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November 20, 2025

Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD)

Re: Summary of Senate Comments on UCAD Interim Report

Dear UCAD Members,

I distributed for systemwide Senate review the July 2025 [Interim Report and Recommendations](#) of the Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions (UCAD). All 10 Senate divisions and eight systemwide committees ([UCAADE](#), [UCAP](#), [UCEP](#), [CCGA](#), [UCORP](#), [UCFW](#), [UCOLASC](#), and [UCPB](#)) submitted comments. Several individual faculty and UC community members submitted additional comments. The compiled feedback is [included in this link](#) for your reference.

General Support: Senate reviewers praised UCAD for initiating an important and necessary discussion and for producing a timely and thoughtful analysis of the University's vulnerability to political, financial, and environmental disruptions. They recognized the interim report as a serious, faculty-led effort to anticipate challenges and strengthen UC's resilience.

UCAD's Scope and Intent: Many reviewers found the report's scope overly broad and urged clarification of UCAD's mandate, noting that portions of the interim report seemed to extend beyond its original charge by proposing long-term structural changes alongside short-term crisis planning strategies. Several recommended defining UCAD's role as developing principles and contingency planning, not issuing recommendations for structural reform. They emphasized that UCAD should remain a planning and advisory body, developing frameworks and principles for decision-making rather than prescriptive policy recommendations.

Reviewers also expressed concern that the interim report's exploratory proposals could risk being treated as actionable mandates. A central concern was the launch of [UCAD Plus](#). Several divisions viewed the launch as premature, and expressed concern that administrative implementation planning was proceeding before Senate deliberations had concluded. Reviewers warned that this undermines confidence in shared governance and could transform a faculty-led planning exercise into an administrative

initiative. A joint letter from the 10 division chairs underscored concerns that the administration was treating UCAD's preliminary proposals as a policy mandate without properly considering systemwide feedback. The chairs emphasized that shared governance is essential to the Senate's credibility and asked that the UCAD Plus initiative involve sufficient deliberation, including appropriate divisional consultation, on how best for the University to move forward.

Reviewers also cautioned that the report appears to assume that current political, demographic, and technological trends represent permanent conditions requiring structural adaptation. They emphasized that external forces are dynamic, and that structural adaptations should remain flexible and reversible wherever possible.

Research Funding Assistance: There was strong support for establishing mechanisms to help faculty recover from research funding interruptions. Many endorsed the concept of bridge, transition, and recovery funding to sustain research continuity during political or economic disruptions. However, reviewers asked for greater specificity about funding sources, eligibility, and governance, stressing that implementation must be transparent and equitable. Recent initiatives were launched without adequate Senate consultation, underscoring the need for shared governance and faculty input in developing any new funding mechanisms.

Reviewers also noted that research support varies across campuses and that new programs could exacerbate inequities. They urged any funding model to include all disciplines and faculty ranks, and to consider graduate student research support. Some questioned whether UCOP or campus resources could realistically sustain such programs in a constrained fiscal environment.

Several reviewers recommended modeling bridge programs after successful COVID pandemic-era mechanisms and exploring cross-campus collaborations, philanthropic partnerships, and coordination with UCOP Research & Innovation.

Equity and privacy were recurring concerns. Reviewers emphasized that underrepresented and early career faculty are disproportionately affected by disruptions, particularly those working in politically sensitive fields. They suggested that UCOP build a systemwide database of disrupted research and track equity impacts across campuses, although others warned that data collection should safeguard personally identifiable information and avoid stigmatizing particular disciplines.

Academic Personnel Evaluations: Reviewers strongly reaffirmed Achievement Relative to Opportunities (ARO) as a framework for equitable faculty evaluation during disruptions. They emphasized the need for consistent application across campuses and called for clearer guidance,

training, and oversight to ensure fairness and transparency.

Reviewers agreed that ARO principles should apply across academic disciplines and faculty titles, and that disruptions to teaching and mentoring should be explicitly recognized in faculty evaluations. They also supported extending ARO principles to non-ladder-rank faculty and early career researchers, who are often most affected by disruptions.

At the same time, reviewers cautioned that simply extending review timelines can inadvertently disadvantage faculty, particularly women, early career faculty, and those with caregiving responsibilities, by delaying advancement and salary progression. They recommended instead a structured flexibility model, including temporary course releases or rebalanced workloads, with regular merit reviews whenever possible.

Many reviewers also warned against interpreting ARO as allowing lost research time to be “offset” by increased teaching, arguing that this approach risks creating a two-tier faculty model and devaluing the contributions of teaching professors.

Finally, reviewers urged the collection of systemwide data to assess long-term effects on faculty advancement and retention, and recommended targeted training for Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) members and academic personnel administrators to promote consistent understanding and implementation of ARO principles across campuses.

Program Resizing and Restructuring: This section generated the strongest criticism. Many cautioned against conflating resilience planning with program consolidation or downsizing. Several warned that the report could be interpreted as endorsing program closures or workforce reductions. Reviewers objected to the use of terms such as “efficiency” and “strategic importance,” arguing that they invite narrow financial reasoning and could marginalize certain programs. They emphasized that academic value cannot be reduced to perceived economic return, and that UC’s strength lies in its disciplinary diversity. Small and specialized programs, particularly in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, are essential to UC’s mission. Reviewers also cautioned that politically complex fields such as ethnic studies are vulnerable and should be protected.

Reviewers urged that decisions about academic programs remain faculty-led and campus-based and proceed through Senate review processes. A few see potential value in systemwide coordination of review principles but stressed that any such framework must respect campus autonomy. Reviewers emphasized that structural changes made in response to short-term disruptions should remain flexible and reversible. They cautioned that research faculty cannot permanently shift into teaching roles, stressing that any transitions should be temporary and voluntary. Likewise, they urged that decisions like prioritizing the hiring of teaching professors or

eliminating programs occur only after Senate consultation and careful academic evaluation.

Several reviewers also cautioned that program reviews are designed to advocate for academic quality and resources, not to serve as tools for program elimination.

Instructional Flexibility and Course Modalities: Senate reviewers supported the goal of maintaining instructional continuity during disruptions, and emphasized that educational quality and Senate oversight must guide all changes. They endorsed limited cross-campus coordination and carefully designed course-sharing pilots, provided that faculty receive workload credit and compensation and that Senate course approval authority remains intact.

Several reviewers, including UCEP, also observed that the interim report devotes substantial attention to disruptions affecting faculty research but less attention to disruptions affecting teaching, pedagogy, and student learning. They noted that while the report proposes support mechanisms for research recovery, it does not parallel these with support for faculty who are asked to shoulder expanded teaching responsibilities during disruptions. Reviewers stressed that teaching labor has become increasingly strained, that requests to shift instructional modes often come with insufficient resources, and that the quality of the student experience is directly affected when faculty are asked to do more with less. They urged UCAD to give the teaching mission equal prominence and to recognize that public perceptions of UC's resilience will be shaped in large part by what students experience in classrooms.

Reviewers cautioned that online and hybrid teaching require substantial faculty labor, pedagogical expertise, and technology investment, and that these modes should not be assumed to be less expensive or more effective. Many urged UCAD to collect and analyze data on student learning outcomes before recommending broader adoption of online or hybrid formats. Several warned that an overreliance on online instruction could diminish the distinctiveness of a UC education and erode public confidence in its quality. They emphasized that ongoing instructional shifts have already increased faculty teaching burdens, underscoring the need to reinvest in instructional support and teaching infrastructure.

UCOLASC noted that online and cross-campus initiatives also have significant costs for libraries, which support digital course content and access. The committee urged recognition of library systems as essential infrastructure in any plans for instructional resilience.

Finally, reviewers cautioned against invoking international students facing visa challenges as justification for permanent changes in teaching modality. Instead, they supported targeted cross-campus articulation to

help international students complete degree requirements remotely during temporary disruptions, as long as decisions remain campus-based, data-driven, and consistent with Senate oversight.

Shared Governance and Campus Autonomy: A central theme was the importance of preserving shared governance and campus autonomy. Faculty emphasized that each campus has unique strengths and conditions that cannot be managed through uniform frameworks. They cautioned against one-size-fits-all metrics and stressed that Senate divisions must retain control over curricula, program structure, and faculty appointments. Reviewers also objected to language that appeared to devalue faculty judgment in academic decision-making. They reiterated that systemwide guidelines should be advisory rather than prescriptive, and that UCAD Plus should function as a real partnership between the Senate and the administration.

Equity, Workload, and Well-Being: Reviewers emphasized that many UCAD recommendations could increase service, teaching, and administrative demands on faculty already operating at capacity. They urged explicit acknowledgment that faculty labor is finite and recommended safeguards to prevent “adaptation” from becoming a new form of disruption. Faculty emphasized that equity is central to these concerns. They called for equitable resource distribution, monitoring of demographic impacts, and recognition of the toll that recent crises have taken. Reviewers also underscored the need to support faculty mental health and work–life balance.

Financial Realism: Several reviewers cautioned that UCAD’s recommendations appear detached from current fiscal realities. They advised that any systemwide plan should consider multiple levels of financial constraint, and that implementation cannot assume the availability of new funding or labor. Reviewers called for realistic cost estimates, clear identification of resource requirements, and exploration of new revenue streams to sustain bridge support for research and instructional continuity.

Others noted that UCAD’s assumptions about external political conditions may overstate their permanence, underscoring the need for adaptable and reversible planning models. Others observed that many rank-and-file faculty may not fully appreciate the gravity of UC’s current financial challenges. Taken together, these divergent perspectives highlight the need for greater financial transparency and communication so that faculty and administrators share a common understanding of UC’s budget conditions shaping the planning efforts.

Academic Mission: Reviewers emphasized that UC’s identity as an R1 university must remain the foundation of any plan to adapt to disruptions. They emphasized that disciplinary diversity, academic freedom, and

intellectual breadth are central to institutional resilience and must not be compromised by short-term efficiency goals. Faculty urged UCAD to defend UC's public mission by protecting vulnerable disciplines and rejecting consolidation of academic areas. Reviewers stressed that UC's academic strength depends on sustaining the full range of inquiry across campuses and disciplines, even under fiscal constraint.

Communication, Transparency, and Engagement: Reviewers highlighted the need for clear, coordinated communication during crises. They noted that ineffective communication during past disruptions compounded confusion and eroded trust. UC should develop explicit strategies for timely, transparent, and consistent messaging to faculty, students, and staff. Several reviewers also recommended greater engagement with graduate students and staff in resilience planning, noting that UCAD's proposals have implications for graduate education, research continuity, and the academic workforce.

Additional Individual Perspectives: Several individual faculty and community members also submitted comments. These commenters urged UCAD to recognize labor actions as a significant and recurring form of disruption that affects instruction, grading, and morale, and to consider strategies for sustaining academic operations during such actions. Others emphasized the near absence of graduate students from the report. Additional comments focused on the protection of academic freedom and research independence. They also reinforced concerns about financial realism, equitable resource distribution, and overreliance on online instruction.

Areas for Further Development: In addition to their evaluative comments, Senate reviewers identified opportunities for strengthening a revised UCAD report or issues for UCAD Plus to take up.

- Broadening the definition of "disruption" to include labor actions, cyberattacks, public health crises, and other events.
- Including graduate students and staff more explicitly in planning, with attention to continuity of funding, mentorship, and career progression during disruptions.
- Establishing clear communication and consultation protocols for crisis response.
- Embedding equity and academic freedom concerns into all recommendations.
- Developing measurable indicators of resilience, such as time to research recovery or instructional continuity, and identifying which bodies at the campus and/or systemwide level will monitor and report outcomes.

- Providing clearer guidance on academic personnel policy, including training for CAP members and chairs on application of the ARO framework.
- Expanding attention to disruptions affecting teaching and student learning, including the need for structured support for faculty facing increased instructional demands, so that resilience planning fully addresses both the research and teaching missions.
- Recognizing libraries as essential academic infrastructure for teaching and research and including them explicitly in disruption planning.
- Integrating financial realism and resource planning, including cost estimates, funding sources, and coordination with UCOP's budget and research offices. Enhancing financial transparency and communication to ensure relevant constituent groups share a clear understanding of UC's fiscal constraints.
- Defining principles for when online or hybrid teaching modes are appropriate, and maintaining faculty workload and quality standards.
- Acknowledging trade-offs and recognizing that adaptation may require difficult choices about programs and resources.
- Connecting adaptation planning to existing UC decarbonization and other sustainability initiatives.

In sum, there is strong support for UCAD's overarching goal of building institutional resilience and for the Senate's leadership in defining priorities. However, there is also concern that the current process risks converting faculty-led planning into administrative implementation without adequate divisional Senate consultation and deliberation.

Sincerely,



Ahmet Palazoglu
Chair, Academic Council
Chair, UCAD

cc: Academic Council
Provost and Executive Vice President Newman
UCI Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Stern
Senate Executive Director Lin