



Ahmet Palazoglu
Chair, Assembly of the
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Academic Senate

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July 23, 2026

Yvette Gullatt
Vice President for Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs
Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Re: Recommendations for UC Online

Dear VP Gullatt:

At the June 24, 2026 meeting, the Academic Council endorsed recommendations developed by the University Committee on Educational Policy ([UCEP](#)) regarding the governance and oversight of UC Online.

Background

Council's endorsement follows several discussions this year regarding UC Online's evolving role, services, and governance. In March, Council met with UC Online's associate vice provost to discuss the unit's strategic direction and the broader context for its work, including persistent challenges related to cross-campus enrollment, course articulation, funding models, data, and operations. In April and June, Council considered UCEP's analysis of deep concerns about UC Online's transparency, the availability of data detailed enough to allow meaningful assessment of its services and outcomes, the lack of independent advisory oversight, and the need for greater Senate consultation and involvement in UC Online initiatives at both the systemwide and campus levels. These discussions informed the recommendations in this letter.

Council recognizes that UC Online can play an important role in supporting faculty, students, and cross-campus educational opportunities. However, as online and hybrid instruction becomes more widespread at UC, the Council is extremely troubled that longstanding issues identified by UCEP and in prior external reviews have not yet been resolved. These include unanswered questions about UC Online's costs and deliverables, and especially its relationship to the Senate in terms of the faculty's authority over academic programs and courses. Council views these as structural and governance problems, not simply matters of communication. They call for a much stronger and more structured partnership between UC Online and the Senate to clarify responsibilities, address recurring problems, and better align UC Online with UC's educational mission.

Request for Comprehensive Assessment of UC Online

Council recommends that the Office of Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs (GUEA) initiate a comprehensive assessment of UC Online or conduct a formal external audit. It should examine the unit's organizational structure, budget and expenditures, services to faculty and students, and active course offerings. It should also analyze data sufficient to understand how UC Online is being used, including the number and types of active courses; the academic credit students receive and requirements those courses satisfy; course-level patterns of cross-campus enrollment, including the factors driving growth and areas that may warrant review; and the distribution of UC Online's services across campuses and student populations. The assessment should do more than restate issues identified in numerous previous reviews. It should identify the corrective actions needed to address ongoing problems, including those related to course articulation, data reporting, funding flows, and evaluation of educational outcomes, and the offices responsible for carrying them out, and a timeline for doing so.

Advisory Oversight and Reporting

Council also recommends restructuring the UC Online Advisory Council to ensure it has sufficiently independent leadership and a defined responsibility for more objective review and oversight. The Advisory Council should serve as a forum for regular, two-way communication between UC Online and Senate representatives, with an established process for considering Senate concerns and priorities. An independent advisory structure would help ensure that the council can provide meaningful advice regarding UC Online's strategic direction, performance, and relationship to broader UC educational initiatives.

In addition, Council recommends that UC Online address the inadequacy of its current documentation by committing to providing significantly more complete and accessible information about its activities on a regular basis. This should include substantive annual reports with relevant data, analysis, and evaluation; an up-to-date catalog of active course offerings; a detailed organizational chart with specific roles and areas of management; and a user-friendly navigation dashboard with clear descriptions of both the services available to faculty and students and how to access them. These resources should be made available to enable campuses, faculty, and students to understand what UC Online offers, how to access its services, and how its activities contribute to the University's educational mission.

Shared Governance

Council recommends that GUEA establish clearer processes for partnering with the Senate on educational initiatives that involve UC Online, particularly as UC Online is increasingly asked to support initiatives beyond its original role in online course development and cross-campus

enrollment. Some recent initiatives, including the Global Language Network, the National Education Opportunity Network dual enrollment pilot, and cross-segment online course development efforts, lacked the necessary Senate consultation. These examples illustrate the need for clearer roles, timelines, and collaborative processes. While the initiatives may advance legitimate educational goals and provide opportunities for UC Online to offer valuable operational support, they also raise questions about course development, instructional standards, credit and articulation, and faculty participation in the development and delivery of courses and programs, all of which require early and sustained engagement with the Senate.

While Council does not aim to direct UC Online's administrative operations or limit its capacity to support systemwide initiatives, it does seek to ensure that initiatives affecting academic programs, course development, instructional standards, credit, articulation, or related educational policy are initiated only after timely and substantive faculty engagement. Early consultation would allow UC Online to contribute its operational expertise while ensuring that initiatives appropriately reflect Senate authority, campus processes, and faculty perspectives.

Ongoing Assessment of UC Online

Finally, Council recommends that UC Online, with guidance from GUEA, develops a more systematic approach to assessing outcomes. Relevant measures should include student and faculty experiences with UC Online, course completion and subsequent academic performance, the effectiveness of instructional and technical support, and the costs and educational benefits associated with cross-campus course offerings. These assessments should inform strategic planning efforts and provide a sound basis for future decisions about UC Online's role and resource needs.

Council also recognizes that the Senate has work to do. Council will ask UCEP, in consultation with Senate leadership and Senate divisions as appropriate, to identify relevant Senate policy questions, gather campus-level information about the use and impact of UC Online, and recommend any Senate processes needed to support more effective oversight, and online and cross-campus instruction.

The Academic Council appreciates the work of GUEA and UC Online in advancing educational access and innovation. We share these recommendations to foster a productive conversation and subsequent action so that UC Online can better serve faculty and students while operating within a transparent and effective shared governance framework. Council requests that GUEA and UC Online develop a concrete plan for resolving these issues and report back to Council within the next academic year. Council expects the plan to be developed in consultation with

appropriate Senate bodies. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you in more detail and identify immediate next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Palazoglu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ahmet Palazoglu
Chair, Academic Council

cc: Academic Council
Provost & Executive Vice President Newman
Associate Vice Provost Moe
Senate Division Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin