



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Susannah Scott
Chair, Assembly of the
Academic Senate
Faculty Representative,
UC Board of Regents

Academic Senate

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

October 30, 2026

James B. Milliken
President, University of California

Rachael Nava
Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

Re: Proposed Systemwide OpenAI Purchase Agreement and Senate
Consultation

Dear President Milliken and COO Nava:

On behalf of the Academic Council, I write to express our serious concern about shared governance and the very limited Academic Senate consultation regarding the proposed systemwide purchase agreement between the University of California and OpenAI.

In the [written item](#) submitted to the Board of Regents for its September 16, 2026 meeting, the administration reported that UC was exploring systemwide agreements with multiple AI providers, and explicitly stated that any resulting arrangements would undergo Academic Senate consultation before the University made a commitment.

Nevertheless, the Academic Council was not aware of the proposed OpenAI purchase agreement until our October 21, 2026 meeting with Vice President and Chief Information Officer Van Williams. On October 22, at our request, CIO Williams invited formal written Council input. The proposed agreement was made available to Council on October 24, with written feedback requested by October 30 before final execution of the purchase agreement anticipated by November 1. We understand this agreement will operate under UC's 2024 Master Services Agreement (MSA) with OpenAI, signed June 13, 2024.

To be clear, Academic Council does not object to the use of AI, nor to the idea of UC providing frontier model access to its researchers. We recognize the potential benefits of a coordinated purchasing approach, including

CAMPUSES

Berkeley
Davis
Irvine
UCLA
Merced
Riverside
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

Davis
Irvine
UCLA
San Diego
San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Lawrence Berkeley
Lawrence Livermore
Los Alamos

reduced costs, improved security, and more equitable access to AI platforms. Council members with a range of views about the merits and implications of the proposed agreement have questions that cannot be adequately assessed within the present timeline. Notably, these include the direct impact of widespread AI access on teaching and learning, student assessment, and research practice.

Although procurement actions are an administrative responsibility, decisions about procurement of any goods or services that may impact instruction and research policies call for Academic Senate consultation before they are made. We do not view making ChatGPT Edu licenses available to every UC student, instructor, and staff member as a routine software procurement decision, but rather a significant academic policy matter that falls within the Senate's delegated authority and expertise to advise on as part of our shared governance process.

Council also observes that making available a chat application capable of producing much of the work that UC courses are designed to teach and assess could be perceived as the University signalling endorsement for its use in all courses. For courses in which instructors have sound educational reasons to restrict these AI tools, that signal will sit in tension with the syllabus.

Neither late consultation nor notification after purchasing decisions have been made can substitute for faculty involvement in shaping the discussion about the issues at hand, given such far-reaching academic consequences. Consultation should mean participation in the decision, through the Senate's processes, and is not achieved by the simple presence of one or more faculty representatives on administrative bodies.

Accordingly, the Council requests that: 1) finalization of the purchase agreement with OpenAI be deferred to permit meaningful Senate consultation; and 2) no deployment of ChatGPT licenses for academic uses by students and faculty take place until appropriate consultation with the systemwide and divisional Senates has occurred regarding the educational implications of such deployment and the establishment of appropriate protections for faculty authority over instruction.

We further request a consultative role for the Senate through the Academic Council and UCACC in renewal of the OpenAI Master Services Agreement, specifically where its terms bear on instruction and faculty research, as well as an ongoing role in future decisions about purchasing, allocation, deployment, evaluation, and renewal of AI tools for academic uses, whether from OpenAI or any other AI providers. Such consultation should include opportunities to assess educational benefits and risks, safeguard

faculty authority over instructional decisions, ensure transparency and appropriate data protection for faculty and students, and develop guidance for uses that evolve along with the AI technologies themselves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Susannah L. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susannah Scott
Chair, Academic Council

Encl. Invitation from VP Williams to Academic Council to provide input

cc: Academic Council
Vice President and Chief of Staff Kao
VP and CIO Williams
AVP and Chief Procurement Officer Williams
Chair Brookwell, University Committee on Academic Computing & Communications (UCACC)
Senate Division Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin

From: Van Williams <Van.Williams@ucop.edu>
Date: October 22, 2026 at 4:09:20 PM PDT
To: Susannah Scott <Susannah.Scott@ucop.edu>
Subject: OpenAI Follow Up

Dear Susannah,

Thank you again for the opportunity to connect with the Academic Council yesterday. I appreciated the thoughtful discussion and our shared commitment to ensuring that decisions of this significance benefit from meaningful faculty consultation. The Senate's engagement in helping develop UC Responsible AI Principles and providing input into the OpenAI master services agreement has established an important foundation for that engagement.

I heard clearly the desire for adequate time to consult and deliberate. At the same time, the current negotiating window gives us a timely opportunity to secure terms that would lower costs, strengthen enterprise protections, and broaden access for faculty, staff, and others who may not have the resources to purchase licenses individually.

With that in mind, I would welcome formal written feedback on the proposed purchase by next Friday so that we can consider concerns and other relevant factors while negotiations are still underway. This feedback is intended to inform the purchase of licenses, and it should be distinct from discussions about teaching, learning, scholarship, or local academic practice. The purchase itself would not prescribe how AI should be used in those settings.

Separately, to support continued faculty engagement around deployment and use, I will advise location CIOs to work with their local academic senates as licenses are deployed. That local consultation complements the Academic Council's systemwide input on the purchase and ensures that academic considerations can be addressed where they are most directly implicated.

Thank you for raising these concerns and for your continued partnership. I hope we can approach this as a shared opportunity to secure better protections, lower costs, and broader access for the university community while continuing substantive faculty dialogue on deployment and responsible use.

Best regards,

Van