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Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
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July 31, 2024

KATHERINE S. NEWMAN
PROVOST & EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Re: UCEP Review of the UC Washington Center (UCDC)

Dear Provost Newman,

At its July 24, 2024 meeting, the Academic Council endorsed the University Committee on Educational Policy’s (UCEP) academic review of the UC Washington Center (UCDC).

UCEP, as per [Senate Bylaw 170.B](#), is tasked with approving systemwide courses and conducts a Senate review of UCDC and other systemwide programs every seven years.

Council endorses UCEP’s recommendation to preserve UCDC as an option for UC students seeking an immersive experience in Washington, DC. UCDC is a major asset to the University, offering high-quality teaching, research, and advocacy programs. It provides transformative experiences for students and enhances the University’s visibility and reputation in the nation’s capital. Council also supports UCEP’s additional recommendations for addressing UCDC’s challenges related to student and faculty recruitment, student preparation for participation in UCDC, affordability, course articulation, staffing, and communications. These measures will help ensure that the program continues to meet standards of academic excellence and serve the needs of UC students effectively.

The Council requests that you transmit UCEP’s review to the campus chancellors and vice provosts for undergraduate education. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James Steintrager, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council
Chief of Staff Beechem
Senate Division Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin

Encl:



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
Melanie Cocco, Chair
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June 13, 2024

**TANYA GOLASH-BOZA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UC WASHINGTON CENTER**

RE: UCEP REVIEW OF THE UC WASHINGTON CENTER

Dear Tanya,

UCEP is charged to review systemwide courses and select programs every seven years. In June, 2023, UCEP advised the UCDC program that it was due for review. A preliminary report was submitted to UCEP in December, 2023 which lacked sufficient detail for assessment. A revised report was provided in April, 2024 which serves as the basis for this review. On Monday May 20, 2024, the members of UCEP voted to approve and close the review of UCDC.

UCEP is familiar with the UCDC program since a UCEP member also serves on the UCDC Academic Advisory Council, meeting with that group several times a year and reporting back to UCEP. Past updates from the UCEP representative to our committee have been exceptionally enthusiastic and effusive regarding the program.

UCEP thanks the UCDC leadership team for providing a very thorough report and commends UCDC for writing a comprehensive self-evaluation. We recognize that this was a process UCDC was largely unpracticed in, and we understand how review reports can be very time-consuming. Overall the committee was extremely impressed with the UCDC program. Although there are many study-abroad programs, most undergraduates across the country never have the opportunity for an immersive experience in the Nation's capital. UCDC is a novel and vibrant educational experience that should be strongly supported by the UC system.

Members of UCEP raised a few minor concerns that do not diminish the value of this program. It was difficult to assess students' views of individual courses given the data submitted. However, UCEP read the present report alongside a self study that was several years old and believes that UCDC is on a steady path of growth and positive impact on students' professional development. In the future, UCEP recommends adhering to its template closely, to ensure that all necessary information is included in a single report. We encourage UCDC to look at this as an opportunity to make a strong case for support and funding for growth, continued strength, and future development.

UCDC reports four interrelated challenges: recruitment, student preparation, affordability, and course articulation. It articulates need for a staff member on each campus whose primary responsibility is to recruit and prepare students for participation in UCDC; a compensated faculty director on each campus who can guide students; and clear

messaging among students, campus representatives, and UCDC. Additional needs include assurances of course articulation with each campus and a scholarship fund to help students with airfare.

UCEP recommends the following:

- 1) UCDC leadership should explore the budgetary challenges and possibilities necessary involved in ensuring that all campus coordinators are appointed with at least a 0.5 FTE. This is critical for the coordinators at UCSD, UC Merced, and UCSC and would bring them into parity with the other campuses. Moreover, this could help to ensure that all student slots are utilized.
- 2) UCDC leadership should regularize communication with campus coordinators and faculty advisors to ensure alignment in messaging, requirements for admission, and preparation for life in Washington, D.C.
- 3) UCDC leadership should explore fund-raising opportunities to endow a scholarship program for students who need financial assistance beyond their financial aid packages.
- 4) UCDC leadership should explore the possibility of creating course listings at each campus if needed, specifically to ensure that students' work in DC is articulated at their home campuses.
- 5) We encourage efforts to reach out to Humanities and Arts students. While it is clear that STEM and Political Science students make up over half the body, the Capitol offers rich potential for Sociology, Humanities and the Arts.
- 6) We applaud UCDC's efforts to recruit faculty from all campuses, and encourage UCOP to prioritize this across the 10 Campuses, perhaps incentivizing faculty with course relief or research support.

Overall, members of UCEP were extremely impressed with the UCDC program and we look forward to it's continued growth as a Systemwide resource for UC students. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Cocco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Cocco, Chair
UCEP

cc: Chair Steintrager
Director Osorio-O'Dea
Executive Director Lin