budgets & Re-Investing in Shared Governance

Dear President Drake,

At its meeting on January 29, 2025, the Academic Council unanimously endorsed a statement presented by the systemwide and divisional Senate executive directors on re-investing in shared governance and accompanying principles for resource allocations in support of Academic Senate operations.

The statement reaffirms the Academic Senate's role and its delegated authorities from the UC Regents and outlines the essential functions of Senate offices. Adequate staff support is critical to fulfilling the Senate's responsibilities under shared governance, and the statement illustrates how the Senate offices provide this support. Twice before—in 2004 and in 2010—the Senate executive directors proposed, and the Academic Council endorsed, a set of principles providing a clear, rational basis for funding Senate operations. These principles, now updated in the enclosed document, serve as an operational baseline for continued excellence and reinforce the call for re-investment in shared governance.

The statement is timely as the University is now facing unprecedented challenges to its core mission. The Academic Senate remains a committed, engaged, and essential partner in navigating these challenges. While Senate budget augmentations would normally be required to support the increased workload, Senate leadership recognizes the financial constraints facing the University. However, maintaining the Senate's ability to function effectively requires:

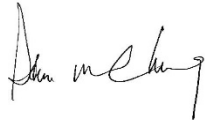
- Fully resourcing Senate offices at both the campus and systemwide levels.
- Prioritizing funding for human resources, facilities, equipment, and information technology systems that support Senate operations.

- Ensuring Senate involvement in centralized system developments and guaranteeing access to relevant institutional data.
- Avoiding trade-offs that force Senate chairs to choose between funding Senate staff and providing faculty research grants.
- Addressing inconsistencies in budget reporting lines, by securing direct funding for divisional Senate operations from the chancellor's office rather than through secondary channels.

By highlighting the Senate's work in sustaining University's excellence, the framework is intended to facilitate discussions between Senate leaders and University administrators about appropriate funding levels for Senate office operations. Council requests that you share the statement and accompany guiding principles with the Council of Chancellors, and through them, with the executive vice chancellors and provosts, for review, concurrence, and implementation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Academic Senate

Enclosures

cc: Academic Council
Divisional Senate Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin



Academic Senate

January 27, 2025

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Dear Chair Cheung,

The Academic Senate executive directors discussed the topic of Senate Office budgets and resourcing at our annual retreat last summer. We determined that we would like to present to the Academic Council in early 2025 the following requests:

1. Council's endorsement of the enclosed "Guiding Principles for Resource Allocations in Support of Academic Senate Operations"; and
2. Council's advocacy for the need to preserve Senate budgets in anticipation of severe budget cuts for fiscal year 2025-26 and beyond.

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Given the cycle of budget challenges, these guiding principles were initially developed by Senate executive directors and endorsed by the Academic Council in [2004](#), and again updated and endorsed in [2010](#). As the officers of the Senate charged with stewardship of the Senate's infrastructure, we revised the principles to address current issues of concern and ask that the Academic Council consider them for adoption and implementation at the systemwide Academic Senate and all 10 Senate divisions.

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We have included a brief statement outlining the general scope of the Senate's work, along with the principles that describe the resources necessary to operate an Academic Senate office. In emphasizing principles rather than prescribing an itemized list of resources, we want to allow for flexibility within the specific context of each UC location and to maintain the autonomy of Senate Offices.

Senate Offices have previously participated in budget reductions, and we are mindful that resources are limited across the institution. As we head into the budget planning season for the next fiscal year and with numerous complex problems facing the University, we believe it is critical that the Senate urge the Administration to re-invest in shared governance through proper resourcing of Academic Senate operations. In light of announced

cuts in state funding to the University, now would be an opportune time to issue plans regarding how best to reinforce these guiding principles even during financially difficult periods to ensure appropriation of adequate resources to the Senate in the future.

Should the Council approve these revised principles, we recommend sending them to President Drake with a request that he distribute them to the Council of Chancellors for review, concurrence, and joint implementation.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns and look forward to receiving Council's response to our requests.

Respectfully submitted,

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Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division

Jisoo Kim, Ph.D., Executive Director, Irvine Division

April de Stefano, Ph.D., Executive Director, Los Angeles Division

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Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Santa Cruz Division

Monica H. Lin, Ph.D., Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate

Enclosure

cc: Academic Council Members



A Framework for Excellence: Re-Investing in Shared Governance

January 27, 2025

The Academic Senate is a distinctive and important organizational element of the University of California—a feature that distinguishes UC from other major research universities nationally and internationally. Formally established by [Standing Orders of The Regents](#), the Academic Senate is the organization through which faculty share in the operation and management of the University. UC’s contemporary practice of consultative decision-making and shared governance reinforces the faculty’s role at the core of the academic mission of the University: teaching, research, and public service.

It is the faculty, individually as scholars and collectively through the Academic Senate, who maintain the quality of the University’s academic programs. The Regents have delegated to the Academic Senate authority over all curricular matters: degree requirements and academic programs; admissions standards; and the review, establishment, and disestablishment of all academic programs. The Senate also has a formal advisory role in academic personnel actions, faculty welfare, and budget matters. This authority and its advisory role lay the foundation for the Academic Senate’s unique relationship with the University’s senior administration and provides opportunity to communicate valuable faculty viewpoints, enhancing the academic excellence of the institution. The Academic Senate’s efforts derive from the premise that the University’s excellence cannot be sustained without faculty, administration, staff, and students all making substantive contributions to the University in an involved, respectful, and collaborative fashion.

To meet the Regents’ mandate, the Academic Senate has organized itself into various standing and ad hoc committees. These committees are composed of Senate faculty from diverse disciplines and function within each campus division and at the systemwide level. Committee work is supported by professional policy analysts through the Academic Senate Offices. For the Senate to perform its duties efficiently and effectively, necessary resources must be provided to the Senate infrastructure to sustain highly functional Senate and key campus operations.

The Senate Offices support the standing and ad hoc committees by administering a myriad of functions that are at the heart of UC’s academic mission, including but not limited to the following:

- Admissions standards that assure UC admits qualified undergraduate students prepared for successful pursuit of a higher education.
- Graduate and undergraduate program reviews, which influence academic rankings and promote excellence.
- Reviews of establishment, transfer, consolidation, and discontinuance of academic programs assure the academic operation is in alignment with the overall academic mission.

- Curricular oversight, such as major, degree, and course approvals, impact UC's ability to attract and retain excellent students who become active alumni and future faculty.
- Establishment and maintenance of a robust faculty peer review process—through management of academic personnel reviews, grievances, and charges—promote quality, excellence, and a sense of fair play.
- Policy and budget reviews provide a link between the Senate and Administration in the allocation of resources for academic endeavors.
- Administration of research funds returns a measure of indirect cost recovery to the faculty who, in turn, use this funding to develop new research ideas and to travel to scholarly meetings where their presentations further enhance UC's reputation.

In seeking solutions to the numerous complex problems currently facing the University of California, the Academic Senate is at the forefront of the problem-solving effort. The Senate and its staff have been asked to [review and respond](#) to an ever-greater volume of policies and issues—including those generated by systemwide and local senior administrators, and groups such as the systemwide Provost's Joint Senate-Administration Working Group on Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty, and the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs—as well as various streamlining and cost-cutting measures.

Although the current economic and political realities at both the state and federal levels have an impact on UC's short-term stability and potentially threaten the University's long-term success, academic leaders are working tirelessly to ensure that UC retains and builds on its identity as an excellent, robust, and accessible academic institution. As these plans develop and begin rollout in 2025, the Academic Senate must be positioned to facilitate the review and approval of proposals to begin new academic programs or consolidate existing ones, discontinue programs, and the like, often against the backdrop of pressing financial implications and compressed timelines. Moreover, while the institution's focus shifts to new initiatives, such as increased online learning and reliance on revenue-generating programs, the responsibilities of the Academic Senate and its staff continue to expand.

Attempting to accomplish more with less resources runs the very real risk of sacrificing UC quality and diminishing the value of a UC education. Twice before in the past, first in [2004](#) and again in [2010](#), the Senate executive directors proposed, and the Academic Council endorsed, a set of principles that provide a clear, rational basis for funding Senate operations. These principles are presented in an updated form below as both an operational baseline for continued excellence and a call for re-investment in shared University governance.

Guiding Principles for Resource Allocations in Support of Academic Senate Operations

January 27, 2025

1. Each Academic Senate Office must have sufficient resources to independently manage its operations, as would any senior administrative office with campus-wide/systemwide areas of responsibility (e.g., offices of the chancellor/president, executive vice chancellor/president and provost).
2. All Senate operations, committees, programs, and services require full support by sufficient human resources in the form of a team of professional and administrative support staff, supervisors, and senior managers, as determined by each division and the systemwide Senate.
 - a. Senate staff positions should include administrative full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to support administrative functions, analytical FTE staff to conduct independent analyses, and managerial and senior professional staff to oversee all of the unit's functional areas.
 - b. Staff positions should be classified at the appropriate level and in the relevant job family to ensure that Senate leaders are provided with adequate administrative and analytical support.
 - c. Fiscal resources for these staff positions should be allocated on a permanent basis to the Senate operating budget, ensuring competitive compensation, retention, and recruitment of highly skilled and versatile staff to support world-class faculty.
3. Senate operations should be supported by sufficient budget, facilities, and equipment, including the following, as applicable to and deemed necessary and appropriate by each division and the systemwide Senate:
 - a. Funds for regular meetings of Senate agencies to conduct their business, such as funding to rent adequate onsite meeting space, or to facilitate video conferences or hybrid meetings.
 - b. Funds for programs, projects, special events, faculty training, staff professional development, Senate leadership retreats, and other operational functions (e.g., Senate service awards).
 - c. Funds to compensate Senate leadership and other applicable Senate officers for their service contributions toward shared governance.
 - d. Dedicated office space for all divisional/systemwide chairs, and dedicated office/work space for Senate staff.
 - e. Dedicated meeting space (e.g., Senate-only access) sufficient to conduct Senate business (e.g., Senate committee meetings) and other official Senate functions.
 - f. Adequate furniture, office equipment, and telecommunications services appropriate to conduct Senate business.

- g. Onsite storage facilities or a permanent budgetary appropriation to fund offsite storage of essential, historical Senate records; funds to support development and maintenance of an electronic archiving system.
- 4. Information technology (IT) resources are critical to efficient and effective Senate operations management, especially as Senate Offices continuously adapt to meet the changing needs of University and Academic Senate workflows. Senate Offices have developed technology-based solutions to manage increasing workloads.
 - a. Access to and the ability to manage IT resources supporting Senate operations are integral to ongoing process improvements.
 - b. Developing systems and procedures that facilitate Senate operations may require customized technology infrastructures that meet Senate business needs.
 - c. Proper IT resourcing includes web development and support, technology systems maintenance, and ongoing technology or programming support (e.g., hardware, software, database development, online resource development).
- 5. The development of unit clustering, shared service centers, and other forms of central administrative streamlining and central system implementation often affect Senate operations. As central systems or procedures are planned, the impact on Senate operations must be explicitly considered in consultation with the Senate Office, including examination of adequate resources to support continued Senate involvement. Through early engagement and needs assessments, workload and resource impacts can be identified and managed during the planning and development phase rather than during implementation, which will minimize delays and budget overruns for systems development.
- 6. Senate agencies exercise delegated authorities and need access to timely data and analysis from campus and systemwide institutional research entities and staff. Responses to Senate agency requests should be on par with response times for similar requests made by senior administration offices.
- 7. Senate chairs must not be asked to choose whether to provide adequate resources for Senate staff or faculty research grants. The budgets for Senate operations and any Senate Office-administered research grant programs must be viewed as mutually exclusive and beneficial. Both require sufficient and stable funding and are essential to the Senate's ability to carry out its authorities as delegated by the UC Regents.
- 8. Upon request by the Senate division, the campus Senate operation should be its own budgetary control unit, with a direct reporting line to the chancellor (or chancellor's designee) on budgetary matters. The systemwide Senate operation shall remain as its own budgetary control unit, with a direct budget reporting line to the local budget planning unit at the UC Office of the President.

2025 Framework & Guiding Principles Submitted by:

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