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Mary Gauvain
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Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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January 28, 2021

MICHAEL T. BROWN
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ACADEMIC SENATE DIVISION CHAIRS

Re: Systemwide Senate Review of Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Provost Brown and Colleagues:

At its December 2020 meeting, the Academic Council reviewed comments from Senate divisions and systemwide committees to the report of the Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force[1], which examines the implications of possible full-time, remote online, undergraduate degree programs at UC. Nine Academic Senate divisions and six systemwide committees (BOARS, CCGA, UCEP, UCPB, UCFW, and UCORP) submitted comments, which are attached for your reference. Below I summarize a few of the common themes that emerged in the comments and Council discussion and propose some possible next steps.

I asked reviewers to focus on three options for fully remote online degrees discussed in the report:

1. (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs;
2. (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that they meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
3. (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy equivalent UC coursework expectations, but not necessarily equivalent out-of-classroom opportunities

The systemwide review revealed a diversity of faculty views about fully online undergraduate degrees. Some faculty and divisions opposed online degrees entirely; a small number were strongly in favor; and a slight majority expressed cautious support for proceeding with experiments around "Option 2". Many members of the faculty are concerned that fully remote online degrees could erode UC quality and build a two-tier system that provides a "second class degree" to certain students. Faculty observed that the in-person learning experience benefits most

[1] https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/underreview/mg-senate-review-online-degree-task-force-report.pdf

UC students educationally and socially, and that many first-generation and underrepresented students tend to perform better in this setting. However, other faculty observed that online degree programs could extend educational access, particularly to students who would otherwise be unable to attend UC in person, and they asked the Senate to support faculty who may want to initiate pilots of quality online degree programs. Faculty also point out that the three options presented in the report may be too limiting, given that learning goals and pedagogical aims should guide the development of any degree program.

Academic Council members observed that the report is outdated given the rapid shift to online learning during the pandemic. They suggested that UC wait for data on educational outcomes from what amounts to an "unplanned experiment" in online teaching and learning currently underway nationally. It is worth noting that the 2020 survey[2] UCEP and the UC Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning administered to students and faculty about their experiences with remote instruction during the Covid-19 crisis found that a majority were dissatisfied with online education. The Council recognizes that there are features of the current remote experience that depart from any planned development of online courses. However, Council members emphasized that the faculty's current use of online teaching and learning technology, both in their hybrid courses and in classrooms and laboratories as part of their in-person engagement with students, will provide valuable information as we move forward in developing any online courses or programs.

Moving forward, the Council believes it is important to develop a clear definition of a "UC quality degree," to guide further discussions about online courses and especially fully online degrees. The Council feels it would be particularly important for the definition of quality to be considered in the context of UC's status as a Research I University that delivers research-based teaching and provides research opportunities to undergraduates and trains graduate students in a wide range of disciplines and professions.

The Council understands that some administrators see online degree programs as a promising and inexpensive way to increase revenues as well as access. However, the research available to the Senate and detailed substantially in the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force report shows that quality online courses are very costly to develop and to run; they will not save the University money. It is clear that high-quality online programs would require substantial investments in infrastructure, in faculty and staff to implement and maintain program content, in new services to ensure the success of at-risk students, and in innovative ways to protect the intellectual content of UC courses. The impact on faculty teaching workload and other obligations central to the University's core missions also requires serious investigation. The academic personnel who teach these courses and the role of these courses in the curricula, especially in relation to major and general education requirements, also need further study.

Faculty reviewers also raised questions about the extent of campus autonomy to develop online degrees and the role and desirability of systemwide oversight. Council members observed that technology would allow multiple campuses to offer a joint online degree. They expressed support for campus autonomy in principle, but also stressed the potential for harmful competition between campuses and also within a campus between the face-to-face and online versions of a

[2] https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/kkb-division-chairs-instructor-survey-results.pdf

course or program. Details and agreements regarding course credit and the award of degrees will also need to be developed. They felt that systemwide guidance and coordination could help establish baseline quality rubrics and help prevent departments and campuses from undermining each other.

In terms of next steps, the Academic Council intends to devote future time to these issues and the topic of UC quality, and it encourages Senate divisions to use "Option 2" (UC-quality remote degrees) as a platform to consider the conditions that would support quality online degrees.

We welcome further input and advice on next steps from the divisions. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council
Chief of Staff to the Provost Peterson
Senate Directors
Executive Director Baxter

ACADEMIC SENATE
BERKELEY
320 STEPHENS HALL
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December 10, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: Berkeley Comments on the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Chair Gauvain,

On Monday, November 30th the Berkeley Divisional Council (DIVCO) discussed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degrees Task Force. The topic elicited strong views, as evidenced by the fact that seven of our committees chose to comment in writing. Our robust discussion was informed by reports from the Committee on Admissions, Enrollment & Preparatory Education (AEPE); Committee on Budget & Interdepartmental Relations (BIR); Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI); Committee on Research (COR); Committee on Teaching (COT); Committee on Diversity, Equity & Campus Climate (DECC); and Undergraduate Council (UGC), all of which are appended here in their entirety. The reports do not speak all in one voice. Indeed, there was considerable diversity of opinion on many aspects of the report. However, over the course of a long discussion, we forged some common ground, which serves as the basis of this memo.

We devoted considerable time to exploring the tension between two values. On the one hand, we cherish the unity of the UC system, and strongly value our shared excellence. We would hope that our sister campuses would prevent us from doing something that was inconsistent with UC quality. At the same time, we believe in trusting our colleagues to know how best to teach their own material to their own students, even if that means that different campuses, departments, or programs enact our shared excellence in different ways. We would hope that our sister campuses would give us the space and freedom to pursue great ideas in the way we think best. Overall, the Berkeley DIVCO does not want to stand in the way of our colleagues teaching in the way they think best, but we also want to retain a strong sense of shared mission and identity, and we recognize that these two values sometimes sit awkwardly together.

The meeting began with only one point of firm agreement: that degrees should continue to be awarded by specific campuses and not by UCOP. While there is considerable room for greater coordination and cooperation among the campuses, Berkeley DIVCO members feel strongly that part of the value of a UC degree is the fact that a specific group of faculty collaboratively forge the character of the major program of study, and it is prohibitively complex for a systemwide faculty body to do that work.

Over the course of conversation another key point of consensus emerged. The taskforce report is an impressive piece of work, and we are grateful for the thoughtful work that our colleagues committed to it. However, the Berkeley Division Council thinks that the report is organized around a faulty premise. We should not begin by deciding a priori which of the three options (no online-only degrees, online-only degrees must be equivalent to on-campus degrees, or high-quality online degrees that are not equivalent to on-campus degrees) UC as a whole should pursue. Instead, the core question should be about how best to offer specific educational material — recognizing that a digital strategy that makes sense in one discipline on one campus may be entirely inapplicable elsewhere. Rather than setting an outer envelope for the entire UC system, we advocate encouraging campus-based programs to develop out from the core of applying the principles of UC pedagogical quality in their specific content areas.

Berkeley DIVCO members also felt that we should not now select any of the three options presented in the report because the report was largely completed before the current massive experiment in remote- and online teaching. We are learning so much about how to teach well online, what works and does not work well, student reactions to online teaching, and so on. For example, a year ago it made sense to think about the fraction of *classes* that were online or mostly online, whereas today we think about classes *themselves* as potentially profoundly hybrid or dual-modality: the category of "online class" itself is partially dissolving. The pre-pandemic scholarly research on remote instruction--which the task force summarized in such excellent detail--was limited both in quantity and quality: the literature review does not include any studies that could be taken as reasonably applicable to the case at hand. This is a further reason to wait for studies of the current unplanned experiment before taking any action like setting an outer envelope. It would be unfortunate to make a substantive decision on the future of online education without drawing the lessons from our current unplanned experiments.

The Berkeley Divisional Council also wishes to underline two specific concerns about expanding online instruction. We are deeply concerned about the risk of creating a second tier of faculty or a second tier of students that would be potentially engaged only with online forms of instruction. Regardless of how we deploy online education going forward, it will be important to attend to questions of equity and access. Second, we emphasize that the financial implications of online education remain unclear, as the costs of instruction do not automatically fall when instruction moves online, while there are large additional expenses associated with mounting high-quality online instruction. While in the long run there may be substantial capital savings associated with online education that could reduce the total cost per student, the specific instructional costs are not meaningfully lower than for in-person instruction. We urge the systemwide Senate to resist the widespread tendency to associate online instruction with cost savings. (One DIVCO member described this as a "pernicious piece of neoliberal nonsense", reminding me of why I love meetings with Berkeley faculty.)

Finally, we do see considerable promise in online and hybrid education, and hope that units across the system with interest and expertise in online instruction will develop and evaluate a diverse range of pilots in this area. We need to develop an approach to online education that promotes equity and access, builds on the best practices identified through careful analysis of the many natural experiments forced by pandemic instruction, and enhances rather than undermines our UC standards and values.

Thank you for opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson-Hanks
Professor of Demography and Sociology
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Enclosures

cc: Ronald Cohen, Vice Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Sara McMains, Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment & Preparatory Education
Leslie Kurke, Chair, Committee on Budget & Interdepartmental Relation
Estelle Tarica, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Dennis Levi, Chair, Committee on Research
Glynda Hull, Chair, Committee on Teaching
Lok Siu, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity & Campus Climate
Richard Kern, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Sumei Quiggle, Associate Director staffing Undergraduate Council
William Lynch, Manager, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Courtney MacIntyre, Senate Analyst, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Rachel Marias Dezendorf, Senate Analyst, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Deborah Dobin, Senate Analyst, Committee on Research
Linda Corley, Senate Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity & Campus Climate

ACADEMIC SENATE
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November 23, 2020

JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Subject: AEPE comments on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair Johnson-Hanks,

The Academic Senate Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) was asked to provide comments on the systemwide Academic Council Online Degree Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. On Friday, November 20, 2020, AEPE discussed the report.

AEPE discussed the following section called "Admissions to fully remote degree programs" (page 4 of the report).

> If fully remote degree programs were offered, how might admissions to such programs operate, and how would proposed admissions processes impact students at the UC? Because students who currently have difficulty accessing a UC campus are also likely to be those students who, on average, face the biggest challenges in a remote learning ecosystem, we conclude that it would be difficult to identify students who would both choose a fully remote degree program and also succeed. More generally, the task force felt that remote programs may end up targeting people whose life circumstances prevent them from realizing the full set of opportunities afforded by the UC, thus creating a "second class" of students who might prefer to be on campus but who can only participate in remote-only degree programs.

AEPE agreed with many concerns raised in the report, and discussed concerns such as how student applicants may not have the sufficient resources required for an online degree program, and creating a "second-class" degree compared to face-to-face (F2F). AEPE was also wary about how evaluating admissions to such programs would affect *current* undergraduate admissions operations. The Committee's concerns included the necessity of designing and maintaining a whole separate admissions program requiring training, oversight, and analysis of student outcomes. They agreed with the reports' conclusion on p. 28 that "designing an admissions process that would allow the UC to identify people who would flourish with remote learning would be challenging." They anticipated that remote degree programs could lead to a possible large increase in applications, without the necessary resources to evaluate them. They agreed with the report's recommendation on p. 44 that "to switch into a F2F program, a student in a remote degree program would need to apply to a UC campus through the existing admissions process for F2F degrees."

However, AEPE is opposed to any centralized admissions to any undergraduate online degree program in a misguided attempt to create "efficiency" (p. 37). AEPE strongly believes admissions needs to remain the purview of individual campuses.

In the same spirit, the Committee does not support a policy that would prevent other UC campuses that might wish to pursue exploring online undergraduate degree programs under options 2 or 3. However, these programs must have sufficient support systems (such as faculty willing to have more office hours for students to engage, robust student advising, networking opportunities, etc.), and would require a huge additional investment. AEPE does not tend to support fully online undergraduate degree programs at the Berkeley campus at this time, so of the options given would choose option 1 for Berkeley (as long as this doesn't preclude other campuses from making a different choice if they wish). In addition, AEPE emphasized putting resources into allowing students from diverse backgrounds to have greater/more attainable access to a quality face-to-face UC education rather than putting these resources into the creation of online degree programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sara McMains
Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

University of California, Berkeley

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND
INTERDEPARTMENTAL RELATIONS

November 19, 2020

CHAIR JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Task Force on Online Undergraduate Education

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the report from the Task Force on Online Undergraduate Education. Following standard practice, we limit our comments to issues raised by the proposal that are within our purview—that is to say, questions related to faculty hiring, review, and compensation, as well as issues of teaching and its evaluation.

The report analyzes strengths and weaknesses of three different possible policies regarding fully remote undergraduate degree programs. Policy 1 (UC Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote programs. Policy 2 (UC Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of fully remote programs, but subject to demanding constraints to ensure that ordinary expectations for a UC degree were satisfied. Policy 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow for the creation of fully remote programs in which the courses taught would be comparable in content and rigor to those in face-to-face courses, but in which other expectations for a UC degree program, for example the development of interpersonal skills contributing to success through collaboration, or the provision of research opportunities closely mentored by UC faculty, would not be met.

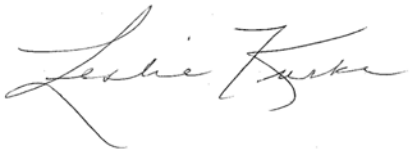
We wish to draw attention to three potential sources of concern regarding Policy 2 and Policy 3. One source of concern is indicated on page 45 of the Report in connection with Policy 3. The task force points out that it is an "immutable requirement" of Policy 3 that the courses in the remote programs must be taught by the same faculty who teach face-to-face courses, as opposed to faculty hired specifically for remote teaching; without this requirement, courses taught in the remote programs will not have the same "content, rigor, and overall quality" as the courses in face-to-face programs. However, the task force notes that this may be difficult to achieve in practice, given that "senior faculty may be less inclined to reimagine their courses in online form." They warn against a "bias" whereby teaching duties in the remote programs would be weighted towards less senior faculty (as was the case in the UCI Business School proposal for a fully remote transfer degree), and also raise the possibility that, if this bias were not corrected, ladder-rank professors would primarily be involved in face-to-face teaching and Lecturers with (Potential) Security of Employment in online classes. The task force notes that this situation would be problematic because it would reduce students' chances to take classes with established leaders in their fields. We note in addition that it would have a distorting effect on the distribution of teaching responsibilities within departments or other units and could lead to the undermining of morale among faculty who felt pressed into remote rather than face-to-face teaching, and ultimately to a two-tiered hierarchy of faculty. We therefore agree with the Task

Force's observation that "successfully implementing an instruction-only remote degree program would require that a department has substantial buy-in from faculty at all levels," adding that this is not only to ensure that "students have exposure to the full scope of expertise of the UC faculty," but also to ensure equitable distribution of teaching responsibilities among faculty at different levels and of different statuses.

A second source of concern stems from the difficulty and expense of updating and revising online courses. Fully remote programs, whether under Policy 2 or Policy 3, would require a large suite of online courses, but, as the Task Force notes, "the up-front cost of producing online content is high in terms of resources and time, and updating a course year-after-year is prohibitively costly (e.g., even extremely well-resourced programs, such as the School of Business at UCI, only allow a maximum of 10% of the online content to be updated annually)" (p. 4; more detail is given on p. 29). We are particularly concerned about the prospect that considerations of cost could interfere with faculty members' ability to revise their courses from year to year. Maintaining standards of teaching excellence requires faculty not only to update courses as their fields develop, but also to restructure their courses and to revise course content and presentation in response to feedback received on their teaching (for example, narrative comments on student evaluations, or student performance on assignments). We think it would be damaging not only to students' learning, but also to faculty members' attempts to maintain and improve the quality of their teaching, if the requirements of increased online teaching were to impose constraints on modifying courses from year to year. There would be corresponding difficulties associated with the equitable review of faculty performance in teaching, since faculty teaching a larger proportion of online courses would have less opportunity to improve their teaching performance in response to reviewers' comments than those who were primarily teaching face-to-face.

A third source of concern relates to the Task Force's claim that "[a]doption of instruction-only remote degree programs [i.e., programs under Policy 3] would... necessitate: [a]dditional UC faculty FTEs to avoid increasing class sizes" (p. 31). To the extent that remote degree programs would indeed demand more faculty FTE than face-to-face programs, this would create problems for FTE allocation. In particular, it would raise a question of how to assign the required FTE to units offering remote programs without disadvantaging those units which offered primarily face-to-face instruction.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to comment on this report.



Leslie Kurke
Chair

LK/wl

ACADEMIC SENATE
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November 19, 2020

PROFESSOR JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
Chair, 2020-20201 Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: COCI's Comments on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report of the UCEP Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) discussed the report at its meeting of November 13, 2020. Below I detail our responses to each of the three policy options put forward in the report.

Policy 1: UC Quality On-Campus Degree
This is currently the status-quo, with one exception: effective Fall 2020, COCI removed the requirement that online courses be required to so-designate with a course prefix (Berkeley used the "W" prefix; the report suggests using "R"). The thinking behind COCI's decision was that there is no simple binary between "online" and "in-person" instruction. Rather, any given course may involve a range of options that can involve different online and in-person components. Policy 1 would require us to return to designating online courses with a prefix, i.e. it would require us to return to the simple binary approach that we find insufficient to account for the complexity of the evolving instructional environment.

Policy 2: UC Quality Remote Degree
Members found that the policy rests on vague expectations. Example: "the expectation is that only a small number of programs would be delivered *fully* remotely" (original emphasis). What is a "small number"? What are the expectations behind that statement? Is this a baby-step towards fully-online, i.e. how different is policy #2 from policy #3? In sum, Policy 2 is unclear.

Policy 3: Instruction-Only Remote Degree
Members expressed reservations about this option because it suggests that a UC education can be equated to "delivery of instruction." This would project a false impression about what we consider important. This policy option looks similar to UC Extension.

Additional points and questions

- The problem of academic dishonesty in online instruction will need to be resolved before any online degree program can be successfully implemented.

- COCI agrees with the report about the need to avoid remote degrees taught by a separate set of faculty. Under options 2 and 3, this is very likely what would happen. The online degree programs will almost certainly include very large courses that need constant,

specialized support by instructors who are consistently dedicated to these courses; these will be full-time jobs that will inevitably go to lecturers or teaching faculty.

- COCI agrees with the report that "it would be very costly to offer online UC undergraduate degree programs at scale, and that lower cost alternatives would subject students to financial risk, etc." Members ask, how will UC campuses fund these programs?

- On a related note, Options 2 and 3 may result in diminishing the quality of in-person education if it involves splitting existing faculty resources into in-person and online instruction.

- How would Options 2 and 3 guarantee online course options from departments *outside* of the programs offering online degrees? In other words, if students are expecting their coursework to be conducted primarily if not entirely online, how will campuses provide them with the wide range of course options, across diverse disciplines and fields, that are characteristic of a UC education?

Sincerely,

Estelle Tarica, Chair
Committee on Courses of Instruction

ACADEMIC SENATE
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November 19, 2020

PROFESSOR JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: COR comments on Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

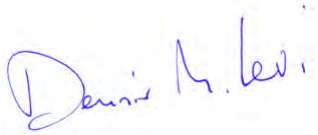
At its November 18th meeting, COR discussed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. COR requested that it be able to review the report, since UCORP had reviewed it and drafted comments, asking for additional input from each campus' Committee on Research. COR believes that there is significant demand from undergraduates for research experiences and would want to ensure that any online degree provide some opportunity for that.

UCORP members supported Options 1 and 2, for a UC-Quality On-campus Degree (hybrid) and a fully online UC-Quality Remote Degree; they were uncomfortable with Option 3, Instruction-Only Remote Degree, as it would not maintain UC's role—and brand—as a premier research university. COR members did not all agree with that; some felt that Option 3 would be detrimental to UC while others suggested that, in some circumstances for some departments, Option 3 might be a viable alternative.

From the purely research perspective, COR members felt that undergraduate research could be carried out most fully in Option 1. Within Options 2 and 3, research could be carried out in at least some disciplines, although not likely in the physical or biological sciences.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

With best regards,



Dennis Levi, Chair
Committee on Research

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COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
ACADEMIC SENATE

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

November 23, 2020

TO: Berkeley Divisional Council
FROM: Committee on Teaching
RE: Response to Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Thank you for the opportunity to review the report from the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force and the three policy options that it provided. COT discussed these options at its meeting on November 10, 2020 and concluded that Option 2 and Option 3 merit further consideration.

While appreciating the concerns raised in Option 1 about preserving the quality of a traditional UC degree, COT felt that this option was too restrictive. Remote instruction has certainly revealed the limitations and challenges of teaching online, but we would not want to prohibit a fully remote degree in all circumstances or prescribe the percentage of online units that can be earned in a major or in total. As the technologies for remote teaching continue to develop, we expect that some of the current limitations around teaching remotely will diminish. We also expect that teaching modalities will continue to evolve, more rapidly now than before, given the faculty's exposure to some of the potential affordances of remote instruction. We understand that prescribing a percentage of major units and total units that must be taken in person would help to prevent programs from converting to remote instruction without campus oversight. However, such oversight could presumably be provided instead through Academic Senate committees and through departmental reviews, rather than through systemwide monitoring (as suggested in Appendix I). The percentage of major units and total units to be taken remotely or in person might reasonably vary discipline to discipline and college to college.

COT appreciated the emphasis in Option 2 on insuring that a remote degree meets all of the expectations for a high-quality UC degree. In Option 3 we support the aspiration of making a UC degree more accessible to more Californians, and the provision that instructors be UC faculty and not a separate teaching force hired as part-time adjuncts. We also appreciated the economic analysis that showed that the significant investment required to design quality online education. For both Option 2 and 3 there was a strong preference for a campus-based rather than centralized organization. For both Option 2 and 3, but more strongly for Option 3, COT was concerned that an online degree, even carefully designed, might be perceived as a second-rate degree and might thereby ultimately disadvantage students who enroll, creating a two-tiered system. Such unintended consequences could undo our work on diversity and inclusion, with more affluent students attending face-to-face and more students of color getting online degrees.

Glynda A. Hull, Chair
Committee on Teaching

ACADEMIC SENATE
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November 30, 2020

PROFESSOR JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
Chair, 2020-2021 Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: DECC's Comments on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate (DECC) discussed the "Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report" over the course of two monthly meetings. Members shared a range of opinions and raised a number of questions and concerns. Factors such as disciplinary differences and disparate experiences with online degree programs (ranging from those who are in units that already offer online MA degree programs to those who have little to no exposure) contributed to the richness of our deliberation. The committee recognizes the potential gains of online undergraduate degree programs, such as the possibility of broadening access to students who face barriers to obtaining on-campus degrees, providing greater flexibility to students who work full-time, and creating alternative learning environments that may be better suited for some students. However, the committee did not find satisfactory any of the three proposed policy options.

Below is a list of items that the committee wants to highlight for further consideration.

1) Some of the data and research used in developing this Task Force Report are quite limited and old (8-10 years), and it would be useful to have more updated research and research that is deeper and broader in scope to help further clarify the pros and cons of online undergraduate degree programs, including pedagogical concerns, online learning environments, student access issues, financial costs, technology capabilities, etc.

2) As the report suggests, the financial cost of maintaining these online degree programs include not only the initial course development and the periodic updating of course content, but also the general infrastructure needed for online tutoring, advisement, and other forms of student and faculty support. How will campuses address the financial costs of creating and maintaining online undergraduate degree programs? How will this affect existing inequities, financial and otherwise, among the UC campuses?

3) Related to #2 is the question of how an uneven development of online degree programs may create and/or exacerbate existing inequities among departments and schools/colleges. How will campuses address these potential inequities? How can campuses ensure an equitable distribution of resources to support the successful development and maintenance of each unit's online degree program?

4) The report briefly mentions a UC systemwide model for managing online undergraduate degree programs, and the committee would like a more thorough exploration and assessment of such a model, one that grants a UC online degree rather than a campus-specific degree. Such a model offers several advantages, including broadened access to faculty across all the UCs, minimizing redundancy of online degrees and inconsistencies in their requirements, eliminating the inefficiency of building separate support infrastructures on all the UC campuses, centralizing oversight and quality control of online degrees, and potentially mitigating inequities within and among campuses.

5) The issue of cheating remains a concern for online coursework. The committee hopes that this issue receives sufficient attention and that faculty will be given the guidance and support needed to address this when participating in online degree programs.

6) Any policy for online undergraduate degree programs should take into consideration its effects on the transfer student population, whose campus experience is already greatly diminished. Will online degree programs accept transfer students? How can online degree programs help socially integrate transfer students?

7) Finally, there is the question of student financial aid and how we can ensure equal access to online undergraduate degree programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important and complex issue.

Sincerely,

Lok Siu
Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate

LS/lc

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 6, 2020

PROFESSOR JENNIFER JOHNSON-HANKS
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: UGC comments on Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair Johnson-Hanks,

UGC was asked to comment on policy options proposed by the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force in its July 2020 report. At its meeting on November 4, UGC discussed these proposed options:

- Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least 1/3 of all major units and also 1/3 of total units to be earned in non-remote courses.
- Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree.
- Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

UGC members also discussed these questions provided by UCEP regarding these options:

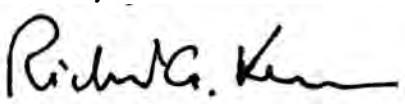
1. Which of the three options above is your top preference and what is your reasoning for selecting this option?
2. What are characteristics that are unique to learning in an on-campus learning environment that can or cannot be replicated to online/remote learning?
3. Do you support the implementation of a totally online/remote learning degree (yes/no/uncertain) for your campus?

The Committee's discussion from the start emphasized the key importance of campus autonomy in developing innovative materials, courses, and perhaps degree programs. Committee members resisted choosing among the three proposed options, with a consensus that the three options were too constraining, "not fully baked," and none was considered appealing as a total plan. Committee members expressed strong opinion that campus experimentation, and bottom-up

development by faculty, will yield better results than a top-down, *a priori* plan developed systemwide. Interest was expressed above all for *hybrid* degree programs that would combine online and campus-based work toward a degree. Some members acknowledged the importance of expanding access to UC educational programs via online degree programs, but others countered that such students are paying a premium for an inferior educational experience (and thus a two-tiered system is created).

This led to discussion of the second question above, about on-campus learning, to which members responded that a significant dimension of the on-campus experience is an acculturation process, in which students learn how to think by being with other people (who hail from different backgrounds, some from different countries). The social capital students accrue from studying at UC derives not just from disciplinary content knowledge but also from their experience of living with, interacting with, learning with, and playing with diverse gifted individuals. This is especially true for international students, for whom experience of living in the US for several years is often what gives them an edge on the job market when they return to their home country. Another limitation of online programs vis-à-vis on-campus programs has to do with research opportunities. This varies across disciplines, but in some disciplines, campus infrastructure and team interaction are essential for quality research experiences.

Sincerely,



Richard G. Kern
Chair, Undergraduate Council

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

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December 9, 2020

Mary Gauvain
Chair, Academic Council

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Mary,

The report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Ten committees responded: Admissions and Enrollment (A&E), Graduate Council (GC), Planning and Budget (CPB), Undergraduate Council (UGC), and the Faculty Executive Committees of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), the College of Biological Sciences (CBS), the Graduate School of Management (GSM), the School of Education (SOE), the School of Law (LAW), and the School of Nursing (SON).

Much like members of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force, Davis Division committees expressed a range of support and concerns for the three policy options. Overall, committees support Options 1 and 2, but none expressed explicit support for Option 3 in its current iteration.

Policy Option 1: UC Quality On-Campus Degree
A&E, GC, CAES, and CBS expressed the most support for Option 1. A&E argues that the "value-added of a UC degree is tied to UC's research-centered focus and excellence." Remote degree options could inhibit laboratory and other hands-on experiences central to many UC programs and important for students' employability. CBS expressed support for Option 1 but cautions that permitting two-thirds of courses to be taken online could be too high. Likewise, GC notes that the optimal proportion of online courses for Option 1 likely differs by discipline.

Policy Option 2: UC Quality Remote Degree
GSM and SON expressed the most support for Option 2. GSM recently launched a remote MBA program and has found that this program offers more accessibility to students who cannot, for various reasons, relocate to and attend traditional on-campus programs. Several committees noted that this could be a potential benefit of remote degrees.

GSM has also found that for its remote MBA program, it is "indispensable to maintain the same quality as the existing MBA degree and ensure that it leads to an identical degree. Maintaining high-quality online programs ensures that the UC brand is not diluted in any way." To maintain this high-quality programming, GSM notes that quality online education is very expensive to produce, as it requires substantial investment in initial course development and requires smaller class sizes in

synchronous sessions. Nearly every committee with reservations about Option 2 expressed concerns about the costs required for online education, including startup costs, pedagogical training for faculty, and student support and success resources (especially for students from low-income or first-generation backgrounds). GSM's experience confirms these concerns and realities. Thus, Option 2 would likely require explicit investment from the State and funding commitments from university leaders.

GC, CAES, and SOE note that shifts toward online instruction could also have consequences for prospective and enrolled graduate students. Undergraduate students who spend less or no time on campus could reduce participation in research, leaving students less prepared and competitive for graduate education. In a fully remote environment, new graduate students might interact less with experienced teaching assistants, leading to decreased professional development. Online undergraduate instruction could also impact funding and resources available for enrolled graduate students.

Committees expressed additional items of concern and questions requiring further research:

- How will the different UC campuses contribute to online degrees?
- The proposal is light on delivery specifics, such as involvement of commercial technology partners. Online content should be determined and owned by UC, and UC should capture its full value.
- It might be difficult to maintain current standards of academic integrity. At the very least, a reliable solution for remote proctoring would be needed. As discovered in our current emergency remote instruction environment, privacy and access are significant issues with remote proctored exams.
- Online programs should be designed in a way that permit and require rigorous, research-based evaluation of their effectiveness.
- There would need to be sufficient availability of online courses to satisfy General Education requirements.
- GSM has proposed an alternative policy option that would "take students from community college graduates in the vicinity of a given UC campus and allow them to complete a 2-year online program in a major of their choice to obtain a bachelor's degree from the UC system. Proximity to the campus means that it is easier and less costly for students to visit the campus for on-premise activities, if they so choose." GSM's full comments are enclosed.

Policy Option 3: Instruction-Only Remote Degree

The concerns expressed about Option 2—namely, maintaining high-quality programming when faced with high operational costs—equally apply to Option 3. Moreover, Option 3 has the potential to further limit peer-to-peer bonding and hands-on, experiential learning opportunities central to many UC disciplines. Designating such a degree as "online" could also suggest that learning outcomes are different for online students, thus diluting the value of a UC education and the UC brand. In its current iteration, Option 3 risks producing programs that are not of high enough quality and breadth to meet UC educational standards.

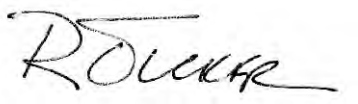
Conclusion

The Davis Division appreciates the Task Force's initial work to assess the feasibility and desirability of offering remote degree programs at UC. It is evident that discussions will need to continue, and it is possible that the variance in teaching and learning methods across disciplines might complicate a universal policy adoption. Nevertheless, we think it is important to continue discussing how to reduce barriers and increase access to UC degree programs for non-traditional students.

To close, the Davis Division recommends, as suggested by CAES, that the Task Force conduct a full lifecycle analysis of the impacts of potential online degree policies. Such analysis should include at minimum the impacts on educational quality, student career objectives, current and future faculty, and the UC institutional brand.

The Davis Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Richard P. Tucker, Ph.D.
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
University of California, Davis

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

c: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

UCDAVIS: ACADEFMIC SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

November 20, 2020

Richard Tucker, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate

RE: Systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Professor Tucker,

The Committee on Admission and Enrollment (CAE) agrees with the task force's sentiment that the value-added of a UC degree is tied to the UC's research-centered focus and excellence. For this reason, the members of CAE think UC should continue to prioritize educational opportunities that involve a direct connection to UC campus faculty and the research mission. This implies a continuation of the current status of campus degrees, or at most the adoption of online option1 as envisioned by the task force.

Since high-quality online programs are expensive, we do not support an expansion of online instructional degrees under any of the three options, unless the state provides concrete and credible funding promises in advance. Substantial funding is essential for the creation of high-quality courses. After any course is launched, lecture time might be reduced and large lecture halls would not be required (if proctoring issues are resolved). However, course delivery will still require faculty and teaching assistants to meet with students in office hours, the provision of discussion sections, and exam proctoring and grading. Since none of these substantial instructional costs will be reduced in online courses, online programs will provide meager scale efficiencies at most. Further, if any online programs are launched, they need to also be accompanied by ongoing support and advising of off-campus students that will ensure degree success and value. Our group is very concerned that the creation of a new online program, if insufficiently funded, will have a negative impact on the sustainability of our current campus operations and educational offerings.

Funding concerns also affected our group's views of options 2 and 3. While we can see how online programs might be attractive to some non-traditional students, we are concerned about student support especially for students from low-income or first-generation backgrounds. These students appear to be experiencing the greatest struggles with the move to remote coursework under COVID-19. These student groups have also had the least positive experiences with online learning offered by other universities. Absent major expenditure and advising support for these students, options 2 and 3 risk a widening of educational disparities and disadvantage.

Although the proposal is light on delivery specifics, our committee also noted concerns about the involvement of any commercial technology partners. First, UC deserves to capture the full value of the UC reputation in any long-term contract it joins. Second, it is important that any online content is determined by UC, and is not subject to intervention by outside technology providers.

Finally, on the admissions dimension our committee discussed uncertainty surrounding student demand post-COVID, interacted with nationally declining birth rates in the 2000s. Any consideration of new programming will require a serious evaluation of the nature and level of student demand.

Regards,

Deborah Swenson, Chair
Committee on Admissions and Enrollment

UCDAVIS: ACADEMIC SENATE
GRADUATE COUNCIL COMMITTEE

November 20, 2020

Richard Tucker
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

RE: System wide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Professor Tucker,

Graduate Council completed the review of the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. Graduate Council found the review informative and detailed. In response to the 3 policies evaluated in the review, members expressed a variety of opinions. Most members recognized that on-line courses will continue to have an important role in the delivery of undergraduate instruction after Covid-19, and see the potential for on-line instruction to increase access to UC education. However, members also voiced reservations that Policy 2 and Policy 3 might create undergraduate degree programs that do not meet the high standards of a UC undergraduate education (e.g., because of limited or no access to campus resources and opportunities, potential for reduced oversight on quality and rigor, use of inadequate assessment tools). Several members also recognized that Policy 1 may be extended to include a higher proportion of on-line courses thereby increasing flexibility for the students, but that the optimal proportion of on-line courses will likely differ depending on the discipline.

Graduate Council wishes to highlight the importance of considering the consequences of the expansion of online undergraduate instruction for graduate education. These consequences were not evaluated in the report. A significant shift towards on-line instruction has the potential to transform access, teaching, and funding practices for graduate students in the UC system. It is paramount to evaluate the impact of online undergraduate instruction or degrees for prospective graduate students and for enrolled graduate students, as described below:

1) *Prospective Graduate Students*. Both Policy 2 and Policy 3 would require students to spend less or no time on campus thereby reducing or eliminating undergraduate students' exposure to campus, including participation in research. As a result, undergraduate students may be less prepared and/or less competitive for graduate education. We recommend that the consequences of online degrees for access to graduate education be evaluated.

2) *Enrolled Graduate Students.* Both Policy 2 and Policy 3 might result in changes in quality of graduate education as well as availability of funding for graduate students. We recommend that the consequences of online instruction and degrees for enrolled graduate students be evaluated, including potential disadvantages in the quality of the experience, reduction of resources and funding for graduate students who serve as Teaching Assistants for programs that deliver a substantial portion of their instruction on line.

Sincerely,

Dean Tantillo
Chair, Graduate Council Committee

UCDAVIS: ACADEMIC SENATE
COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND BUDGET

November 25, 2020

Richard Tucker
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) has reviewed and discussed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. Overall, CPB viewed this report as a good first step in examining the implications of online education. However, the committee agreed that this report did not comprehensively address how to develop high-quality online programs consistent with UC's rigorous standards. The committee therefore provides the following comments for consideration:

- While CPB considered the task force's discussion of three possible online options helpful (specifically the strengths and weaknesses each option presented), it would have been useful if the task force had also developed guiding principles to inform future efforts in this area. There is an opportunity for the UC system to be a bold leader in online degree programs going forward, even with the limitations of current research about online education. However, in doing so, online programs should be designed in a way that permits and requires rigorous research-based evaluation of their effectiveness.

- The report seems to greatly underestimate the time and cost of developing online courses. Creating partially or fully online degree programs will take considerable resources and will require the commitment and investment from university leaders. It is critical to get a better understanding of what the true costs may be. There are likely some good examples from UC campuses in the professional schools and fully online certificate programs that could provide better estimates of the time and financial investment required to develop high quality, online education.

- The pandemic has forced UC campuses to transition the majority of their courses from in-person to online. Consequently, there have been many lessons learned about what works and what does not in terms of online learning. For example, at UC Davis, the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) surveyed faculty and students after the Spring 2020 transition to remote learning and published those findings to help identify best practices. While the findings from this survey and others should be contextualized within the emergency circumstances under which they were conducted, they still present important insights that would have been useful to address in this report.

CPB appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

UC DAVIS: ACADEMIC SENATE
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

November 22, 2020

Richard Tucker
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

RE: Request for Consultation: RFC: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Richard:

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) reviewed the Request for Consultation (RFC) of the Systemwide Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. UGC began its discussion by clarifying the distinction between emergency remote instruction versus online courses. We presume that online undergraduate degrees would involve the latter, which are deliberately designed with online instruction in mind.

As you know, this is a most complex issue, with many competing interests and concerns. Overall, UGC is open to the general idea of online degrees as a mechanism to increase access for students who may not be able to afford residential fees or require greater flexibility in their academic schedules to accommodate work, caregiving, and other demands. The Systemwide Report was a fantastic resource to start discussion. However, without a great deal more information, UGC members did not feel there was enough clarity to express a preference between the three Options suggested by the Task Force, which were

(1) requiring at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses,
(2) supporting the formation of entirely remote degree programs that require programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree, or
(3) allowing fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework requirements as face-to-face programs but do not guarantee equivalent out-of-classroom opportunities.

UGC was united in rejecting the idea that non-Senate faculty be hired to staff online degree programs, advocating that online degrees be populated by the same academic faculty as current face-to-face degrees.

Issues Central to Program Quality

Current policy. UGC starts with the recognition that *under current policy, programs can in principle create fully online majors with no change in the Senate's education policies* simply by successfully submitting enough online versions of their courses through COCI such that all major requirements are available online. The Davis Division may wish to consider whether this leeway is intentional and helpful. If so, it may be useful to formalize it at the campus or system-wide level. If not, a clarifying policy would be necessary. We noted above that the distinction between "remote instruction" versus "online courses" lies in intentional design. The Senate may wish to consider whether the notion of "online degrees" also should require this type of intentional design, as opposed to a program where many courses have online versions.

Cross-unit collaboration. Second, UGC notes that even if a program offers all major requirements online and permits students to complete the entire major through online courses, there currently is no way to ensure online availability of courses with sufficient General Education (GE) designations to satisfy degree requirements. UGC was not aware that enough courses are offered online by other campuses through ILTI to satisfy the requirements through this avenue, either. Members are especially concerned that a wide enough range of GE courses not materialize for online programs, as the very philosophy of GE requirements is to encourage students to take a broad range of courses to become well-rounded scholars and citizens.

Assessment and in-person performance. Thus, the availability of online degrees would necessarily require cross-unit, cross-college, or cross-campus agreements, which are still a relatively new phenomenon on campus, with some very promising but mixed results. In this light, UGC's discussion can be understood as taking shape similar to discussions of any cross-college major, focusing on program quality, sustainability, and student interest, with two caveats:

Assessment. In the discussion of most cross-college majors, there is little hang-up over the issue of assessment. UGC was united in noting that for courses relying on proctored exams, at the moment there is absolutely no reliable way to conduct these online without running into disturbing issues of privacy and access. UGC appreciates the suggestions by education specialists that instructors can replace proctored exams by "more frequent, low-stakes" methods of assessment. However, it is for instructors to decide how to gauge mastery and in many fields there simply is no substitute for proctored exams to demonstrate mastery. In most discussions of remote instruction, online instruction, and online degrees, the problem with proctoring is acknowledged but quickly set aside. The problem cannot be set aside. This issue is fundamental to the quality and likely success of any online degree and must be dealt with first for any field which relies upon proctored exams.

In-person performance. Similarly, a number of fields rely on in-person labs, performances, or other activities requiring on-site work or participation to gain or ensure mastery. Somewhat related, there is ongoing uncertainty as to whether the GE Committee and UGC will formalize remote presentations as satisfying Oral Literacy requirements. This is not a huge stumbling block, as Oral Literacy credits are interchangeable with Writing Experience credits for this portion of the GE requirements. However, if the committees formalize that presentations for the Oral Literacy must be in person (as opposed to just live), this could limit students' options to satisfy GE requirements in online coursework.

UGC does not presume to identify for which fields the assessment and in-person work are germane. It does stridently argue that, while these issues should not hold up fields where they are not an obstacle, these problems not be set aside as something that can be figured out later for those where they are. Any serious effort to create online degree programs should be buttressed by a joint committee with both faculty and technology specialists to work out the proctoring problem. Any serious effort to create online degree programs must begin by acknowledging that some majors by necessity will always have to be hybrid online and face-to-face programs.

How the campus and university decide to handle assessment and in-person work for affected fields is absolutely fundamental to the quality of the programs and the prospects for students' employability

upon graduation. There is a danger that a half-baked online program could spread a negative impression on the job market after graduation, casting a shadow on the quality of UC Davis degrees more generally. This should be avoided at all costs through careful design and ample investment to address these issues.

Transcript Designations. UGC generally is in agreement than an online degree may not carry the same assurance of mastery in some disciplines that a face-to-face degree program would, so there is some logic to creating an "online" designation for the transcript. Again, the Senate may wish to consider whether degrees with this online designation should be intentionally designed as such, or whether the designation would be applied once some threshold proportion of credits toward the major or degree have been completed online.

Employment Prospects. Members are concerned about the possible impact of an "online" designation on the transcript on students' prospects for employment or graduate school. Program quality and assurance of program quality for prospective employers and graduate programs appears to be absolutely essential. How will the university approach shaping the public's perception of graduates from online degree programs? What sort of outreach to employers would the university undertake to make the quality of the degree program widely known?

Program Sustainability

Having discussed the requirements of what would constitute a UC-quality online degree—carefully designed programs with a broad range of supporting GE courses and innovative but realistic approaches to proctoring and work that may need to be completed in-person—UGC began to recognize that such a program would require a substantial investment by the campus or university. The Task Force Report noted that drop-out rates in some online degree programs are quite high, as maintaining engagement, motivation and accountability is much harder in these environments, though less so in "high-quality" degree programs.

UGC feels it is worth investigating how committed UC Davis is to ensuring that online degrees launched from this campus are high-quality, to avoid the pitfalls of under-resourced degree programs, which present great risks to students. This naturally brought forward a number of questions:

- Is the UC in a position to make this investment?
- What support would departments receive for creating fully online GE or service courses?
- Both Options 2 and 3 emphasize that it will be the same faculty teaching the online courses as face-to-face courses. However, given the time involved in developing high-quality online courses, it is likely that new faculty or instructors will have to be hired if both online and face-to-face courses are going to be offered.
    - Are there funds for these hires?
    - How will programs engender confidence that they will maintain staffing and quality in both programs (online and face-to-face)? We already have seen evidence and warned in earlier memos that masters programs sometimes erode the level or quality of instructional resources available for undergraduates.

    - How will programs show that the staffing is equivalent between the two (e.g. similar mix of faculty, adjuncts, and grad students)?
        - What support would departments get for creating fully online GE courses?
- How would the admissions process look—would it be in the same application pool and relying on the same staff as admissions for face-to-face programs? Would there be separate pathways from moment of admission?
    - Would on-campus students have access to the online courses?
    - Could students switch back and forth between going online? If so, exactly how would that work?
    - Would credits be transferrable between online and in-person degree programs?
- What would happen to an online course when an instructor leaves? UGC is a little worried that some attempt might emerge to deliver "canned" asynchronous courses indefinitely, with no Senate faculty connected to provide interaction, support, and feedback to students.
- Workload issues and accounting: UGC has concerns about the how online courses will be counted toward faculty workload once developed. If a course is online, has fully recorded lectures that are re-used, and the faculty teaching it is mostly responsible for office hours and assessment, is this equivalent to teaching a full course face to face, where there are still the responsibilities of office hours and assessment, plus holding lectures/discussions in person?
- To ensure proper oversight within the Undergraduate Program Review framework (which we imagine may be important to maintain WASC accreditation), degree programs should be kept within the purview of the campus/Division. In this case, additional staff positions and training would be needed to administer online programs.

Student Interest

UGC wonders whether there are data indicating the level of student demand for online courses or online UC degrees. Ultimately, demand may hinge on program quality and the perception of online degree graduates by employers. One member reported hearing that the University of Washington engaged in a great deal of market research to learn about student needs and demand before engaging in program design. This may be something to consider. One can envision two models, one where a program gradually produces enough courses that it's major can go fully or mostly online, versus a more deliberate model, where a program or group of programs surveys student needs and interest, then designs a new program to meet these.

In summary, UGC encourages the Academic Senate and our campus to continue exploring the feasibility of online degrees as both a natural progression in the current development within some academic units and as an opportunity to address issues of access and inclusion. At the same time, we urge immense caution and circumspectness as we proceed, taking care that progression toward online degrees is both intentional, broadly supported across units, and amply supported with necessary

resources to ensure quality and sustainability. There is great danger in neglecting any of these three cautions.

Thank you.

Katheryn Russ
Chair, Undergraduate Council

FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - DAVIS

November 25, 2020

Dr. Richard Tucker
Academic Senate Chair

RE: ***Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force***

The Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences read and discussed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. While we agree that the offer of online training is important and timely, member of the CA&ES FEC raised substantial concerns regarding particular points associated with the report. Some of those concerns are listed below:

1) There was no support for implementation of Policies 2 and 3 by our faculty. Members were concerned that undergraduate students will miss valuable practical training and hands-on experience. There was also concern that students will not be employable by the time they graduate without laboratory experience. Faculty expressed concern about training of graduate students. In a fully-remote environment, new graduate students will not be interacting with experienced teaching assistants which can lead to decreased professional development.

2) The document does not provide a clear vision on how the different UC campuses will contribute to online degrees. This should be clarified.

3) Faculty recommended that a full life-cycle analysis of the impacts of online teaching on student education quality, potential impacts on career objectives, possible dilution of a UC degree, impacts to current and future faculty, and the institutional brand.

4) The FEC was concerned that investments for online education will be substantial, further decreasing fund allocation to in-person teaching.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

Sincerely,

Jorge L Mazza Rodrigues
Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

November 24, 2020

Richard Tucker
Chair, Division of the Davis Academic Senate

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) of the College of Biological Sciences (CBS) has reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

Overall, this report was considered to be well-researched and thoughtfully presented. Feedback focused on the barriers toward achieving UC Quality remote instruction, which were considered to be high and costly. Therefore, the incentive for UC to invest in a substantial direction change toward online instruction was considered low. Several concerns are highlighted below.

- The challenges associated with online assessment remain to be addressed and will require a major investment by the University to maintain current standards of academic integrity.
- Achieving UC quality online instruction presents substantial new challenges, requiring a major investment in pedagogical training of instructors.
- Investment in UC quality online educational programs will require substantial resources that would be drawn away from supporting UC as a world-class public research university.
- Option number 1 received some support, given that issues listed above could be addressed, however concerns were expressed that 2/3 online was too high.
- Option number 3 was considered by many as not in line with the UC mission and therefore should be rejected.
- Broadening programs demographically, both internationally and domestically, was noted as a strong benefit of online courses. However, it was also noted that these groups often have unique challenges, which were thoughtfully outlined in the report, that could be more difficult to address remotely.

In sum, the CBS FEC expressed significant concerns with all options presented for implementing online instruction and was of the opinion that proceeding forward with formal degree options that include a significant component of online instruction would be premature.

The CBS FEC appreciates the opportunity to comment on **t**he Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

Sincerely,

Karen Zito
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
College of Biological Sciences

Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Graduate School of Management has reviewed the report developed by the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force for examining the implications of potentially creating full-time, online, undergraduate degree programs at UC. The task force provided three distinct policy options (Option 1: UC-Quality On-campus Degree, Option 2: UC-Quality Remote Degree, and Option 3: Instruction-only Remote Degree) and considered strengths and weaknesses of each. Based on the provided documentation, we have the following comments:

The Graduate School of Management (GSM) at UC Davis launched an entirely remote degree in Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Fall 2019. In designing the program, we found it indispensable to maintain the same quality as the existing MBA degree and ensure that it leads to an identical degree. Maintaining high-quality Online program ensures that the UC-brand is not diluted in any way. Therefore, **we support Policy 2** of forming UC Quality Remote Degree for undergraduate degrees as the best path forward.

The proposal documents clearly that quality education can be delivered in remote format, but quality program is costly. This assessment mirrors our experience. Online remote instruction is often associated with cost-savings, but true quality education requires substantial investment in initial course development used in our asynchronous content (video recordings). Moreover, we found it essential to maintain small class sizes in the synchronous sections (remote video-conferencing sessions). Rather than being cheaper, quality online education is actually very expensive to produce.

One of our initial concerns was potential migration of students from traditional programs to the online program. We have so far not experienced this. If anything, the remote program has made our MBA curriculum more accessible to part-time students who can otherwise not attend on-campus programs. These students are just as capable, if not more so than, as students in the traditional programs. Our experience has been that remote instruction opened up the MBA program to a broader market of students who, for one reason or another, have difficulties relocating physically onto campus. Hence, we disagree with the characterization that such students are "second class", when they simply have different life-priorities.

Another lesson learned from our experience was that the creation of an online program and the temporary "emergency remote" mode of instruction due to campus closures challenges the notion of what a "campus" is. The GSM's traditional MBA program is delivered in three geographically separate campuses: Davis, Sacramento, and Bay Area. The introduction of an online degree and "emergency remote" mode of teaching made every program functionally identical. Yet each program has separate admissions process and tuition rates. By removing geography from the equation, there was no more reason to limit a student from cross-registering into other campuses courses. A student's "home" campus is essentially where students build networks, but coursework can readily be fulfilled anywhere. Introduction of remote undergraduate programs could also allow students to more accessible access courses at

other UC divisions. This may also change the notion of a UC-campus as separate divisions but more like a residential colleges.

We also would like to raise the possibility of a new option that builds off of Option 2 and is targeted specifically to Community College transfer students:

This proposed option would take students from community college graduates in the vicinity of a given UC Campus and allows them to complete a 2-year online program in a major of their choice to obtain a bachelor's degree from the UC system. Proximity to the campus means that it is easier and less costly for students to visit the campus for on-premise activities, if they so choose. Many if not most of the students in this population are working students and need to keep a job after graduating from community colleges to support themselves and sometimes their families. Many of them have limited financial resources to afford the cost of residence and dining services that moving away from their families requires. Online education format provides this population with more equitable access to a bachelor's degree from the UC system. This population also tends to be significantly more diverse than students who currently enroll in on-premise programs at the UC campuses.[1] The option will thus help close the gap between underrepresented minority groups and other groups in the rate of obtaining bachelor's degrees. In the long run, this program will be complementary to the existing initiative to improve representation of URM scholars in Ph.D. programs and among faculty. The DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) component is a strong motivation for proposing this option, and it is exciting that recent advance in remote learning technology and pedagogy can be harnessed to achieve this noble goal.

This option also alleviates the issue that the Task Force report raises with Option 2, namely that remote-learning students will miss out on social engagement that is a core part of on-campus experiences. Since students will have spent their first two years on campus at community colleges, they receive the intangible benefit of informal interactions with peers and faculty, and integration into academic, intellectual and cultural life on campus. By the time they enter the UC system as 3rd-year students, they will have attained the intangible skills to navigate the college and professional careers, and will be ready to focus on pursuing their major. Individual UC campuses have opportunities to collaborate with community colleges in their vicinities to ensure that students they accept have had rich and balanced on-campus experiences in the first two years. Furthermore, the physical proximity of their hometowns to the campus enables them to pursue programs that require taking on-campus courses (e.g., labs, performance-based classes) and other extracurricular activities without incurring the cost of room and board. In some cases, scholarship funding may be useful to enable students to live on campus for a period of time.

We believe this proposed option could significantly increase opportunities for working students with limited financial capacity and time constraints to obtain UC degrees while balancing the need for well-roundedness of on-campus experiences.

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[1] see https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/sites/default/files/thefacts_diversity_0313.pdf

Overall, the Graduate School of Management's evaluation is that Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) is the strongest option of the set proposed, and its implementation could substantially enhance accessibility to students who might otherwise not be able to participate in on-campus programs.

Regarding the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Response from the School of Education Faculty Executive Committee

November 25, 2020

We appreciated the opportunity to review this report, and found it informative and useful in providing the opportunity to evaluate the three policy options. We recognize that many universities in the U.S. and globally already successfully offer remote degree programs, and that the forced shift to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic has likely changed the way students, instructors and the public view online learning such that it's use will increase. With this in mind, the Report was an excellent start to the discussion and debate about precisely how UC should proceed within this sphere. We echo the concerns in several other responses and have the following comments:

- We see great importance of actively seeking ways to increase access to UC degree programs and reduce financial and geographic barriers while increasing flexibility to accommodate work and caregiving, which we agree online degree programs might offer.
- Policy 1 seems to be the most palatable option of the three given the concerns that Policies 2 and 3 have the potential to result in degree programs that to not meet the high standard of a UC undergraduate education, even while Policy 2 may aspire to this. However, more information and clarity about the costs, benefits and structures even for Policy 1 need to be provided.
- The pedagogical practices required to teach effectively, design course instruction, and develop course materials in online environments are significantly different from those most faculty and instructors in the UC have experienced themselves or have received training for. This means that any policy options that include online coursework for undergraduate degrees requires significant resources and investment in training, course design, course technology. Comprehensive and well-resourced training for the particular nature of online instruction and course design should draw on the growing body of educational research on the effectiveness of online learning and design of these learning environments, which is only expanding with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and mandatory online learning across universities internationally.
- Consideration about the effects of any major shift to online learning on graduate student education, training, apprenticeships, funding and teaching assistantships must be included in any assessment of the overall impact of online undergraduate degrees, which seems lacking in the report.

Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

FEC: School of Law Committee Response

November 25, 2020

The only reason we should consider a fully online undergraduate degree is if it will expand access to a high UC quality education to more students, especially in ways that fulfill our public service mission. I've learned that online learning can be robust and quite excellent but it also has significant limitations; among them, the impossibility to recreate the peer to peer bonds that college students form outside the classroom and the experiential learning opportunities that are also hands on and/or relational. It is a false premise to imagine that we can fully replicate what is good about in-person learning, as much as it is also a false premise to discard new opportunities for better learning online. These are two distinct platforms and more thought should be given to whether there are majors or populations that are better suited for online education.

Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

FEC: School of Nursing Committee Response

November 25, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment on this important evaluation of the strengths and challenges associated with developing undergraduate online degree programs that support not only the classroom learning environment, but also create the learning experience outside the classroom. It is apparent that the task force finds value in the effectiveness of online courses. The evaluation of the evidence related to online learning explores both factors that facilitate quality assurance and enhance the learning experience as well as examine factors related to recruitment, retention, and sustainability. As the COVID era has shown us, it is important for students to develop the ability to take initiative, self-motivate, function in a technological environment and establish human connection and mentorship through multiple modalities. One way to develop these characteristics is through online education. As you assert in the report, pedagogy and learning outcomes should drive the environment in which students learn. As your report stipulates online programs appeal to Black and older students as well as students in rural areas or those who have lower socioeconomic status. Recruitment of these students is consistent with the mission of the UCs.

Of the three options presented, option two offers the ability for learning outcomes and pedagogy to drive delivery. The inclusion of hybrid delivery facilitates creation of on-campus experiences and F2F mentorship. Recommend the UC system not delineate a degree as an online versus F2F as this implies that the learning outcomes are different for online students which would be in direct opposition to accreditation standards. Further recommend that when courses are proposed for an online degree justification be clearly articulated for the delivery method and the program appropriately resourced to facilitate both student and faculty success. Evaluation of both F2F and online coursework should be based on set criteria as suggested in the report to ensure they meet UC quality standards. Evaluators should possess educational experiences and collaborate with research faculty as appropriate for the course content.

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December 7, 2020

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Re: Systemwide Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair Gauvain,

The Irvine Division Senate Cabinet reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report at our meeting on December 1. The report was also reviewed by our Council on Educational Policy, Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom, Council on Equity and Inclusion, Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries, and Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience. Memos from these councils are attached, and a summary of our Cabinet discussion is provided below.

Councils had mixed reactions to the three options presented in the report. Some felt that UCI, and UC, should not pursue fully online undergraduate degrees, while others preferred to keep this option available and felt strongly that the systemwide Senate should allow campuses to make this decision locally.

Members pointed out that should campuses choose to launch fully online undergraduate degrees, systemwide coordination will be necessary to avoid competition between programs. Some members suggested that in-demand majors offered on a small number of UC campuses across the state might be the most logical to make available online.

The Cabinet agreed that there should not be a separate faculty hired to teach in fully online programs, and that every effort should be made to avoid creating a perception of a “two-tiered” system. While UC policy is clear that undergraduate programs may not be self-supporting, members felt strongly that reflecting on experiences with online SSGPDPs would be helpful for campuses considering proposing fully online undergraduate programs. Among the lessons we have learned at UCI is that there are significant costs to regular in-person instruction when faculty are called upon to support online or other auxiliary programs.

Faculty considering proposing such a program must consult with the administrative offices involved in various aspects of operations from the very beginning; launching a fully online undergraduate degree program would require considerable planning to address questions related to licensing, tuition and fees, financial aid, access to student services, etc.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Barrett, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

University of California, Irvine

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October 15, 2020

JEFFREY BARRETT, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE – IRVINE DIVISION

Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

At its meeting on October 5, 2020, the Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience (CTLSE) reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force forwarded by Systemwide Senate Chair Gauvain. Last year, the Academic Council formed this task force to examine the implications of creating full-time, online, undergraduate degree programs at the University of California. Its July 2020 report provides three distinct policy options and outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each. The report included the following options:

- **Option 1** (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
- **Option 2** (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
- **Option 3** (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

Members admired the thoughtfulness of the report and thought the issues it raised merited further discussion. Some members argued that it would be short-sighted to disallow any of the three options without due consideration, while others reminded the Council of the special value of the on-campus experience and urged that we consider all aspects of the UC student experience in our determination of what constitutes a "UC-quality" degree. If we did offer online degrees, how could we best ensure that students have some access to the social and practical support systems that are so central to on-campus life? One member noted that option #2 has the virtue of engaging students in a learning community even in the context of an online-degree program.

Going forward, members thought it particularly important that we consider the following issues:

(1) We need fully to understand who the potential audience for a given online degree program is, bearing in mind that the structure and feasibility of a program bears a direct relationship both to the discipline on which it focuses and the population it is intended to serve. Graduate and professional programs, for instance, often serve older students whose needs are more circumscribed and more easily defined.

(2) If our primary goal is to make degree programs available for students whose location, jobs, family responsibilities, or finances make attending on-campus courses difficult, how can we best ensure that the programs we design will meet those specific needs? What will be distinctive about UC online degree programs in terms of their accessibility compared to those offered by other institutions, including community colleges? What are the data that show we are potentially losing qualified applicants from this pool of students who need online programs? What number of such students would likely choose to go to those institutions that already offer such online degrees (which may or may not be as good as ones that we might offer), rather than attend campus-based UC programs?

(3) We need to consider career impacts for students with credentials from these programs since they differ from traditional UC degrees.

(4) How does the UC system articulate whether or not there is a clear added value in the campus experience? If there is a value to that experience, how will students getting an online-only degree have access to experiences of equal value (or, alternatively, pay less for their degree).

Sincerely,

Andrea Henderson, Chair
Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience

C: Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Academic Senate

C: Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director
Academic Senate

University of California, Irvine

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November 10, 2020

JEFFREY BARRETT, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION

RE: Systemwide Review of Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Council on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) was asked to review the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report and comment on the proposed policy options. The Council discussed the report at its November 2 meeting.

Members had concerns about each of the proposed policy options, specifically about the equity implications of remote programs, both in terms of the admissions pool and the student experience. Brief feedback on each option is provided below.

Option 1 (UC-Quality On-Campus Degree): The Group discussed a cap on online courses along the lines described in this model. However, members felt that it would be difficult to create a "one-size-fits-all" maximum number or percentage of online units, and that we should consider the types of courses that could be effectively offered online, rather than a maximum number. There was also some concern that limiting the number of online courses implies they are inherently inferior.

Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree): Members were open to some experimentation with this option for majors, particularly those that are not offered across the system and can make an argument about increasing access and diversity through this model. We are assuming it is more possible to achieve a UC-Quality Remote Degree in transfer programs than a full four-year degree. Much of the research cited in the Task Force Report is already dated, particularly given all we've learned with remote learning due to COVID. As Chancellor Gillman has said, we are offering access to UC faculty and the remote classes offer UC quality. An important issue is finding ways to offer online learning that meets the needs of URM and non-traditional students. It was recommended that robust pilot programs for a fixed period should be employed before fully implementing this model. Option 2 does not support having a specific cohort for an online transfer major, but a cohort would enable departments to give priority enrollment in online courses to them, and student services could be more targeted to the needs of online students.

Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree): Members generally rejected this option as creating a "two-tier" system that fails to provide support services for students earning remote-only degrees.

While members expressed concerns about several issues related to offering remote degrees in general – such as students' lack of access to technology infrastructure and support services – some felt there was reason to consider fully online programs, particularly as the nature of work is changing as a result of the pandemic. Online programs may have the potential to increase access to a UC education, and expanded access may benefit more diverse students. It was also noted that some programs, such as business, have tried the traditional model of in-person instruction to increase diversity and have not been successful, so it may be time to try something new.

The Council on Equity and Inclusion appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Louis DeSipio, Chair
Council on Equity and Inclusion

C: Joanna Ho, Chair Elect-Secretary
Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director and CEI Analyst
Brandon Haskey-Valerius, Senate Cabinet Analyst

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November 6, 2020

JEFFREY BARRETT, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE – IRVINE DIVISION

Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

At its meeting on October 13, 2020, the Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom (CFW) reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force forwarded by Systemwide Senate Chair Gauvain. Last year, the Academic Council formed this task force to examine the implications of creating full-time, online, undergraduate degree programs at the University of California. Its July 2020 report provides three distinct policy options and outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each. The report included the following options:

- **Option 1** (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
- **Option 2** (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
- **Option 3** (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

Members had the following comments:

1. Although the report seemed thorough, it did not outline a funding infrastructure including how faculty would be compensated for creating and maintaining the courses.
2. It was unclear what the definition of "quality" meant in the report, and whether that would be obtained through full-time faculty or by other means. Further, it was expressed that there is a higher cost associated with high-quality online programs than in-person high-quality programs.
3. It was unclear how teaching would be evaluated in the merit and promotion process, given how distinct remote instruction is as opposed to the traditional in-person instruction.

4. Members expressed concern that online programs may create a second class citizen group of students.

5. It was not clear if there was a practical plan for implementation of these programs.

6. On the whole, the report did not provide enough specificity for members to respond in kind, but members would not support any option without a clear outline of funding and compensation for faculty.

Sincerely,

Terry Dalton, Chair
Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom

C: Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Academic Senate

Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director
Academic Senate

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November 23, 2020

JEFF BARRETT, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Systemwide Review of Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Council on Educational Policy (CEP) discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force report at its November 5, 2020 meeting. Members felt that the report was well-researched, thorough, and helpful for thinking through various issues that would be presented should UCI choose to launch fully online undergraduate degrees in the future. The University Registrar noted that any Schools proposing online degree programs, either for transfer students or first year students, should be in conversation with operations staff as early in the process as possible, as it takes considerable coordination and planning to address issues related to tuition and fees, licensing, financial aid, and admissions. CEP unanimously agreed that UCI faculty should have the option to choose to offer online undergraduate degrees in the future, and that campuses should reserve the right to make these decisions individually.

Sincerely,

Charles Anthony Smith, Chair
Council on Educational Policy

Cc: Kate Brigman, Executive Director, Academic Senate

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December 1, 2020

JEFFREY BARRETT, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

At its meeting on November 19 2020, the Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries (CORCL) reviewed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

The Council made the following comments:

- Of the three options proposed, the Council expressed support exclusively for Option 1(UC-Quality On-Campus Degree) which would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses. Interaction with other students and faculty on campus is a significant function of education, research, and learning. The opportunities to discuss, debate, and collaborate are crucial to creating a learning environment conducive to producing excellent graduates.

- Option 1 has the added benefit of easier reversion from the online platform to full-time campus teaching.

- For Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) which would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree, the Council observed that while more flexible, it is not ideal. The question of synchronized versus non-synchronized online teaching is crucial. However, the report does not address this. Synchronized teaching for smaller classes may still be acceptable online, as long as students are visible and engaged. Non-synchronized teaching should be discouraged insofar as face-to-face teaching is paramount to high-quality learning. Were UCI to allow courses to be taken completely online, this could potentially move the campus to be perceived by the public similarly as lower ranked online Universities (e.g. University of Phoenix) or any number of other continuing education universities. If the strong reputation of UCI is to be protected, this option is inadvisable.

- On Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) which would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities, the Council expressed that this option should be avoided at all costs. This option opens the possibility of a second class of degrees such as "Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Online" which will impact on UCI prestige.

- Options 2 and 3 make it nearly impossible for students to do research. It is unclear whether these options satisfy visa requirements.

- The computing demands for the campus would also be considerable.

- In terms of library concerns, licensing textbooks may be problematic. As textbooks are a significant source of revenue for publishers, individual student fees may be increased.

- The Council recognizes that these options were considered in light of the pandemic. Remote teaching has become a necessity for universities to continue providing an education. However, the Council advises against making policy decisions with prolonged consequences designed to address a likely short term problem.

Overall, the Council noted given the cost of tuition, it is incumbent on us to provide value. Immediate interaction with faculty and other students of the quality that UCI attracts is what makes an education at UCI so special and rewarding. While many programs may be able to deliver their curriculum remotely, a significant portion of our courses should be taught on campus. The Council appreciates the opportunity to comment.

On behalf of the Council,

Michele Guindani, Chair

c: Kate Brigman, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Assistant Director
Michelle Chen, CORCL Analyst
Brandon Haskey-Valerius, Senate Analyst

UCLA Academic Senate
Executive Board

December 8, 2020

Mary Gauvain
Chair, UC Academic Senate

Re: **Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force**

Dear Mary,

Thank you for providing the UCLA Academic Senate with the opportunity to comment on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report Discussion. The proposed policy was distributed to Academic Senate committees for comment with responses from COR, COT, CPB, CUARS, FWC, GC, and UgC. The Report and the committee responses were discussed at the November 12, 2020, meeting of the Executive Board. As you will see from the committee reports, the question of the future of online education elicited serious thought and deep concerns from a wide portion of the UCLA Academic Senate. All members were deeply impressed with the seriousness and thoughtfulness with which the Task Force had fulfilled its charge and agreed that it was an illuminating document. But in the end the Executive Board cannot endorse any of the options as such.

The Committees and the Executive Board unanimously agreed that Option 3 was simply unacceptable. UC cannot, and should not, attempt to fulfill its public mission by offering a lower quality version of its regular offerings. To knowingly design an online structure that failed to provide at least as high a quality and depth of learning as the residential program would be to institute a two-tier system that we think is morally and pedagogically objectionable. The Academic Senate must insist that University Leadership refuse any effort to offer lower quality programs in the name of a false claim of access. If the University does not provide equal educational opportunities to all of its students, it will have turned its back on its deepest purposes.

The Committees and the Executive Board were more conflicted in approaching options 1 and 2. But after an extended discussion, the Executive Board thinks that the proper course for the Senate is to refuse a set of forced choices. As the Board sees it, rather than seeing options 1 and 2 as distinct choices the Senate could best view them as descriptions of the present state of online at UC and of one possible future trajectory. In other words, Option 1 does little beyond describing current practice; option 2 does little beyond describing a future that does not yet have a technological or pedagogical basis. To endorse one or the other would be to freeze practice on the one hand or to prematurely commit to one conceivable future. Neither seems to us to display the commitment to practical experimentation that the University of California has been noted for.

Consequently, we urge the Academic Council to refuse a set of forced choices. Instead, we think that the Council should acknowledge the present accomplishments of those at the University who have

developed online courses and programs. In doing so, it can renew its commitment to seeing that all future online programs will meet the same standards that the Senate demands of the University's in-person programs. If, and when, such online programs are developed the Academic Senate can review them in good faith.

Sincerely,

Shane N. White
Chair, UCLA Division of the Academic Senate

cc: Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, UC Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Division of the Academic Senate
Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Division of the Academic Senate
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Division of the Academic Senate

UCLA Academic Senate
Graduate Council

November 2, 2020

To: Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Andrea Kasko, Chair
Graduate Council

Re: Systemwide Senate Review - Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report

At its meeting on October 30, 2020, the Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report and offer the following for consideration:

Generally, members were not supportive of option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) which would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities. The Graduate Council would like to echo some of the concerns raised by other UCLA Academic Senate councils and committees regarding the potential erosion of the UC brand in moving forward with this option. Members would like to highlight that any erosion of the UC brand affects graduate students, even if it stems from undergraduate education initiatives, as graduate students serve as teaching assistants and may enroll in mixed-enrollment courses.

Members were generally supportive of option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) as it would open the door for innovation as members see a potential for online undergraduate education at the University of California in some form. Members agreed that the UC could learn and benefit from existing online graduate programs, their successes and failures, and what they have produced in their time. Members agreed that the UC system should continue to innovate with a focus on UC quality education. Members stated that it takes time to innovate, measure, and learn from the experience. With this in mind, the Graduate Council would recommend that time be dedicated to plan and create an infrastructure whereby this option could prove to be successful in the long-term.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the Graduate Council analyst, Estrella Arciba, at earciba@senate.ucla.edu.

UCLA Academic Senate
Council on Research

October 30, 2020

Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Systemwide Item for Review: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair White,

At its meeting on October 7, 2020, the Council on Research (COR) had an opportunity to review the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. After an initial discussion and overview, members expressed the following comments and concerns:

We applaud the efforts of the Task Force in completing a thorough, data-driven, inclusive and comprehensive review of the remote degree educational landscape. It is evident that many of the concerns brought up at our Council discussion had been identified by the Task Force. Your work clearly outlined a number of options for consideration, all evidently crafted to accommodate different levels of remote learning.

Our Council agreed that remote classes are and will continue to be important as part of the educational repertoire of tools. We acknowledge that remote learning degrees are viable options to accommodate flexibility on scheduling, provide cost savings to students, and promote access to education. However, our Council strongly opposed a move for institutions like UC or UCLA to offer remote learning degrees. Many undergraduate degrees emphasize requirements for research experiences, formal laboratory, field training, and performing arts practices, which would not lend themselves to remote learning. The learning experience is a complex mixture of lectures, practical learning, student interaction that promotes social growth, mutual teaching and learning, and opportunities for spontaneous collaboration.

Furthermore, the structured and very isolating effect of remote learning, coupled with additional barriers due to lack of access to adequate internet bandwidth, computer and camera equipment, and limitations in access to on-campus resources available to other in person degree seekers, further creates an unintended opportunity for the emergence of a two-tier degree system. Given the conclusions of the task force report, which highlight the limited cost savings but the increased financial and administrative/educational burdens to faculty, in addition to the disparities in availability of online degrees in certain areas of research, we propose that the Task Force take a stand against these online degrees.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at julianmartinez@mednet.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu,or x62470.

Sincerely,

Julian Martinez, Chair
Council on Research

cc: Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect,
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Principal Policy Analyst, Council on Research
Members of the Council on Research

UCLA Academic Senate
Committee on Teaching

October 28, 2020

To: Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Academic Senate Committee on Teaching discussed the Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force during its meeting on October 27, 2020. We appreciate the work of the task force and the detailed strengths and weaknesses of each of the options on the table.

Before our committee's discussion, Chair Jessica Collett reminded the committee that we were not evaluating the effectiveness of online teaching, but instead which of these three proposals we were most supportive of. The committee discussion was robust. The general consensus was that *of the three options*, the committee was most in support of Option 1, although with reservations (detailed below).

1. The majority of the committee believed that "face to face" instruction and collaboration is hallmark of a university experience, sustains the culture and character of local campuses, and should not be sacrificed in the interest of economic constraints.
    a. There was confusion—perhaps exacerbated by the comparison table in Appendix C that suggests 1 and 2 share all the relevant qualities—about the distinction between Options 1 and 2. The only difference appears to be the addition of a seemingly arbitrary threshold of how much of a hybrid system would be required on-campus. The committee wondered where the 1/3 came from.
2. The committee saw the benefits for students of remote instruction, with a mixed-view on its effect on equity in education. We want to ensure that public education is accessible and affordable. To offer students some options to pursue classes without having to live in expensive areas like Westwood or to spend as much time commuting would help with the burdens some lower SES students face. However, the committee wants to ensure these students are getting the same quality education that they would get if they could engage in campus life and the professional development and resources from campus that would help them be most successful post-graduation. Without this, there is fear this policy may unintentionally create a two-tiered system.
3. Ultimately, the decision to be involved in online instruction (classes and/or degrees) must be made at the local level, as it may be attractive to large majors to use the physical classroom space for upper-division courses rather than the introductory courses that would function rather well online. This, of course, would not work for hands-on majors, like those in the arts and sciences.
    a. Regardless, the committee is in support of staffing these online courses with ladder-faculty and experts in their fields rather than contingent faculty.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the task force's report. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at collett@soc.ucla.edu or Academic Senate Policy Analyst Renee Rouzan-Kay at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Jessica L. Collett, Chair
Committee on Teaching

cc: Shane White, Academic Senate, Chair
Jody Kreiman, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/ Chair- Elect
Michael Meranze, Academic Senate, Immediate Past Chair
April de Stefano, Academic Senate, Executive Director
Members of the Committee on Teaching

UCLA Academic Senate
Committee on Undergraduate
Admissions & Relations with Schools

October 29, 2020

To: Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Per your request, the Academic Senate Committee on Undergraduate Admission and Relations with Schools discussed during its meeting on October 9, 2020, the Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force.

The report was discussed at length, with the majority of CUARS members' in agreement with the policy options outlined in Option 1 (UC-Quality On-Campus Degree). The preferred option is for a substantial proportion of courses to be offered in-person. The consensus of the committee was that fully online programs would dilute the value of a UCLA degree. Concerns were expressed regarding a two-tier system, even if taught by the same faculty, as students not on campus would lose out on networking, informal discussions with peers and faculty, and hands-on research opportunities. There were also concerns that online programs would increase disparities in outcomes between well-resourced and under-resourced students. Another compelling point, is what students get out of attending a university. An education provides much more than classroom knowledge, like how to learn, how to be a professional, learning how to behave and interact with others, and "grow up". Going fully online would undermine these important aspects of University education.

In addition, members discussed the following points specific to each option, which are outlined below;

Option 1 (UC-Quality On Campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;

- As mentioned above members prefer Option 1, as it recognizes remote learning as a useful approach to delivering information for many classes and would help solve classroom space issues. However, students should be required to have a substantial amount of in-person learning.
- In-person instruction is the preferred method of learning for many students as they are more engaged in the classroom environment.
- Teaching online is a completely different experience. Extending access to the University by adding hybrid and online courses makes sense, given there are not enough classrooms and space to meet current demands.

- Learning remotely cannot replace traditional "brick and mortar" instruction. There is value learning in a cohort in-person, learning together, building relationships, and the ability to have face-to-face communication.
- UCLA prior to the pandemic was offering some classes fully remote and for students with good home environments, and good access to internet, online instruction may be a viable option. However, this may not be the case for students learning within a different time zone, having to logon for example, at 2 AM or listen to a prerecorded lecture.
- In addition, there was the feeling that even Option 1 goes too far, would deplete the student from the opportunities a non-remote degree would provide, as keeping only a third of the units being in-person still creates a disparity between the students.

Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;

- Members felt Option 2 would likely be a mistake.
- If the University moved forward with Option 2, what would be required? Would requirements be left to the major and departments to decide? There are disparities between students who are highly resourced, who will do well no matter the situation and those students who have just dropped off the radar. The committee was concerned that entirely remote degree programs would magnify these disparities.

Option 3 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as at UC's face to face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

- The majority of members felt Option 3 would be a mistake.
- However, CUARS' student representatives pointed out moving to online increases accessibility. Students cannot afford to live in LA especially now given the financial crises. Having the opportunity to go to class from home increases accessibility providing the opportunity to pursue extracurricular actives and help support families.
- In addition, online instruction provides a number benefits especially for students who may experience a hardship in the middle of an academic year, i.e. personal, health, or financial crisis. Providing a fully remote option gives students the opportunity to continue their education without having to take a leave of absence, which could decrease the time to degree and increase the graduation success rate.
- While it is the case, fully online programs could bring down the cost of a UCLA degree; this may be counteracted by reduced completion rates for under-resourced students. In the case of a student not graduating, they will have wasted time and money.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at knowlton@psych.ucla.edu or Academic Senate Policy Analyst Renee Rouzan-Kay at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Barbara Knowlton, Chair
Committee on Undergraduate Admission and Relations with Schools

cc: Jody Kreiman, Academic Senate, Vice Chair/ Chair- Elect
Michael Meranze, Academic Senate, Immediate Past Chair
April de Stefano, Academic Senate, Executive Director

UCLA Academic Senate
Undergraduate Council

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

October 28, 2020

To: Shane White, Chair, Academic Senate

From: Megan McEvoy, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Re: Systemwide Senate Review: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

At its meeting on October 23, 2020, the Undergraduate Council reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. The Council also consulted with the Curriculum Committee, which discussed the report at its meeting on October 21, 2020.

The Council does not endorse any of the three options offered by the task force. Even the limits described in Option 1, the most conservative of the three, seem to us to be too far below the bar of what we consider to be a UC-quality degree granted by a research university. While we recognize any of the three options may confer enormous long-term financial benefits to the University, to realize those financial gains would come at the cost of quality and student success (as described in Appendix F, H, and J in the task force report), which would dilute the University of California brand and hurt all our students.

We are concerned about the dangers of creating a two-tiered system, a likely consequence of all three options. Less privileged students may need to weigh more heavily the expense of moving to campus when choosing among in-person, hybrid, fully online options; more privileged students would not need to weigh cost as heavily, and would be more likely to enjoy all the benefits of the in-person experience. In fact, the two-tiered system already exists at UC campuses located in high-income zip codes such as UCLA, situated in Westwood and surrounded by Bel Air, Brentwood, and Beverly Hills. At UCLA, our students are already having to make the choice of whether to live on or near campus or to commute, and we see the divide in our student body, and the negative impact on our commuter students. All three options would exacerbate this problem, rather than ameliorate it.

While the Council does not endorse any of the three options offered in the task force report, members acknowledge the tremendous potential in online education to promote access and equity. Indeed, when we return to in-person instruction, we may want to consider continuing some of the practices we have innovated under “emergency distance learning” during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as holding some office hours remotely to accommodate commuter students, and using video lectures as a component of a class that involves face-to-face interaction, as in the “flipped classroom” model. A better course of action would be to evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching modalities, before moving to create new programs.

During this period of emergency distance learning, we have also come to realize sharply what the on-campus learning environment offers to our students, what online learning cannot replicate. The task force report describes and cites many such elements (see pp 23, 30, 39–40). We add to this list what we call the “serendipitous moment”: searching the stacks and finding a book next to the one you were originally looking for; going to a talk you saw advertised in the elevator; engaging with a professor in the

few minutes after class; meeting someone new in a café. In other words, the happenstance of being among people, rather than in the curated, pre-determined environment of online learning. The opportunity to form deep connections, often lifelong friendships, with fellow students, to feel a sense of belonging in a community of scholars and learners, is an essential aspect of undergraduate education.

If increasing equity and access is the point, then what we ought to consider is how to make our current campus-based educational experience more accessible to all students.

If you have any questions, please contact me via the Undergraduate Council's analyst, Aileen Liu, at aliu@senate.ucla.edu.

cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Aileen Liu, Committee Analyst, Undergraduate Council
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
Olga Yokoyama, Vice Chair, Undergraduate Council

UCLA Academic Senate
Faculty Welfare Committee

October 22, 2020

Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair White,

At its meeting on October 14, 2020, the Faculty Welfare Committee reviewed and discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. Committee members and offered the following comments.

The State Legislature would see online education as an opportunity to transform UC and educate more students. This would lead to irreversible damage to quality of education. Members expressed concerns over the degradation of the whole experience, and how would UC compete with a community college, especially if delivering online instruction. Members agreed that the experience of being on campus (Option 1) is essential to a full educational experience and not willing to accept a fully online experience. Online learning and interactions are less conducive to the development of knowledge. There is a significant probability of ending up with a two-tier system. A hybrid option would be preferable, offering a mixed in-person and online environment degree.

Members strongly opposed to making a decision on online undergraduate degrees when in a state of peril. Overall, quality concerns outweigh potential benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please contact us via the Faculty Welfare Committee's interim analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu .

Sincerely,

Huiying Li, Chair
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Academic Senate
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Interim Analyst, Faculty Welfare Committee
Faculty Welfare Committee Members

UCLA Academic Senate
Council on Planning & Budget

October 20, 2020

Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Chair White,

At its meeting on October 12, 2020, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) had an opportunity to review and discuss the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. Members were generally impressed with the thoroughness of the report, agreed that all three options have limitations, and offered the following comments and conclusions.

1. Option 3 seems an odd choice: There are clear standards for what constitutes a University of California degree and Option 3 explicitly indicates it would not fulfill those criteria. It is hard to see how this would not damage our reputation as an institution. In addition, members felt students are potentially limited post-graduation by fully online degrees. Some questioned if UCLA goes online does it mean that faculty members do not need to be at UCLA? Members expressed concern that the university community might be harmed by not having a unified physical space. Members agreed that the university is more than online classes: It is the full experience and goes beyond a physical space. It was also observed that successful graduate online programs might not pose the same sort of limitation for their students, as their students presumably have already had a foundational experience at the undergraduate level.
2. Option 1, in turn, seemed arbitrary and short-sighted about future changes to education. Foreclosing our ability to experiment and innovate seems like a bad idea in the long term.
3. Option 2 was preferred to Option 3, in that it explicitly called for UC standards to be upheld. However, it also presented issues, as members were skeptical that an online-only degree option could readily fulfill the University's high standards.
    a. Members did note that during the pandemic, our instruction will continue to be remote for an unknown period, and we cannot conclude that the quality is poor. Some did endorse more widespread online options to better assist underserved populations, and believed we could build on our current innovations to provide a UCLA degree that does not require being on campus and demonstrably achieves UC standards of excellence.

b. One member expressed support for Option 2 stating that online instruction presents new possibilities. For example, students in a department have been using an online software called "gather town" which allows for gatherings in small and large groups, and allows participants to wander around a virtual space in real time. The next generations will be even more similar to a conference-type environment.
c. UCLA is still in the learning stages, trying to figure out the possibilities with online instruction; however, the power of creativity and ingenuity should not be underestimated. Some are hopeful we might be able to do amazing things in unexpected areas (and noted how much more challenging our online meeting would have been a decade ago) and should therefore be cautious about applying current standards to a rapidly-changing online environment.
d. Others pointed out that there are many uncertainties and that the non-classroom experience cannot be simulated online, such as working on labs, as well as interactions outside of class.
e. How can this be done well? It was observed that faculty may tend to idealize what is being done currently and not recognize the limitations of face-to-face teaching at a large research university. Having larger classes and fewer sections on campus also challenges UCEP's ideals. Likewise, faculty would need to go through training to offer consistency in their online teaching delivery. The university might have an impetus to hire a new wave of faculty, with proven skills in online education.
f. Members appreciated the report's appropriate caution regarding the limited empirical evidence of the effectiveness of online education (particularly at comparable institutions and with good experimental designs). Some therefore advocated more experimentation and piloting, especially if those tests could target underserved populations that the university hopes to serve. As faculty at a research institution, we are excited by the prospect of generating–and being guided by–better evidence than is presently available.
g. Therefore, **Option 2 seemed to be the most viable, future-looking option of the three (but also the most challenging to achieve)**.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at groeling@comm.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu or x62470.

Sincerely,

Tim Groeling, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Principal Policy Analyst, Council on Planning and Budget
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget

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OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ROBIN DELUGAN, CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
senatechair@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343

December 3, 2020

To: Mary Gauvain, Chair, Academic Council

Re: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The *Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force* was distributed for comment to the Merced Division Senate Committees and the Schools of Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. The following committees offered several comments for consideration. Their comments are appended to this memo.

- Admissions and Financial Aid Committee
- Graduate Council
- Undergraduate Council
- School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Executive Committee
- School of Engineering Executive Committee
- School of Natural Sciences Executive Committee

At its November 13, 2020 meeting, Divisional Council (DivCo) discussed the three options described in the Task Force Report and members were generally in favor of options 1 and 2. There was no support for option 3 as it was deemed not feasible nor desired. The Merced CCGA representative also confirmed at the DivCo meeting that a similar consensus occurred at CCGA where there was no support for option 3.

DivCo wishes to emphasize that whichever option that is selected by the UC needs to be properly resourced and not diminish the UC educational experience.

The Merced Division thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

Sincerely,

Robin M. DeLugan

Robin DeLugan
Chair, Divisional Council
UC Merced

CC: Divisional Council
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Senate Office
Encl (7)

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE (AFAC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD

October 29, 2020

To: Senate Chair DeLugan

From: Admissions and Financial Aid Committee

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Members of the Admissions and Financial Committee (AFAC) have reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force and the three policy options put forth by the Task Force.

i. Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
ii. Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
iii. Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

AFAC is in favor of Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) and offers the following comments.

1. What are the potential financial and admissions issues (if any) for option 2 (UC Quality remote degree)? The report provides a brief description of potential issues for option 3, and none for option 2. This information would be very helpful for offering a comprehensive assessment of all three proposed options.
2. The report does a good job identifying the mechanisms by which online degree programs could undermine educational, economic, and social equity. The report notes that online programs remain expensive to deliver, thereby delivering no cost savings to students. The programs are only profitable if they increase in scale, with fewer instructors per student delivering classes. But that particular online model is thought to produce much lower graduation rates (such as with ASU online). The report sensibly adds that "the task force felt that remote programs may end up targeting people whose life circumstances prevent them from realizing the full set of opportunities afforded by the UC, thus creating a "second class" of students who might prefer to be on campus but who can only participate in remote-only degree programs." When combined with the high costs of these programs and use of student loans for tuition and living costs, the Task Force notes " it

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HRANT HRATCHIAN, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL
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5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343

OCTOBER 29, 2020

TO: ROBIN DELUGAN, CHAIR, DIVISIONAL COUNCIL

FROM: HRANT HRATCHIAN, CHAIR, GRADUATE COUNCIL

RE: REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL TASK FORCE ON ONLINE UNDEGRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate Council (GC) has reviewed the Report of the Academic Council Task Force on fully online undergraduate programs at the University of California. GC is pleased to endorse the report which, while not reaching consensus on a particular policy proposal, specifically rejects the possibility of online degree programs taught by a separate set of faculty from the face to face programs (as pointed out in the attached review by the GC lead reviewer).

Graduate Council thanks you for the opportunity to opine.

CC: Graduate Council
Senate Office

Encl (2)—GC lead reviewer review, and the Academic Council Task Force Report

Review of the Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Background and Summary:
This taskforce was formed last year to explore implications of fully online undergraduate degrees within the UC system, partly in response to a "first of its kind" proposal from UC Irvine for a fully remote degree in business administration submitted in 2018-2019. The taskforce's report recommends 3 options for moving forward:

Policy 1: UC Quality On-campus Degree
- Would prohibit any fully remote undergraduate degree programs.
- The number of remote courses that could be applied a student's degree would be capped at 1/3 of required courses

Policy 2: UC Quality Remote Degree
- Would allow for fully remote undergraduate degree programs provided the programs can fulfill *all* characteristics normally associated with a face-to-face (F2F) UC degree*
- These online degrees would not have a different name from traditional F2F degrees (e.g., students in the online program and those attending campus in-person would both receive a B.S. in Economics)
- Students enrolled in these remote degrees would have the same rights and privileges as students attending college in-person including right to change majors (including switching from a remote to F2F major), right to double major, and access to co-/extra-curricular activities such as undergraduate research

Policy 3: Instruction-Only Remote Degree
- Would allow for fully remote undergraduate degree programs distinct from F2F programs, e.g. "B.S. in Economics (Online)"
- Would be expected to have the same quality and rigor to F2F programs in terms of coursework, but not expected to fulfill all of the outside-the-classroom experiences normally associated with a UC degree
- Separate admissions process from F2F programs

*The essential qualities of "UC education" identified by the report are:
- Access to expertise of UC faculty
- Access to the research-based environment inherent in the UC system
- Exposure to intellectual and cultural diversity
- Exposure to the comprehensive experience of a UC education above and beyond the transmission of information from any single class or activity

Recommendation
I think either endorsing or declining to comment would be appropriate, given that the report exclusively focuses on undergraduate degree programs.

Comments and points of interest
- For Policies 2 and 3, the report repeatedly emphasizes that remote courses would be taught by the same faculty that teach in the F2F programs. The report specifically rejects the possibility of remote degrees taught by separate set of faculty
- Fully online master's programs already exist within the UC system (e.g., Masters in Data Science at Berkeley), but the report implies that the implications of online *undergraduate* degrees would be qualitatively different because of the outsize impact of outside-the-classroom experiences to undergraduate vs graduate education

- The report attempts a meta-analysis of published studies of online education but this proved difficulty for a number of reasons:
    - Lack of peer institutions for “apples-to-apples” comparison. Most online programs are offered by community colleges or for-profit universities
    - Most studies looked at outcomes of individual online courses, not entire degree programs
    - Technology for online education has advanced rapidly, making it difficult to evaluate older studies
- Arizona State University and Georgia Tech both offer online degrees but they rely on adjunct lecturers to deliver those courses, which the report specifically rejects
- Cost implications – it’s complicated!
    - From the student’s perspective:
        - Tuition for “high quality” online courses (characterized by small classes and frequent interactions with faculty) is not that different from F2F classes. Cost savings would primarily come from saving on room and board
        - Although tuition is cheaper for online courses with higher student:faculty ratios, outcomes are poorer (e.g., low rates of completion)
    - From the university’s perspective:
        - Infrastructure costs are significant both in terms of the technology needed to support online learning and in instructor’s time needed to develop and *maintain* remote courses
        - To maintain the quality of the UC degree, students enrolled in remote and F2F programs should both have access to student services such as tutoring, counseling, healthcare, and academic integrity, but implementation for remote programs could be challenging

ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD

October 30, 2020

To: Senate Chair DeLugan

From: Undergraduate Council (UGC)

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

UGC discussed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. We commend members of the task force for preparing a thorough report. The task force reviewed several policy options and, in the absence of a consensus, put forth three different policy frameworks, noting that they are not mutually exclusive.

i. Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
ii. Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
iii. Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

Members of UGC discussed the following points outlined in the report:

i. The task force recommended that instructors in a fully online program would need to be the same faculty that teach face-to-face. They do not want an online program that follows the model of Arizona State online. The idea was that a lot of the strength of a UC degree lies with UC's reputation as a world class research institution. We do not want this element to be lost in an online degree.
ii. It is costly to offer online undergraduate programs at any scale. Lower cost alternatives would subject students to a financial risk because of large classes not being able to customize certain aspects of online course delivery. Several studies show lower completion rates with those types of programs. Looking at the cost and quality analysis, UGC members noted that to have a highly successful program is expensive and requires considerable infrastructure. The task force was also very realistic when discussing modifying classes.
iii. The report suggests that faculty teaching online courses should be the same faculty who teach face-to-face, but logistically, it is not clear how this can be achieved. What happens when faculty leave a program or campus? How do we ensure that it is UC faculty who

are teaching and what are the incentives for faculty to teach these programs? Furthermore, what is the cost associated with faculty incentives? Is it a stipend? If compensation is a course release, then other faculty must be hired to allow those courses to be taught without negatively affecting existing in-person curriculum.

iv. The task force stated that a third of the classes must be taken in person; however, that still means two thirds must be completed online. Task force members were also mindful when thinking about the trade-offs and tensions for online instruction. Access is touted as one of the reasons to move to online instruction, but then there are also concerns regarding students who might have to pay for a costly residential experience. At the same time, there is temptation to move to remote instruction for revenue-based reasons. Task force members strongly voiced the need to mitigate the impact of the monetary temptation, pointing out that it may not necessarily be less expensive and that it can undercut access and equity. In general, the task force was concerned about oversight and we must all be very careful if we move to online degree program instruction.

v. Were there discussions regarding increasing the number of faculty by a certain amount?

vi. Is the online degree the same as current program offerings or is it a completely new program?

vii. How do we preserve the academic quality of the offerings and how will academic integrity issues be addressed?

viii. Will the online programs be adequately resourced?

We thank you for the opportunity to review this item.

Cc: UGC
Senate Office

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

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MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-7742
FAX (209) 228-4007

21 October 2020

To: Robin DeLugan, Chair Merced Division of the Academic Senate

From: Susan Amussen, Chair, SSHA EC

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Trask Force Report

At its meeting today, the SSHA EC discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. We had a lively and passionate discussion of the issues involved. We were grateful to the Task Force for including such excellent reviews of the relevant literature. We overwhelmingly agreed that Option 1 was the only viable option. We make this recommendation for several reasons:

1. The evidence is quite clear that for undergraduates, the co-curricular experiences are as significant as the actual classes. And while Option #2 allows students to come to campus, it does not provide the robust interactions with faculty and students that are possible with on campus classes.
2. Completion rates in online programs lag significantly behind those in face to face programs. Those completion rates are also sharply different for students from different socio-economic backgrounds. If UC is an engine for mobility, an incomplete online program will not help the underserved communities in the state.
3. Finally the cost: online instruction if done well is more expensive that F2F instruction. Given that we are looking at pay cuts for faculty and furloughs for staff, this seems an inopportune time to invest money in programs that primarily serve wealthier students.

Our endorsement of option 1, the hybrid degree model, recognizes the needs of the students we teach at UC Merced. We would actually encourage a higher minimum for F2F instruction in option 1, at least 50% in person rather than 1/3.

From:	Catherine Keske
To:	Fatima Paul
Cc:	UCM Senate Office; SOE Executive Committee
Subject:	SoE ExComm Comments on Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force
Date:	Monday, November 2, 2020 3:41:35 PM

Dear UC Senate Colleagues:

The School of Engineering (SoE) Executive Committee appreciates the opportunity to opine on the report.

We note that a great deal of work went into this study and that there is a comprehensive discussion of the trade-offs of the different online models. However, we suggest that more exploration of different financial models is needed to contemplate benefits and downsides of a tiered pricing system, and the corresponding nuances. We also suggest an addendum that considers the changes in technology, social norms, and national policies that have evolved since the task force was first initiated in 2019.

Online programs are more likely to be of relevance to the social sciences and humanities than science and engineering programs that involve laboratory components. Online engineering programs would also need to be compliant with accreditation requirements, and this dimension isn't fully explored in the report.

Should engineering colleagues from within the system express interest in offering online engineering programs, we would be interested in engaging in a dialogue with them to learn more, and to potentially offer targeted support once we are better informed.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if there are additional questions.

Best regards,
Catherine Keske
(SoE ExComm Chair)

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SCHOOL OF NATUAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 N. LAKE ROAD BLDG A
MERCED, CA 95343

5 November 2020

To: Robin DeLugan, Chair, Merced Division of the Academic Senate

From: Harish S. Bhat, Chair, Natural Sciences Executive Committee

Re: Systemwide Review: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

NSEC has discussed the report by email. Overall, NSEC is in favor of both Policies 1 and 3.

Policy 1 makes it clear that UC-quality undergraduate degrees (e.g., as currently implemented at UC Merced) cannot be fully replaced with 100% online degrees. NSEC believes that in-person experiences form an important part of the undergraduate degree. These experiences include lab and field work, as well as in-person interaction in a campus culture that values research, creativity, and discovery.

Policy 3 allows for the creation of 100% online degrees, with the caveat that these degrees will be branded differently than existing degrees with a face-to-face (F2F) component. The landscape of higher education may shift notably after the pandemic is over. The fraction of students who want an all-online option may grow notably while overall enrollment in the US is projected to decline. It would be in the best interests of UC to engage students interested in an all-online option.

The policies also raise two questions:

1) If our current pandemic mode persists for significantly longer than is currently expected, will Policy 1 be sufficiently flexible to accommodate students? For instance, if we are forced to remain online for the next four years, then it might be extremely difficult or impossible for newly admitted students to complete at least one-third of their units face-to-face.

2) Do these policies distinguish at all between synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction? These provide very different experiences for students. The policy should clarify what type of balance between synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction is allowed or recommended for fully online degrees.

We look forward to clarifications of these points and future discussion on this topic.

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CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
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December 14, 2020

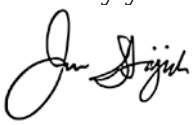
Mary Gauvain, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Mary,

The UCR Senate is pleased to provide the attached package of standing committee feedback on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. Apologies for the delay.

Sincerely yours,



Jason Stajich
Professor of Microbiology & Plant Pathology and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director of the Academic Senate
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate

UC RIVERSIDE

Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON COURSES

November 2, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Ming Lee Tang, Chair
Committee on Courses

Re: Systemwide Online Degree Taskforce Report

The Committee on Courses reviewed the Systemwide Online Degree Taskforce Report at their October 14, 2020 and October 28, 2020 meetings and had a robust discussion regarding the report.

Firstly, the Committee would like to commend the Taskforce on this excellent report that speaks to the challenges ahead. The Committee is glad to note that (i) the Taskforce realizes that faculty buy in is critical to the success of this proposal, and (ii) no existing major should be transitioned to 'online only' without triggering Senate oversight. The Committee noted concern that the report did not address the motivation for developing online degrees in light of the remote learning environment catalyzed by the pandemic, nor does it indicate if online degree programs would be implemented by the System or at the local level. Revenue-based incentives were lacking and the Committee recognizes that economies of scale would accrue if a degree were offered at the System wide level.

Concern was noted that campuses that are underfunded (e.g. UC Riverside) might not have all the resources needed to support online degree programs. Substantial financial support from the state to create quality remote options (e.g. to fund infrastructure, faculty, staff, and graduate student TAs) would be required to change public perception about the low quality of remote programs. In addition, the problem of plagiarism/ cheating in an online environment was not addressed.

Lastly, the Committee noted concern that online degree programs will not give students a full UC experience. Remote learning precludes interactions with peers in student-run activities, research-active faculty, opportunities for independent research and self-exploration, development of interpersonal skills and good study skills via immersion in the rich intellectual and cultural environment inherent to UCs. As pointed out by the Taskforce, students go to college not solely to acquire knowledge, but to learn to learn and to synthesize knowledge. It is not clear if our broad educational mission can be fulfilled via a purely online degree.

UC RIVERSIDE Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

October 15, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Stefano Vidussi, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report

The Committee reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report at their October 2, 2020 meeting and had a robust discussion. First, while the report mentions a recent UCI based study that seems to show that online degrees do not disadvantage URM and other socioeconomic groups, there's well-established scholarly literature that points in the opposite direction, and while this situation may be evolving, scrutiny is necessary. Concern was noted on whether a student can receive a UC quality degree with a program that is offered all online (Options 2 and 3). The Committee recommended that if the System was to proceed with offering partly online undergraduate degree programs (Option 1) that regulations be set in place for students to be on campus for one half to three quarters of the portion of the degree. Concern was also noted with the potential reliance on adjunct faculty to instruct the courses for the online degree program, which would be potentially untenable for the UC System. The Committee recommended that rigorous guidelines be set for any proposed online undergraduate degrees to ensure that the programs are close to the same quality as on campus degree programs.

UC RIVERSIDE Academic Senate

GRADUATE COUNCIL

October 29, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Amanda Lucia, Chair
Graduate Council

Re: Report Review: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Graduate Council discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report at their October 15, 2020 meeting. Members agreed there was no benefit to the third option. This option would require considerable substantive support and would not uphold the high caliber of a UC education. It would also create disparities between UC campuses (without student incentives to choose newer and more vulnerable campuses). The Council felt the second option was also philosophically very dangerous in that it has the potential to eviscerate entire disciplines whose campus contribution is invaluable but that do not readily translate into an online environment. Most importantly, if any of these options move forward, there must be: (1) investment in faculty development and faculty compensation, (2) campus infrastructure for online pedagogy and ongoing technical support, and (3) a robust plan for implementation - not just a summary of research. There are also persistent inequities surrounding access to internet, technology, etc. that need to be addressed and given thought.

The Council is cognizant of the fact that the UC must be forward thinking and suggests using a task force that can push us forward while maintaining UC quality; a hybrid model was preferable to most members.

UC RIVERSIDE

Academic Senate

October 23, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Alejandra Dubcovsky, Chair
Committee on Library and Information Technology

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Committee on Library and Information Technology reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at their October 15, 2020 meeting and cited several concerns relating to the Committee's charge of Library and Information Technology.

The Committee had many concerns about the access and costs of online education. The report made clear, and our experiences during COVID online teaching has shown that students for whom access is an issue are also those students who would have the most difficulty with successful remote learning. In short, online education would exacerbate existing inequalities among students. Second, the move to online education requires varying levels of infrastructural reorganization, training, and course redesign; all this change would cost significant amounts of money. It was not at all clear if this proposed online instruction model would actually save the University any money.

Moreover, the report was not clear how the recommended percentages (1/3 physical classes and 2/3 online instruction) was established.

As for the Library and its ability to provide resources, the main concerns were about books and materials that instructors would need for online learning. Because of COVID both HathiTrust and the Internet Archive have provided UCR with access to online materials. But after COVID, UCR would not have access to these online materials, meaning that the library would be responsible for purchasing a great deal of books and other resources for online teaching. With impending budget cuts, it was unclear how the Library could shoulder those costs.

As for Technology, the report issued no minimum standard that was deemed appropriate for video production or course design. The potential cost, both from the production and technological training and support for course redesign were not properly addressed. The report also did not address how the disparate technological needs and problems of students would be met or funded.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

October 30, 2020

TO: Jason Stajich
Chair, Riverside Division

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

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The UC Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) was tasked with evaluation the feasibility and desirability of an online degree program. The committee was comprised of twelve members from all over the UC's. The task force posed questions and tried to determine if an online degree could meet UC standards. The task force was **not** responsible for determining the effectiveness of online classes.

In assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three policies, the UCEP used Quality Criteria (based on *Characteristics of Educational Quality* written by the committee in 2011), which emphasized: student access to core UC faculty and to a research-based environment; as well as intellectual and cultural diversity, all of which are more important than the mere transmission of information.

Moreover, "the task force feels strongly that the rapid shift to online-only learning following recent campus closures due to COVID-19 should not be used as a template for moving forward in this domain in the future" (p. 8 of the report). Certainly the significantly negative sentiments voiced in the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) conducted during Spring term 2020 (link on p. 8 of the report) explains why the task force wanted to dissociate its general examination of the development of online degree programs from the pandemic experience. Nevertheless, as we note below, the remote learning during the last several school terms provided much useful information and a cautionary tale.

The UCEP proposed three options and rejected a fourth:

1. Policy 1: Not fully remote (allowing for up to 1/3 online)
2. Policy 2: Fully Remote OK
    a. FULLY Online degrees
    b. Many degrees can include online components
3. Policy 3: Remote but not comparable to UC degree, for example offering "BA of Arts in Economics"
4. NOT recommended: online degrees taught by different faculty

It is a thoughtful report that notes:

1. online education *could* meet UC standards, but would be expensive to achieve, more so at the undergraduate than for the graduate levels
2. the costs are not just financial, but would also demand greater effort and time from all participants, instructors, and students alike
3. moreover, if a UC campus offers programs that vary in the extent of online and in-person (face-to-face/F2F) instruction, then this may result in inequities in how different students have access to the "UC experience" and in the amount of work that different faculty have, raising questions about standards for personnel actions
4. lower-cost alternatives can be implemented, but at the expense of aggravating educational inequities and be less successful in meeting UC quality criteria
5. as yet, unanswerable questions include: how would online programs affect the quality of UC's educational offerings in comparison with other institutions (which do not have online degree programs)?

The CHASS EC had several questions about specific points in the report.

1. For Policy 1: What is the rationale for the 1/3 non-remote major and GE requirements? The majority percentage of coursework would be allowed in remote format, but the report gives no supporting documents explaining how this percentage was worked out.
2. The report states several times that UC already has fully remote courses (prior to the pandemic). How many? What are the hard numbers around course success, student satisfaction, etc? What is the allowable number of such courses?

Further, the CHASS EC's discussion of this report and the written reviews by two of its members note:

1. The task force aims to separate its assessment of online undergraduate programs, although the report does address relatively briefly the experience of UC campuses' forced and largely improvised "remote learning" due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, any further plans for an online undergraduate program should be placed on hold until we have a clearer understanding of what the pedagogical effects upon students have been and how faculty feel the quality of their teaching has been negatively (or positively) affected.

2. Moreover, during a time, even when our campus resources are already stretched--even not counting the devastating effects of the pandemic--when staff are already overburdened due to continuing budget cuts, and when class sizes have increased significantly without financial support for readers, TAs, etc., it is counterintuitive at best and cynically irresponsible at worse to propose changes that would at every level require more financial and people-power resources. In light of the alarming budgetary situation, wherein the next few years will see even more belt-tightening, it makes no sense to pour resources into these proposed courses/degrees.

Our strenuous recommendation for caution is based on specific and solid evidence. In Fall 2018 the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) received the "Provost's Task Force for Hybrid and Online Education final Report," which sought to incentivize the creation of fully online courses here at UCR. They proposed the creation of 250 courses within 5 years. However, FWC noted that the university lacked the structural and financial infrastructure to develop these courses in a

way that would not place the onus on faculty. We were particularly alarmed that junior faculty might be tempted to develop such courses in order to meet departmental efforts to comply with the growth plan and that the lack of infrastructure would put them at professional risk. The preponderance of the task force's information was culled from non-research institutions and those otherwise below the caliber of UCR. FWC rejected the task force proposal as poorly researched and designed in terms of financial costs, time and energy resources, and implementation plans.

3. That we received this report at the same time that we are considering the "Crossing Boundaries: The New UCR General Education Curriculum" report suggests the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing, as these two groups of reports – i.e., a sweeping restructuring of undergraduate education and the proposal to allow for partial or fully remote degrees -- have sharply divergent motivations.

4. This task force was deemed necessary due to UCI's proposal for an entirely online degree in Business Administration. The strong belief of a number of CHASS faculty and the experience of some undergraduate students who have taken courses taught by the UCR School of Business is that Schools of Business seem to have different goals than other colleges. At the least, the such schools do not emphasize pedagogy and quality of the learning experience.

Indeed, degrees that could claim to be effective in a fully online environment would seem to be housed in schools/programs whose pedagogical mission is farthest from what a UC-quality degree is deemed to be. The motivations for proposing such degrees are, to at least some members of the CHASS faculty, suspect and would negatively affect students, the quality of their education, and the reputation of the UCs.

5. Because there was much concern about how UCI had attempted to create an online degree **without** Senate oversight. To "prevent 'stealth' remote majors from being developed without adequate Senate oversight to ensure the quality of the program", the task force recommends creating a divisional oversight committee, as well as a systemwide committee, should a degree allow or require more than 50% remote classes (Appendix I, p. 34). However, the first option of the very proposal we are reading allows for 70% of major courses and 70% of GE courses to be remote. This suggests that service burdens would increase at both the divisional and systemwide levels.

6. UCR prides itself as an institution dedicated to promoting a diverse student body and helping economically disadvantaged students achieve academic success. Thus, UCR should be very careful in considering developing online undergraduate programs and degrees, since it is precisely those low-income students who would be most challenged, financially and academically. Evidence, both anecdotal and from surveys strongly show that the remote learning of the Spring 2020 quarter, the summer sessions, and the current Fall 2020 quarter have posed significant challenges to students lacking the technology to access the online instructional materials in their courses. And all three options examined by the task force report would require significant, if varying, levels of infrastructural organization – and therefore would accrue financial costs. Programs whose foundational rationale are based on these two items have low graduation success rates, as well as low student satisfaction rates.

The oft-cited argument that students can save money through online instruction because they can stay at home, thus saving on room and board ignores the considerable costs of a quality online program and the lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors and advisers (see the full discussions of Appendices F, G, and H of the report). And among the students who would benefit most living on campus and direct personal contact with faculty are those who can least afford to forgo these experiences. In short, online degree programs may prove to be neither equitable nor economical.

7. A related issue is that the effectiveness of remote learning modes is mixed and often dependent on very particular groups of students. None of the information here pertains to completely online degrees; rather, it is based on individual courses. (See Appendix D, p. 14.)

8. Developing online degree programs and even individual online courses also make great demands on the faculty. While one may argue that the growth of online courses is inevitable, UC and any academic institution committed to quality pedagogy by its core faculty must deliberate carefully how more appropriate ways to assess faculty members' success in their teaching, research, and service in the light of more online teaching and most likely more research collaboration online. The task force was not asked to address these issues, but they should be examined in the future.

In sum, the task force report believes that more online classes and options were a clear trajectory for UC but want UC standards upheld. It thus had more reservations about Policies 2 and 3, as did the majority of the CHASS Executive Committee members. And one member stated: "Both at this time and in principle, I reject all 3 proposals, with my greatest resistance to #2 and #3. That said, I don't believe #1 is at all wise to undertake."

UC RIVERSIDE | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
Executive Committee

October 18, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Theodore Garland, Jr., Chair, Executive Committee
College of Natural and Agricultural Science

Re: Systemwide Review - Report Review: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Committee observed that each of the models has plusses and minuses, but that it doesn't seem practical to do a broad online policy for all of UC. There are some possibilities for a small number of CNAS courses to be done remotely, that there may be some practicalities for some departments if they were interested, and we can reconsider some of the insights from the Report as we continue to learn more about remote learning.

At this time some of the strategies are still in the abstract because we haven't experienced them yet and we should be careful to consider our UCR population in terms of how they manage remote learning compared to other institutions. The Committee considered that remote learning, which is what UCR is experiencing now, is a different experience than full-fledged online learning. The Committee also noted that there needs to be an equitable distribution of resources to support the activities, proportional to the needs of the respective campus, and so it would be practical for this report to include financial support. Ultimately, the Committee concluded that with respect to the possibility of degrees being done entirely online, we don't see that as feasible for our college.

Cheers,

Ted Garland

School of Medicine
Division of Biomedical Sciences
Riverside, CA, 92521

October 22nd, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

From: Declan McCole, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

Subject: SOM FEC Response to the *Online Degree Task Force Report*

Dear Jason,

The SOM Executive Committee reviewed the *Online Degree Task Force Report.* The FEC applauds the very detailed efforts of the Task Force to identify the potential benefits and concerns of an online degree program. We have a number of questions and concerns that we would welcome clarification on regarding the Online Degree Task Force Report.

1. There is a lot of information in this report regarding evaluation of outcomes – mainly based on community college students – but it was clear that students performed better in face-to-face (F2F) classes than in online classes. Those most disadvantaged were "Males, younger students, Black students, and students with lower prior GPAs". Having identified these groups as being most vulnerable to the disadvantages of online earning, consideration should be given to upfront monitoring of their performance upon initiation of online learning programs.
2. We fully agree with the task force assessment that "we cannot adopt a model like that of ASU, in which a separate cohort of lower-wage instructors teach the online courses".
3. There is also the danger – with some evidence at UCI – that some programs seek to migrate online without local or system-wide review by the Academic Senate. The task force recommendation that measures be put in place to prevent "stealth" remote majors from being developed without adequate Senate oversight to ensure the quality of the program is a very important consideration.
4. Some additional clarity on who will be the target audience for remote learning degrees would be welcome. For example, will online degrees be focused on California residents; non-state residents; a hybrid?
5. If students are required to spend some amount of time on campus (Plans 1 & 2), does this mean that students are expected to move here for 1 quarter of the year for 3-4 years?
6. What are the practicalities of this with respect to obtaining housing (renters may want a minimum 6 month commitment), students are presumably working while studying so do they have to quit their jobs for a quarter and hope they can retain or find new employment afterwards? *Cal-state has offered programs to accommodate the working student whereas the UC does not. Will it be emphasized that even a UC online degree program may not be a good option for the working student from that perspective?*
7. How will online UC degrees be judged if online graduates apply for on-campus UC graduate programs including professional schools (Medicine, Business, Engineering, Law)? Will they only be eligible to join fee-paying Masters programs? – *The FEC feels very strongly that the UC system - and UCR - have to set the example that we will accept online degree graduates to our graduate programs because if we don't, why should any other institution? This will place a burden on the*

new online degree programs to really emphasize UC-standard quality across the board for these degrees as they will essentially act as a gateway for graduates to either further their education or obtain better jobs than would have been available without a UC degree.

8. There was strong concern regarding barriers to access regardless of which plan is selected. With respect to plans 1 & 2, there was concern as to whether incorporation of an on-campus obligation will act as a barrier to access for certain students? This would argue in favor of option 3 from an equity & access perspective. Specifically, students who live in geographically isolated rural areas i.e. the Coachella valley) are disadvantaged because they can't commute to a UC (other rural areas of Northern California have even greater distance to UCs) and may not be able to afford housing near a UC (especially if they are expected to be on campus for part of a year then landlords may not be inclined to rent to them vs. students renting for a full year). To address this, will the UCs subsidize campus housing for students who cannot afford to rent?
9. Has any consideration been given to making accommodations for students who can't physically commute due to the aforementioned economic or geographic restrictions, perhaps they are caring for a family member at home etc.?
10. Concerns with access to the online degree programs also exist for those who do not have to spend time on campus (Plan #3) also exist. As exemplified by the current issues across the educational spectrum during the COVID-19 pandemic, not everyone has access to broadband etc. especially in geographically isolated areas or areas with poorer infrastructure issues i.e. Coachella valley. Will accommodations be made at either the UC or the state level to support or subsidize wifi access for those students?
11. With respect to the language in Policy 2 – the FEC suggests removing reference to a "small number" of programs and instead emphasizing the need to meet the high bar associated with a UC degree. Emphasize how improving infrastructure for this hybrid model could increase access (housing, broadband connectivity, devices, etc.).

Yours sincerely,

Declan McCole

Declan F. McCole, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
School of Medicine

UC SANTA BARBARA

Academic Senate
Susannah Scott, Chair
Shasta Delp, Executive Director

1233 Girvetz Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050
http://www.senate.ucsb.edu

December 8, 2020

To: Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Susannah Scott, Chair
Santa Barbara Division

Re: Systemwide Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Santa Barbara Division distributed the task force report to the Undergraduate Council (UgC), Committee on Courses and General Education (CCGE), Council on Planning and Budget (CPB), Committee on Library and Instructional Resources (CLIIR), Committee on Information Technology (CIT), and the Faculty Executive Committees of the College of Letters and Science (L&S FEC), College of Engineering (COE FEC), and College of Creative Studies (CCS FEC).

The reviewing agencies were nearly unanimous in their deep concern about the ability to produce a fully online degree program that meets the standard of excellence that is expected from the University of California. The development, implementation, and maintenance of high-quality online degree programs would require a wealth of resources, in terms of time, funding, and labor. CPB asks a broader question, appropriate for consideration at this time, which is "What is UC's commitment to doing the research, planning, and development on online education that would make it fit UC's standards for a UC-quality education?"

Many of the responding groups highlighted the importance of the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities that are associated with being in residence at a University, and expressed uncertainty about the ability to reproduce equivalent remote experiences. These include, but are not limited to research opportunities, experiential learning in labs, in the field, or in the studio, and connections made in residential living arrangements, study group meetings, and office hours, sports, the arts, and student government. As stated by CLIIR, "an education is not just the transmission of information, but an experience that is embodied." CCGE calls attention to the statement in the report that "student success and student satisfaction hinge on the kinds of rich social entanglements both within and beyond the classroom that it is harder to provide in a remote environment" (p. 23).

Another key area common to the council and committee responses is access, diversity, and equity. Several groups noted that online programs may provide increased accessibility for students who may not be able to participate in the traditional residential experience for various reasons such as financial resources, family commitments, employment, or disability. Others pointed out students' varied living environments, resources, access to technology, and other challenges that might impact their academic

engagement. Studies indicate that the dropout rate in online courses is greater and that the performance level of students in those courses is lower. CPB suggests that students who would select the fully online degree if it were more financially accessible might be the students who would most benefit from being in residence. How online learning would affect UC's commitment to access, diversity, and equity is yet to be determined.

Based on the information provided, the council and committee opinions on the three specific policy options weigh significantly in favor of Option 1, and away from Option 2 and Option 3. As CPB states, Option 1 is recognized as the only model that "has the potential to approximate a quality UC education," though a rationale for the percentage of remote instruction would need to be developed. The opposition to Option 3 is strong, with several groups expressing profound discomfort with the UC offering undergraduate degrees that are substantially or fully online, or outright rejection of the idea. Again, one of the key principles is the ability to deliver a UC-caliber education. In this vein, both CPB and the L&S FEC concur with the Task Force in their emphasis that the curriculum for online degree programs should not be taught by a separate class of instructors. Several groups also expressed concern that a significant investment in online degree programs would draw resources away from traditional academic programs, thereby diminishing the quality of education.

The Santa Barbara Division concurs with the task force members that much research is still needed, and many groups noted that this must include consideration of the observations and lessons learned during the ongoing period of remote instruction. The councils and committees raise a large number of operational, and practical questions and concerns, detailed in their individual responses (attached). Topics such as student demand, academic engagement, the benefits and drawbacks of asynchronous instruction, student success, opportunities for general education, change of major, the use of for-profit technology platforms for instruction and assessment, security and data privacy, remote proctoring, academic integrity, network capacity, staff support, and student support resources, are just a few of the issues which would require more thorough examination before the University can seriously consider new initiatives of this type.

We are also in agreement with the task force's recommendation that the be Academic Senate fully consulted on every aspect of future plans for online instruction. We thank you for the opportunity to opine.

Academic Senate
Santa Barbara Division

November 19, 2020

To: Susannah Scott, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Mary Betsy Brenner, Chair
Undergraduate Council

Re: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Undergraduate Council considered the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report over several meetings during the fall quarter.

UgC declines to endorse any of the three policy options presented in the report. Members are inclined to support Policy 1, but are unable to make an informed decision due to the lack of information about the feasibility of Policy 2 and Policy 3. Based on the information present, there is no support for Policy 3 as a potential approach to undergraduate education in the near future. The development and implementation of high-quality, fully online courses tend to be highly resource intensive in both funding and faculty and staff time. There is reasonable potential for the quality of faculty-student interactions and peer-to-peer interactions to decline in quality, and for course material to become outdated. Further, absent a major initiative to shift co-curricular activities and on-campus services to remote delivery, students could miss a significant component of their undergraduate experience.

Overall, the Council feels that the timing is suboptimal for a meaningful discussion of this issue and that the report would be better examined in the post-pandemic period. While it is true that recent course offerings were transitioned to a remote modality under pandemic conditions, and cannot be reasonably compared to an intentionally designed fully online course, there are sure to be valuable observations and lessons learned from this period of remote learning that would be applicable to the current discussion. Potential areas of reflection might include access, measures of student success and satisfaction, demand, academic integrity, and remote proctoring. The Council also suggests that further discussions of this issue include the experiences and recommendations of faculty who have taught fully online courses.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director

Academic Senate
Santa Barbara Division

December 1, 2020

TO: Susannah Scott, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: William Davies King, Chair
Committee on Courses and General Education

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Committee on Courses and General Education (CCGE) met on November 17 to discuss the Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force, and a number of points were raised about this topic. No consensus emerged from our discussion concerning the proposed options. Several expressed the opinion that the work of this task force has unfortunately (or fortunately) coincided with an unavoidable experiment in online education due to the COVID-19 crisis. Since virtually everyone in this university is confronting the pros and cons of the various modes of remote instruction, we feel that a more apt moment for thinking about the creation of an online undergraduate degree program might be at the end of this academic year or the beginning of the next.

Several members of the committee pointed out some of the advantages of an online degree program within the university. For financially disadvantaged students, who might find it impractical to reside near the university, or who must simultaneously find employment (even full-time) while pursuing a degree, having the option to do the academic work online could be a significant advantage. Considering that underrepresented minority students might be more likely to fall into this category, we can see that an online program might increase access to the university. Accessibility is a fundamental problem for many students with disabilities, and they, too, could benefit.

However, the benefit of access would diminish if the online program did not provide an equivalent education. That is our biggest concern about online programs for all students who might reasonably suppose that a UC degree program ought to be of a uniformly high standard in whatever mode it is delivered. Further, equity is an issue of great concern with regard to online programs. Students have varied living environments, resources, access to technology, and other challenges that might impact their academic engagement. Studies indicate that the dropout rate in online courses is greater and that the performance level of students in those courses is lower.
Another issue to consider is that many students initially choose to pursue one degree program, only to find that they really belong in another. Sometimes the other pathway is found through a General Education (GE) course or from a roommate's suggestion or from the observation of an instructor who sees some promising ability in a student. An online program, especially any sort of fully online program, would not enable that sort of discovery the way a campus experience would.

However an online undergraduate degree program is set up, the student would face GE requirements, which this committee promotes as an important part of an education, fully consistent with the ideals of a liberal arts education. We have concerns that an online degree

program would marginalize GE education, since only a small number of GE courses are offered online.

We also wondered if the university would actually benefit financially from the establishment of an online program, when you consider the intense effort required to establish online courses and then to run them. This is especially true in the early stages of developing such a course, and CCGE has a rigorous protocol for reviewing online courses. The protocol is necessary for many reasons, specifically aimed at ensuring that the course remains at a high standard, with systems to check on the progress of students, to thwart cheating and plagiarism, and to evaluate work accurately. Even in the long run, once the three-year process of initial review is passed, online courses must be revised to keep up to date and to maintain the high standard. Passing on the supervision of an online course to a new instructor, as will happen with the shifting personnel within a department, presents a critical challenge.

We are aware that some colleges—notably the California community colleges—require certification of instructors who provide online courses. Would certification be required of UC faculty, and what form would that take? Furthermore, would certification even be feasible for graduate student associates who step into the teaching within an online degree program?

If a significant portion of a department's faculty is focused on initiating and maintaining the online program, will that diminish the quality of education of the students who pursue degrees in the department on campus?

It seems clear that many departments will be unable to offer an online degree program, perhaps not even at the 2/3 proportion indicated in Option 1. Programs that require laboratory and studio courses simply could not transform into online degree programs. Would a university that shifts its resources to programs that could be offered online end up disadvantaging the programs that could not?

The co-curricular and extracurricular facets of a university education should be kept in mind, as the opportunity for those sorts of experiences would diminish with a proliferation of online options. As noted in the report, "student success and student satisfaction hinge on the kinds of rich social entanglements both within and beyond the classroom that it is harder to provide in a remote environment" (p. 23). Residential living cohorts, study group meetings, and office hours facilitate student connection and academic engagement. Sports, the arts, student government: these and other activities often end up orienting students to an adult working life in a way that is more influential than a degree program. Then too, the argument that online options might benefit disadvantaged students (under-represented, disabled, working parents) might lead to a *less* diverse student population on campus.

Any of the above arguments that might be posed against the development of online degree programs might be presumed to be weakened in Option 1, which seems to argue in favor of that option. However, we could see no rationale for imposing a two thirds/one third ratio.

Again, we appreciate the work done by the task force, but we question whether the university has come to the point where enough is known about the advantages and disadvantages, the costs and the benefits, to make a sound decision about which of these options, if any, ought to be favored. This is especially true in the moment of coping with COVID-19.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ACADEMIC SENATE
SANTA BARBARA DIVISION
Council on Planning & Budget

October 22, 2020

To: Susannah Scott
Chair, Academic Senate

From: Douglas Steigerwald, Chair
Council on Planning & Budget

Re: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Council on Planning & Budget (CPB) has reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force's Report. Generally, the Council feels that understanding how to best incorporate online/remote elements into undergraduate education is a timely issue, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Task Force was given the specific mandate to study the possibility of fully remote degree programs at UC (instigated by one UC's proposal for an all-online undergraduate degree) and not the viability of remote instruction in general. Nonetheless, the Task Force, to try to give a context to its recommendations, reviewed the existing research on online education, which it found to be out of date and not scientifically reliable. Surprisingly, the data produced by self-interested parties in all-remote instruction from the University of Phoenix to ASU conclude that it does not work for many students, especially disadvantaged ones; has huge technological development expenses; costs more to deliver than most in-person instruction unless classes are large and taught by less expensive adjunct instructors; and has significant deficits for what is considered a top-tier research university education where students interact with faculty and peers in a rich campus setting.

The Task Force provides three distinct policy options with the strengths and weaknesses of each:

- **Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree)** would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
- **Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree)** would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
- **Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree)** would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

While both the Task Force and CPB found all three options to be problematic without a great deal of further research, they emphatically rejected any option that involved an online degree program taught by separate non-UC faculty and not equivalent to a UC degree. The Task Force

evaluated each option not so much for its operational feasibility, which is largely undeveloped at present, but for whether it met "The Characteristics of Educational Quality at the University of California." These characteristics can be summarized as access to a world-class faculty actively engaged in research and exposure to intellectual and cultural diversity.

CPB evaluated each option this way:

Option 1 (UC-Quality On-Campus Degree), while still needing a great deal of further research, is the only one that has the potential to approximate a quality UC education. However, a rationale for the percentage of remote instruction to on-campus experience would need to be developed.

Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) already exists at UC but for graduate programs only such as the Berkeley Online Master of Information and Data Science. Such a program can succeed because it has an older, already professional demographic and can intervene early when problems are detected because of smaller classes. Issues of scale alone would make this option prohibitive for most undergraduate degrees. So, too, we know from our forced experiment with all-remote instruction during the pandemic, students crave the on-campus experience. Also, the students who would select the all-remote degree if it were cheaper might be the students who would most benefit from being in residence.

Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) also already exists at UC in its Extension programs, many of which offer much-needed high-quality certificate programs with the UC imprimatur but without the classroom experience.

CPB has many practical questions or doubts about how any of the three options could work. They range from how student evaluations function in an online environment and how online instruction would affect the transfer students' program to how to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach across different campuses and disciplines and student bodies. Another practical consideration involves adopting for-profit technology platforms for instruction and assessment, such as Zoom and ProctorU, that cannot guarantee security or data privacy. We did this on an emergency basis during the pandemic, but is it sustainable to outsource our teaching mission to these unaccountable corporations?

But more philosophical issues stood out:

- What is UC's interest in remote/online instruction–is it to save money?
- To what extent is it possible to adapt the on-line experience to the totality of the in-residence college experience that students and faculty desire and demand?
- What is UC's commitment to doing the research, planning, and development on online education that would make it fit UC's standards for a UC-quality education?
- How would a more substantial adoption of on-line learning affect UC's commitment to diversity and equity?

The Task Force's report concluded by saying that it had no agreed-upon recommendations but was instead offering the report as a framework for much-needed further research. CPB agrees that a great deal more research is needed and also that we must have the chance to learn from our experience with emergency remote instruction.

The Task Force's Report's final and most insistent recommendation was that no matter how or what percentage of remote instruction we end up adopting, the Academic Senate must be fully consulted on every aspect. CPB concurs.

cc: Shasta Delp, Academic Senate Executive Director

Academic Senate
Santa Barbara Division

November 23, 2020

To: Susannah Scott, Divisional Chair
Academic Senate

From: Karen Lunsford, Chair
Committee on Library, Information, and Instructional Resources

Re: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Committee on Library, Information, and Instructional Resources reviewed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at its meeting on November 20, 2020. The committee felt that this was a radical rethinking of the university, and the membership rejected the possibility of the University of California offering online undergraduate degrees.

Committee members collectively expressed that online degrees are not capable of delivering an experience equivalent to being on campus. They emphasized that an education is not just the transmission of information, but an experience that is embodied. They further argued that co-curricular opportunities and research experiences cannot be adequately accommodated in an online format, even with a requirement for partial on-campus presence. Although the report was completed prior to the pandemic, the faculty felt that their recent experience with delivering coursework online due to COVID-19 has only reinforced their perception of inherent flaws in the platform, rather than encouraged their desire to expand into the online realm. Despite some successes in online courses, it is clear that their students understand that they are not receiving the same caliber of education in an online mode.

The members expressed many procedural concerns, primarily that it is not possible to have an online degree program without the entire university functioning in kind, as degrees are not siloed in single departments. There are questions about increased faculty workload and impacts to research that would necessarily follow, for both faculty and students. Some areas, such as the arts, require physical contact; although they are functioning in the current emergency, the faculty feel it would be hypocritical to claim that a genuine education could be delivered permanently through such channels. Moreover, the necessary reallocation of resources to allow for online degrees would actually decrease available options for the students who are receiving their education in person. The impact on staff is particularly underestimated in the report. The committee is fundamentally opposed to the creation and promotion of online undergraduate degrees through the University of California.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

Academic Senate
Santa Barbara Division

November 13, 2020

To: Susannah Scott, Divisional Chair
Academic Senate

From: James Frew, Chair
Committee on Information Technology

Re: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Committee on Information Technology reviewed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at its meeting on November 13, 2020. Although the members recognized this study originated from a proposed 'first of its kind' program, they did not see a need adequately demonstrated and felt that this decision must be evaluated only in that context. The members are profoundly uncomfortable with the idea of the University of California offering degrees in which a substantial volume of coursework is completed online.

Members discussed the varying degrees of success they've experienced with their own online teaching over this past year; they support online content delivery when it is able to enhance the teaching and learning experience. However, they still see many barriers to success in the remote landscape that have yet to be resolved; in particular, the ability of instructors to accurately assess student performance and effectively promote student participation, particularly in an asynchronous setting, remains abysmal. Members expressed concern that, in many circumstances, the online environment is teaching students how to "find answers" rather than build their capacity for scientific thinking.

One member took issue with the Characteristics of Educational Quality at the UC that are identified in the report, and the assessment as to whether they could be delivered in the various degree modules. This member felt that some of these characteristics could not truly be isolated from one another and therefore could not be used to accurately distinguish the various options.

Members saw additional challenges from an IT perspective. Although removing the students' need to be present on campus might allow for increased enrollment opportunities, many systems will not be scalable in a linear manner. Increased licensing fees, expanded network capacity, and the increased need for support/help resources are just some of the challenges, to say nothing of the costs of high-level production associated with successful online course delivery. Members also expressed concern about the potential impacts on disadvantaged populations in terms of accessing remote content.

The resounding sentiment among the members is that it is not currently possible to deliver the caliber of education expected from the UC in a predominantly online format and that the institution would irreparably harm its reputation in offering substandard degree options.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

UC SANTA BARBARA

Faculty Executive Committee
College of Letters and Science

November 25, 2020

To: Susannah Scott
Chair, Divisional Academic Senate

From: Sabine Frühstück
Chair, L&S Faculty Executive Committee

Re: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Letters and Science (FEC) reviewed the report of the systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force. The report considers the possibility of the University offering online undergraduate degrees and presents three options.

The FEC concurs with the report that remote degrees should not be "developed and run by a separate class of instructors" (i.e., outsourced to "a separate set of faculty"). Further, the FEC assesses that the risks of instituting fully online degrees are considerable, and finds that the data at this point do not support the success of such a venture at the level of UC-Quality.

Given the current state of the evidence, FEC finds only Option 1, UC-Quality On-campus degrees that allow some portion of units to be completed remotely, acceptable. The committee was unanimous in its assessment.

cc: Pierre Wiltzius, Executive Dean of the College and Dean of Science
Jeffrey Stopple, Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Charlie Hale, Dean of Social Sciences
Mary Hancock, Acting Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts

October 6, 2020

TO: Susannah Scott
Divisional Chair, Academic Senate

FROM: Pradeep Sen, Chair
College of Engineering, Faculty Executive Committee

RE: Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The College of Engineering FEC met on Monday, October 5, 2020, and reviewed the proposal and would like to offer some comments discussed in the meeting.

The committee did not fully understand the intent of the report. However, some members mentioned they would support an online undergraduate degree should a system be in place to help decrease the cost. On the other hand, some members expressed that an online undergraduate degree option may diminish a critical experience such as campus living where collaboration and synergies happen. It was also noted that the options were probably discussed before the pandemic and should probably be reconsidered.

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COLLEGE OF CREATIVE STUDIES

November 23, 2020

To: Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Fr: Kara Mae Brown, FEC Chair, College of Creative Studies.

Re: CCS FEC response to Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

First, we would like to thank the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force for their thoughtful and thorough consideration of the possibility of the University of California developing and offering fully remote undergraduate degrees. The timing of this report seems apropos, since we have been teaching remotely for most of calendar year 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a faculty, we've learned that major disruptions to our regular modes of teaching can and will happen and that remote learning is an important piece of the overall puzzle of providing accessible, high quality higher education to the citizens of California. We've also learned that high quality remote teaching requires immense resources of time, funding, and labor. Given the former, we agree that both Option 1 and 2 seem prudent and likely paths for the future, provided that--given the latter--sufficient resources are provided in the course of development and maintenance of those degree programs.

In the past, remote learning has often been explored as a cost-saving measure, but this report seems clear-eyed about the fact that a remote degree program taught by the UC faculty may in fact prove more costly, but still worth pursuing because of the increased accessibility provided to students who may not be able to participate in the traditional on-campus experience. Indeed, the high quality remote degree programs described in this report would require significant investment.

We tried in particular to consider if such UC-Quality Remote Degrees or Instruction-Only Remote Degrees would have a place in the College of Creative Studies (CCS), where small groups of undergraduate students earn degrees in nine areas across STEM and Arts and Humanities fields. One of the defining characteristics of the CCS experience is that students are encouraged to become participants in the production of knowledge in their given fields early and often in their undergraduate careers, often through experiential learning in labs, in the field, or in the studio. As such, it is difficult to imagine a remote degree that would still be true to that CCS experience in most fields, though there was some variation between the different majors.

In short, we agree with the task force's assessment on p. 39 of the report, where they state:

This task force was charged with considering the wisdom of offering "online only" degrees at the University of California, and to that end it spent considerable time learning about and debating the strengths and weaknesses of online pedagogy. But ultimately, what some have come to realize is that the question of "online" versus "face to face" education is to some degree a side-issue. Online education, like face to face education, can be done well or done badly, suits certain subjects or topics well, and not others. Increasingly, it will be seen simply as one among many tools available to instructors, and it seems reasonable to imagine that the majority of courses taught at the University in the not too distant future might be hybrid in their mode of delivery

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Office of the Academic Senate
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION
125 CLARK KERR HALL
(831) 459 - 2086

December 8, 2020

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

Dear Mary,

The Santa Cruz Division has reviewed and discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. Our Committees on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA), Courses of Instruction (CCI), Educational Policy (CEP), and Planning and Budget (CPB) have responded. Given our current circumstances of remote teaching and learning during COVID-19, this report comes to us at a relevant and poignant time. Our committees spent multiple meetings discussing the many nuances and issues that arise when conceiving of a fully online undergraduate degree at UC Santa Cruz. Ultimately, CPB, CCI and CEP support Option 2: UC Quality Remote Degrees. CAFA and CAAD expressed support for Option 1: No Fully Online, but CAAD was willing to concede to Option 2 since it appears as though our campus is already exploring pursuing online degrees.

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the committees was the emphasis that a university degree extends beyond the classroom. CPB noted, "[A]n educational experience involves many aspects beyond classroom instruction, including access to the expertise of faculty; access to research; a stimulating, diverse environment; conversations with peers from diverse backgrounds; the ability to take non-major classes, etc." Similarly, CAAD raised the potential of students missing "critical life experiences, including but not limited to important networking opportunities with students, faculty, and staff, on-campus employment and research opportunities, and learning to access tutoring and/or mental health services if needed." This illuminates how our committee members recognize that the success of students is tied to much more than purely academics. However, there was also acknowledgement that to ensure student success, resources would need to be allocated to create infrastructure. CEP stated, "Right now, we don't have the funds or space to provide this support adequately for our in-person students, and providing a parallel network for online students would be prohibitively expensive." CAFA echoed this sentiment when stating that high quality online degree programs are "not appropriate for a public institution stripped of much of its public money and struggling to maintain the quality of its on-campus programs and house and serve its students." When UC is in the midst of discussing how to prepare for the impending budget shortfalls over the next several years, developing online degrees appears to be moot.

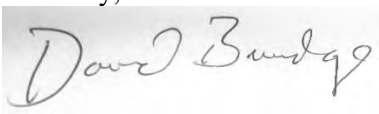
Our campus spent considerable time examining issues of access and equity when considering a fully online undergraduate program, but ultimately did not feel like the arguments outlined in the task force report were compelling enough. CAFA questioned this when stating, "The students being identified as in particular need of an online program are those with responsibilities that don't let them relocate to a residential campus, or who can't afford to do so. Many of these students will be first-generation or students from under resourced schools that have not

prepared them with the expectation of attending a 4-year college and the habits likely to lead to success." CAAD also cautioned that this could potentially lead to "de-facto two-tiered degree system disproportionately impacting first-generation, low-income, and students of color." There is great concern that an online undergraduate degree without secure funding and infrastructure would widen systematic gaps, reinforcing barriers, inaccessibility and inequity.

CPB and CCI raised additional issues to be considered around the data privacy issues and intellectual property issues and how this would impact an already extended faculty and staff in terms of additional workload. CAFA and CAAD would like further clarification from Academic Council about a systemwide policy as the UC Santa Cruz administration has recently announced an initiative to study the creation of online degree programs.

The Division appreciates the time and commitment of our colleagues in generating this extensive Report. Our Academic Senate unequivocally supports initiatives that draws upon and expands the pedagogical strength of the UC system both systemwide and divisionally. We thank you for the opportunity to opine.

Sincerely,



David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Encl. Senate Committees Bundled Responses

cc: David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Sylvanna Falcón, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Yat Li, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Tracy Larrabee Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

November 30, 2020

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Systemwide Review of the Undergraduate Online Degree Taskforce Report

Dear David,

The Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD) has closely reviewed the Systemwide Undergraduate Online Degree Taskforce Report. In this current moment of remote teaching and learning, this report finds us in an unprecedented and relevant position. While we have been impressed by the innovation and flexibility of all faculty, instructors, students and staff in their commitment to continue to deliver quality education, we also want to acknowledge the inherent challenges that have been endured and also made more visible. It is inevitable that in reading this report, we are also influenced by the current moment of the pandemic.

For CAAD, Option 1 (UC-Quality On-Campus Degree) is our preference out of deep concerns to the impact fully online degrees would have on equity issues. However, if the campus moves forward with online instruction, then Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) is better than Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) in our assessment. Further, CAAD is not convinced that online degrees would even be accessible to underserved communities in the state and could actually work against the objective of equity.

We had a lengthy discussion about access versus equity and that there could be an emergence of a de-facto two-tiered degree system disproportionately impacting first-generation, low-income, and students of color by the proposal of fully online degrees as a result of Options 2 and 3. So even though we cite Option 2, we do have concerns about it with respect to our committee's charge.

CAAD expressed concern that Options 2 and 3 take away critical life experiences from students, including but not limited to, missing important networking opportunities with students, faculty, and staff, on-campus employment and research opportunities, and learning to access tutoring and/or mental health services if needed. Moreover, a fully remote degree would come with additional labor for staff and faculty, and could introduce unexpected concerns about how to maintain an equitable faculty course load as remote teaching has been extremely labor-intensive.

CAAD is also concerned how tuition and fees would be calculated for Options 2 and 3. If the cost is the same or close to the same as the current cost, then obtaining a remote college degree is not more affordable, and thus, student debt would continue to disproportionately burden students who sacrifice to attend college. Further, CAAD discussed several of the critical services that a university offers to its students in-person and wonders how these same services are going to be offered for online learners, including disability accommodations, access to overall health care, including mental health, university libraries, campus museums, research labs, scholar talks, and on-campus conferences and symposiums.

CAAD would like to thank our colleagues who worked on the 2020 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey about the impact of COVID-19 and remote learning, with an emphasis on first-generation students. We found this report very illuminating about the kinds of challenges that a remote degree would have for UC Santa Cruz students, including students feeling ill-equipped to effectively learn material online.

Thank you for providing CAAD with an opportunity to comment. CAAD members want to ensure that all eligible students obtain the best college experience at the University of California.

Sincerely,

Sylvanna M. Falcón

Sylvanna Falcón, Chair
Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity

cc: Minghui Hu, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
David Smith, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Tracy Larrabee, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Yat Li, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching

December 2, 2020

DAVID BRUNDAGE, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Re: Systemwide Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task force Report

Dear David,

During its meeting of November 18, 2020, the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA), reviewed the report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce. The committee thoroughly discussed the Online Degree Task Force report and finds that, despite its presenting its three policy scenarios on more or less equal terms, the arguments made and data presented within the report suggest to us that only Policy 1 (no fully online degrees permitted[1]) is really defensible at this time. We strongly recommend that Policy 1, or a variant thereof, be adopted by Council for now and if that is not possible, that Policy 3 at least be immediately rejected.

While online but fully UC-quality degrees (policy 2) may theoretically be feasible, we feel that the challenges are so great and the uncertainties so large that it would not be prudent to allow such programs before a more thorough study at the systemwide level -- with issues of finance and admissions done at UCOP and academic outcomes through Council/UCEP. Such a study might include surveys to assess demand, as understanding both the numbers and characteristics of students who might apply are important before an investment is made. One of our chief concerns is potential pressure on divisional admissions to produce a cohort that will justify the investment made in developing a program, possibly to the detriment of the students. Keeping strong constraints and skeptical review at the systemwide level would protect the approval process from revenue-based motives at the divisional level.

As we proceed through the arguments below, bear in mind that we are referring only to *undergraduate* degrees, the subject of the report in question, not professional Master's degrees, which have a much higher rate of success nationwide, due to the maturity, college experience, and motivation of the students, and the technical specificity of the subjects (see Appendix F of the Task Force Report). One of the conditions that might make us more receptive to the possibility of adopting policy 2 in the future is if fully online Master's programs take root in the system, show success in student outcomes, and give departments significant experience.

[1] Note that the (sample) criterion for Policy 1 is that no more than one third of classes (both overall and within the major) may be remote (see page 38), not that at least one-third must be face to face as stated in Chair Gauvain's cover letter.

Arguments that apply against both Policies 2 and 3

As the committee responsible for admissions policy at UCSC, CAFA is concerned about what students would be selected for fully online undergraduate programs, and how well they could be served. We can't articulate this concern better than the Task Force Report did,

> *"Because students who currently have difficulty accessing a UC campus are also likely to be those students who, on average, face the biggest challenges in a remote learning ecosystem, we conclude that it would be difficult to identify students who would both choose a fully remote degree program and also succeed."* (pg 7) *"Students in remote-only degree programs may need higher levels of self-directed learning skills and time management skills. This may be harder for students who have circumstances that make them more likely to engage in remote-only learning in the first place."* (pg 33)

The students being identified as in particular need of an online program are those with responsibilities that don't let them relocate to a residential campus, or who can't afford to do so. Many of these students will be first-generation or students from under resourced schools that have not prepared them with the expectation of attending a 4-year college and the habits likely to lead to success. We believe that face-to-face support and immersion in a college environment is particularly valuable to these groups, and are what would be hardest to approach in a fully online degree.

Students will expect online education to be cheaper, as they will understand it to have less value, but it will not be, for two reasons: first, it's expensive to create and update high-quality online classes (page 7 and Appendix H of the Report) and second, and it may not be possible to reduce basic tuition and fees, which apply to all UC students (pg 34). Combined with the lower rates of completion characteristic of online programs nationwide, this becomes a potential economic landmine for already vulnerable students.

> *"One goal of remote degree programs is to expand access. However, It is not clear if this promise is realistic, for a number of reasons. Research and interviews with educators indicate that there are no "economies of scale" available in remote learning that allow additional students to be added to high-quality programs without a corresponding budgetary increase."*

In particular, as the committee in charge of admissions, we are concerned that low enrollment or budgetary pressure might result in pressure to admit even more students to these programs, resulting in an even less prepared online student body and even lower completion rates.

High-quality online undergraduate programs are by definition high-touch and expensive. They are more appropriate as initiatives from well-resourced institutions seeking to provide a service to a small group of students outside their normal scope, and not too concerned about losing money; they are **not** appropriate for a public institution stripped of much of its public money and struggling to maintain the quality of its on-campus programs and house and serve its students.

So much is required of a department to offer even a small number of high-quality online courses today, that we expect a department that truly committed to the necessary labor would, of necessity, shortchange its in-person students. Ensuring equal access to co-curricular enrichment activities (colloquia, student clubs, etc.) poses additional challenges and would require efforts from multiple campus units. One possible way around this would be to organize such degrees as systemwide efforts, which would reduce the burden on any single department on any single campus, and also could provide a way to centralize standards for the needed funding and guarantee that a revenue motive doesn't distort the decisions regarding the degrees.

Argument that applies specifically against Policy 3

Removing the commitment to undergraduate research, other individual interactions with faculty, access to colloquia, seminars, and other enriching experiences, etc., would remove most of the "value added" that distinguishes a UC education from an education at CSU, which also has excellent instructors for courses. It would seem to make more sense, then, that the sort of degrees envisioned under Policy 3 would be better made available through CSU, with its lower tuition baseline.

Urgency at UCSC for clarity from Academic Council

The UCSC administration has recently (11/19/20) announced an initiative to study the creation of online degree programs, including undergraduate degrees, arguing that it would serve students who are unable to relocate from home (see discussion above) and "boost revenue," an expectation that we believe is in considerable disagreement with the **primary** conclusion of the otherwise divided Task Force, that

> *"..it would be very costly to offer online UC undergraduate degree programs at scale, and that lower cost alternatives would subject students to financial risk due to poor graduation rates and may compromise the quality expected from a UC education."*

The Task Force was particularly skeptical of revenue-based incentives,

> *"If remote programs are driven by revenue-based incentives, it will be difficult to ensure that quality remains high and to respond rapidly if poor outcomes become evident. This is especially important because some remote degree programs have low degree completion rates, incurring costs both to learners and to the reputation of programs..."*

This disconnect is made considerably more worrisome by the statement of the administrator in charge of the initiative, in a letter to UCSC's CEP, that *"As with many things, our campus has found ways to maintain quality with fewer resources than are common at other campuses."* While members of CAFA are proud of what our colleagues accomplish in all domains, we believe that embarking on a difficult and expensive enterprise from the position that we don't really need the funding that would normally be considered necessary is dangerous, and that existing underfunded programs and services here, even those run with extraordinary commitment, often have adverse effects from the student perspective. Already, the incentive for developing online courses at UCSC has been cut, even as pressure to develop them continues. As this letter also completely mischaracterized the three policies laid out in the Task Force report, we feel that clear and explicit guidance from Council is urgently needed at UCSC.

Sincerely,
/s/
David Smith, Chair
Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

cc: Tracy Larrabee, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Yat Li, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching
Sylvanna Falcón, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

November 19, 2020

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Re: Systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear David,

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (CCI) has reviewed Academic Council's Systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. We defer to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to discuss the issue of quality of curriculum. However, CCI is concerned with the increasing impacts on workload for our committee given the existing structure and membership. We note that the importance of the mission of the university remains committed to the quality of learning and are concerned if this proposal for online undergraduate degree programs aligns. We affirm CCI's mission to uphold the university's commitment to excellence in its academic programs and course offerings.

Sincerely,

Yat Li, Chair
Committee on Courses of Instruction

cc: Minghui Hu, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
Sylvanna Falcón, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Tracy Larrabee, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Yat Li, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching

November 9, 2020

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Re: Systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear David,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has reviewed Academic Council's Systemwide Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. We had multiple lengthy discussions, and our resulting recommendation is for Option 2: supporting the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but requiring that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree. We would like to note that the only other conclusion we could have come to would be to go with Option 1: prohibiting fully remote undergraduate degree programs and requiring at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses. In particular, CEP members feel that this is a bad time for the overwhelming expense and investment required to do fully online degrees well (complete with a full-fledged support system for fully online students). The committee believes that increasing online offerings and support could lead to a future situation where we have the infrastructure to support fully online degrees, but this support is not available now. At this time, CEP does not support the implementation of an entirely online or remote learning program, but we hope that in the future, we will build the infrastructure to make this a possibility.

The original request from UCEP asked us about characteristics unique to on-campus learning, and we discussed this in detail. Some of the obvious things are physical skills training such as wet-lab work and physical performance in groups. Some of the less obvious things have to do with social interaction, participation in student government, sports and clubs, and mentoring from other undergraduates who are succeeding. Many of the less obvious things could potentially be reproduced for online-only programs—and the committee discussed that any successful programs should have extensive support structures for online students that include mental and physical health support, learning-differences support, and job search support. Right now, we don't have the funds or space to provide this support adequately for our in-person students, and providing a parallel network for online students would be prohibitively expensive.

Equity issues were very much on CEP members' minds during this discussion. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Herbie Lee opined that online degrees are an equity issue that could increase access to underrepresented students. CEP did not find this argument compelling—particularly in the face of the lack of an online support system. Lowering the cost to students is sometimes brought up in this context, but UC tuition cannot be changed, so the only possible way to lower cost would be to reduce fees, but that would either mean online students would be second-tier without full access to the university or further costs that the university would have to absorb because if certain fees that in-person students pay could be waived, other kinds of costs particular to online instruction would most likely rise. The data about the demographics of online versus in-person degrees at Arizona State University (ASU) combined with the advice of our local Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) initiative principles swayed us. We would be interested to see if there is existing

UC data that would counter the ASU data. CEP members were curious about the demographics for use of existing Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI)-offered courses. Is that information available?

This last point leads into one of our strongest positions: to effectively produce online degrees, we need rigorous study and quality control, which is another huge expense. If UC is to head towards online degrees, UC must first invest in the infrastructure to support online students and online education. CEP members felt that such quality control could be better handled at the individual campuses than to have this effort supported by any central agency (including ILTI).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. CEP members know this will be a key area moving forward, and we want to make sure that our inevitably increasing catalog of online materials are of the high quality worthy of the University of California.

Sincerely,

Tracy Larrabee, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Minghui Hu, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
Sylvanna Falcón, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Yat Li, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Maureen Callanan, Chair, Committee on Teaching

November 13, 2020

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Review of Online Undergraduate Task Force Report

Dear David,

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at its meetings of 15th and 22th October 2020. CPB appreciates the clarity of the report and agrees with many of its conclusions.

The report states that developing and maintaining online degree programs is a costly endeavor if these are to provide a UC-quality education. Consequently, online programs should not be considered a cost effective way of delivering and scaling UC-quality degrees: an educational experience that involves many aspects beyond classroom instruction, including access to the expertise of faculty; access to research; a stimulating, diverse environment; conversations with peers from diverse backgrounds; the ability to take non-major classes, etc. Given the potential costs, each campus should consider the budgetary implications of dedicating resources to invest in and maintain online programs, and not view online only programs as a cost-cutting way to scale.

CPB does not consider remote degrees taught by a separate set of faculty ("Separate-Faculty Remote Degrees") to be a viable option, for the reasons well outlined in the report.

CPB also does not support Option 3, Instruction-Only Remote Degrees. The UC-quality undergraduate educational experience, and the associated UC reputation, are a fundamental aspect of the identity of the University of California, and this identity should not be sacrificed or weakened in any migration towards online education. Put differently, the additional educational modalities available via online education should not be viewed as a justification to weaken the quality of a UC degree. Associating a distinct name (e.g., "Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Online") with these online-only degrees does not fundamentally address these concerns about UC quality and identity.

CPB does support Option 2: UC Quality Remote Degrees. CPB believes that providing UC-quality education in an exclusively remote manner to be a very high bar that is likely to be satisfied by few programs. Nevertheless, the experience in offering these programs will be a valuable learning opportunity for the UC community, and will provide insight into how best to provide an online educational experience both for fully-remote programs as well as for the online portion of on-campus degrees. Provided UC-quality can be maintained, there do seem to be plausible benefits to offering remote degree programs.

A number of additional concerns were raised during the discussions, which will need to be carefully considered during the development of these programs:

- Confirmation is needed that faculty would retain intellectual property ownership of their lectures and other course materials.
- There were concerns over the ability to maintain control over course content in a remote teaching context, in which the technology used to reach students is not owned by or under the control of UC. (See, for example, the recent instance of Zoom's censorship of an event at San Francisco State University.)
- There were concerns about privacy issues, given the vast amount of data that would be available to the technology vendors, and given that the interests of the technology vendors are not likely to be well aligned with the privacy interests of students and faculty.

- There were also concerns about the impact on faculty working conditions (e.g., workload) of teaching in an online environment.

CPB also considered the likelihood that remote-only degree programs would prove attractive to transfer students, a possibility whose impact should be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Dard Neuman, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: CEP Chair Larrabee
CCI Chair Li
CAAD Chair Falcón
COT Chair Callanan
CAF Chair Hu
CAFA Chair Smith

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November 16, 2020

Professor Mary Gauvain
Chair, Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Review of Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Report

Dear Professor Gauvain,

The Academic Council Online Undergraduate Degree Task Report was distributed to San Diego Divisional Senate standing committees and discussed at the November 9, 2020 Divisional Senate Council meeting. By a strong majority vote, Senate Council opposed Option 3, and there was a consensus that Option 2 should be pursued with caution. Concerns were raised regarding the lack of data on online degrees (versus online classes). Access and equity issues were also a concern. Members commented on the social capital benefits of in-person instruction and expressed concern that a fully online degree program would not provide any of that benefit.

The committee responses are attached.

Sincerely,

Steven Constable
Chair
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

Attachments

cc: Tara Javidi, Vice Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate
Ray Rodriguez, Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, UC Systemwide Academic Senate

October 28, 2020

STEVEN CONSTABLE, CHAIR
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE) discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report at our meeting on October 16, 2020. The Committee appreciated the detailed description of the three options put forward by the Task Force, their thorough literature review, and ultimately their humility in leaving an array of options on the table in this information-sparse environment. Because of this lack of data, particularly on anticipated EDI impacts, the CDE does not have a concrete recommendation (that is, we did not decide on a specific recommendation from among the three options). Instead, we request a more formal evaluation of potential EDI impacts of these types of degree programs, made in comparison with similar-magnitude on-campus and community investments.

We evaluated the three proposed options from the same framework we would use to evaluate other proposals. We start from the premise that equity, diversity, and inclusion must be an integral part of the function and educational mission of every UC San Diego unit or program, and necessarily includes work on access, representation, climate, and culture. To that end, all units or programs should meet basic standards of: (a) understanding and documenting shortcomings in these four areas; (b) addressing shortcomings in an accountable manner; and (c) actively and pro-actively promoting best practices in all areas.

From this framework, the Task Force Report is very difficult to evaluate. The Committee had a difficult time weighing the stated options because we just do not know very much about what to expect. As the Task Force literature review summarized, online options both boost enrollment (i.e., they may expand *access* to the UC for certain groups), and have historically had problematic dropout rates (which amounts to a counterproductive narrowing of the pipeline within a program). If we truly care about broadly expanding access to UC degree programs, more research is needed to understand whether or not (and how) that might be achieved. ***Absent such research (including direct surveys and/or pilot testing), the Committee is worried that EDI – and particularly the notion of access – will be used, without much evidence, to justify a very costly endeavor that may ultimately do very little to diversify the UC.*** [As but one example, hybrid degree programs may make the most sense in terms of providing the stated benefits of a UC degree, but by virtue of being still partially tied to a physical campus, they may sacrifice the presumed expansion of access. As another example, an online format may in fact be exclusionary to low-income or differently-abled students who cannot effectively engage via standard videoconference capacity.]

The Task Force correctly noted (and the pandemic has highlighted) that online educational quality requires investment. Our committee raised two issues in this regard: (1) an important comparison to make is to what might be expected (across the range of desired outcomes) from a similar-scale on-campus investment, or other important counterfactuals, including: expanding recruitment from community colleges, and direct investment in financial aid that would enable more undergraduates to have the "full"

UC experience. (2) There may be important EDI considerations for faculty teaching in different formats. The effective "translation costs" for in-person versus online instruction are very different across disciplines and course types, and this will need to be better understood, both in terms of direct faculty equity concerns, and in terms of potential hidden costs of online programs.

Finally, we note that, according to the Task Force Report, many of the components that create the value in a UC education have little or nothing to do with the classroom environment. In particular, exposure to intellectual and cultural diversity is held up as an important piece of the value proposition of a UC degree. Any online offerings would need to have concrete plans for how to ensure this in a virtual or hybrid environment, and our Committee emphasizes that simply having access to campus does not guarantee meaningful engagement with EDI. Additionally, we note that the value of a UC degree that *does* accrue from the classroom often comes from the smaller major-specific classes taken by advanced undergraduates. These are often work intensive, or project based, courses and the teams of students taking them have the best experiences when they do so in an environment of trust, cooperation, and interconnection. The Committee is concerned that these are the toughest dynamics to reproduce online, and believes that a more serious investigation will be required to see if this portion of the value proposition can truly be reproduced remotely.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Burney, Chair
Committee on Diversity & Equity

cc: T. Javidi

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November 12, 2020

PROFESSOR STEVEN CONSTABLE, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Chair Constable,

In response to the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report, the Committee on Preparatory Education has the following questions and concerns:

- The primary concern is that a fully online degree program (Option 2 and 3) might amplify inequities in our student population, rather than promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. In Appendix C, Characteristics of Educational Quality at the University of California, the values central to a UC education were not checked as part of what would be delivered in Option 3. The committee raised concerns about this track not being aligned with UC values of EDI more broadly.

- The committee also wondered the effects of Options 2 and 3 in terms of creating a diverse campus environment for our students. Would either Options 2 or 3 segment the population of students in ways that reproduce inequities in preparation and have detrimental effects on the diversity of our campuses? Following this, what kinds of access to support programs would students have in both Option 2 and 3?

- The committee also raised questions about labor and training for faculty teaching in remote programs (Option 2 and 3). How would this impact student to faculty ratios? How would faculty labor be compensated? Would these courses primarily rely on Unit 18 lecturers or faculty with security of employment? How would quality of the courses be assessed?

The Committee on Preparatory Education did not come to a conclusion to endorse any of the options provided in the report.

Sincerely,

Phoebe Bronstein, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education

cc: T. Javidi
R. Rodriguez

October 30, 2020

STEVEN CONSTABLE, CHAIR
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Committee on Planning & Budget (CPB) reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report at its October 20 meeting. The Task Force offered three options:

Option 1: UC-quality On-campus Degree

Option 2: UC-quality Remote Degree Hybrid

Option 3: Instruction Only Remote Degree

The three policy proposals had substantial support from different members of the Task Force but, ultimately, they did not come to a consensus on one policy to recommend. They offered the three options as a framework for debate.

The CPB had questions for the points made under the "Appendix H - Costs" section:

- Development costs for high-quality online courses range from $10k-$60K, (can offset potential savings)
- Cost savings come through increases in class sizes, which can adversely affect student/faculty contact
- 6% more expensive to design+ 6% more to deliver online courses compared to f2f courses
- Most studies focused on outcomes, found worse performance in remote compared to f2f
- For-profit programs-courses primarily taught by separate cohort of adjunct instructors (courses cost between $530-$1153 per credit) but low success rates and major cost savings are in room and board

What do these costs include? After experiencing emergency remote learning/teaching, might these costs be reduced as faculty have become more accustomed to many of the features of online course building? Since there isn't a systemwide consensus the CPB imagines there will be further debate of the online undergraduate degree model.

Sincerely,

Kwai Ng, Chair
Committee on Planning & Budget

cc: T. Javidi

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October 27, 2020

PROFESSOR STEVEN CONSTABLE, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Review of Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

The Educational Policy Committee (EPC) reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report at its October 20, 2020 meeting. Committee members' responses to the Report were mixed and, in the end, the Committee concluded:

1. The majority of EPC is opposed to Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) as it has the potential to lead to a two-tier system in terms of quality and access.
2. While all members of EPC prefer the on-campus learning experience championed in Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree), exclusively offering in-person only degree programs may not be sustainable over the long term. Higher education has the potential to evolve during the next ten years and it is likely that online options will be increasingly available to students and there may be demand for them.
3. Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) seems like a reasonable compromise to begin exploring the possibility of a remote UC undergraduate degree. A significant number of details need to be worked out before a remote option can be achieved, but it is likely beneficial to UC to start thinking through the challenges and parameters.
    - EPC is only supportive of Option 2 if discretion is given to department faculty to determine if their field of study is conducive to a remote format. EPC is not in favor of a one-size-fits-all approach to remote learning at the undergraduate level or a requirement that any field must develop a remote option. For certain fields that rely heavily on experiential learning, a remote degree may not be feasible.
    - Further consideration is needed in terms of expectations for instructor and instructional assistants interacting with remote student populations and how to provide student access to enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Cook, Chair
Educational Policy Committee

cc: T. Javidi
P. Rangamani
R. Rodriguez

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October 30, 2020

PROFESSOR STEVEN CONSTABLE, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

At its October 9, 2020 meeting, the Undergraduate Council reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (OUDTF) Report. The Council did not explicitly endorse any of the three options presented in the Report. The Council agrees that there are valid reasons to seriously consider the online delivery of undergraduate degree programs, and was very impressed with the thorough evaluation of the desirability and feasibility of fully online UC degrees and the framework of the available research that is presented and discussed in this Report. The Council is supportive of allowing undergraduate students to complete some coursework online but it seems premature to establish fully online degrees without further consideration. It is notable, for example, that the Report emphasized that most of the research focuses on student performance in individual courses, not fully online degree programs

The Council offered the following comments and questions for consideration:

- There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to online degrees. Offering online undergraduate degrees will have a profound effect on students and faculty and it is not clear whether an entirely online degree is good pedagogy. It is important to think about what kinds of programs and post-graduate opportunities are compatible with an online format and whether UC has expertise in those areas to launch a successful program.
- The learning outcomes for undergraduate programs may provide some insight into which programs can be successfully adapted for online education.
- Option 2 is difficult to evaluate as it is not clear what metrics can be used to assess how a fully remote degree meets the standards for a UC-quality degree as articulated in Appendix C. It seemed to Council members that faculty engagement and intellectual diversity would be diluted in a remote environment where students are not part of a living and learning community.
- The Report cites clear trade-offs between access, cost and quality when it comes online instruction, and considers that a fully online degree of UC quality could be costlier than offering instruction in person. Given this, what would be the primary motives for UC to offer fully online degrees, if not to expand access by reducing costs?
- An on-campus college experience can be important in building social capital and professional networks that can serve a student well after graduation. What is known, if anything, about how these significant benefits of a college education would translate into a fully online degree? If a fully online degree cannot preserve these social connections, then would remote learning mostly benefit the more significantly resourced students, who already have sufficient social capital and professional connections through family and existing community? Would other students from lower income communities be further left behind after completing online degrees?
- Under the proposed structure for Option 3, the Instruction-Only Remote Degree, students in the remote programs would receive a distinct degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Online). This suggests that online instruction is inferior. It would not be clear to someone outside of UC that the “online” in

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the degree signals that students did not have access to activities and opportunities outside of the classroom. If UC is to distinguish between degree formats, it is also important for UC and the Senate to clearly articulate why in-person engagement is superior.

Sincerely,

Jane Teranes, Chair
Undergraduate Council

cc: A. Booker
T. Javidi
R. Rodriguez

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October 27, 2020

PROFESSOR STEVEN CONSTABLE, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

At its October 12, 2020 meeting, the Graduate Council reviewed the UC Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. The Council declined to weigh in on whether to support any of three options presented, expressing disappointment that the Task Force failed to provide any concrete recommendations about whether it is advantageous for UC to pursue online undergraduate degrees. The Council offered the following comments:

- The lack of research about the efficacy of fully online degree programs is concerning. This will be important for the Council to keep in mind as it reviews proposals to establish online graduate degree programs.
- If UC is to pursue online undergraduate degree programs, it should be based on the academic merits of such a degree program. There is concern that these programs will be pursued based on perceived revenue-based incentives.
- It is unclear how online undergraduate degree programs will affect the graduate student experience, but it would be worth further exploration of the potential impacts on instructional assistants and preparing undergraduate students for future graduate education.

Sincerely,

Lynn Russell, Chair
Graduate Council

cc: B. Cowan
T. Javidi
R. Rodriguez

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December 8, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR,
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: RESPONSE TO THE ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE TASK FORCE REPORT

Dear Mary,

UCEP has completed its review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (OUDTF) Report. Because I was vice chair of the OUDTF, I did not feel it was appropriate for me to lead UCEP's discussions of the issue, although I did participate. UCEP Vice Chair Mary Lynch kindly agreed to lead the discussions and to write up the committee's response, which is attached below. The document provides a thorough summary of UCEP's deliberations, conclusions, and recommendations for future actions.

Best wishes,

Daniel Potter, Chair
UCEP

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December 8, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR,
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: RESPONSE TO THE ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE TASK FORCE REPORT

Dear Mary,

Thank you for the opportunity for UCEP to review the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report.

As noted in your memo from September 8, 2020 the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report recommended the following three distinct policy options:
Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses;
Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree;
Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities.

The UCEP faculty representatives participated in a lengthy review of this Report, discussed the three distinct policy options with their individual Campus-based CEPs and participated in two vigorous discussions at UCEP meetings regarding faculty feedback on the three policy options presented in the Report. Whereas the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force presented their Report during the early days of the Pandemic, UCEP members and their faculty constituents experienced the rapid and unexpected need to support remote learning due to on-campus restriction associated with exposure to the Coronavirus. Therefore, it is likely that this ongoing experience with supporting remote learning at least partially informs faculty views on the development and implementation of an online undergraduate degree program.

It is with these considerations in total that we present this summary of the feedback on the three policy options presented in the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report:

1. UCEP supports Campus-based efforts for exploring and developing remote educational opportunities rather than identifying any one of the three policy options to be endorsed for implementation;
2. Participation in on-campus education supports innumerable learning experiences that go far beyond classroom learning and include building social capital and professional networks for students that facilitate long-term positive outcomes for the graduates. Therefore, developing opportunities to support social capital and networks for students will also be important in the application to remote learning;

3. No singular adoption by the UC-System of any of the three policy options is advisable given the unique strengths and challenges that each UC Campus may experience with adopting any of the options;
4. Together, the options propose a range from extremely limited to total implementation of remote education; determining the feasibility of any of these will require much more consideration of the scope of the education included, the costs associated with educating faculty, staff and students on providing and receiving quality remote education, and the resources required to support quality remote education;
5. Any future decisions on the development and implementation of remote education must be considered as separate from the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI); and
6. Multiple concerns about the current quality of remote learning in the US due to the Pandemic reflect inequities in student learning related to limitations in access to the internet, challenges in securing safe and quiet space for student learning, decreased quality of educational offerings and challenges to academic integrity. These concerns must be addressed prior to any decision on developing remote learning for online undergraduate degree programs in the UC System.
7. UCEP recommends that flexibility be available for each UC Campus to develop their own plan for the scope of remote learning to be implemented post-Pandemic and that further exploration regarding the development of online degree programs be initiated within the individual Campuses.
8. UCEP also volunteers to work on a proposal for developing guidelines for the implementation of high quality and equitable application of remote learning.

Thank you again for the opportunity for UCEP to review and comment on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Lynch, Vice Chair
UCEP

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December 8, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Mary,

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) has reviewed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report, and we have several comments. First, we note that the Task Force Report largely ignores the history of online education at UC, wherein then-Governor Brown presented it as an access panacea. But all three proposed options fail to address access concerns; not all students have reliable access to adequate internet. Further, online instruction is not less expensive or less time intensive than in-person instruction, for either the faculty person or the student. Accordingly, the current model of online instruction will only be useful to those who can succeed in the status quo. More online courses, especially under options 2 and 3, we feel would only exacerbate access disparities. Academic quality assurances must be strengthened before online courses become more widespread, and ensuring that online instructors and students are not viewed as less-than remains a challenge. Access and capacity concerns must be addressed by the state, not by half-measures with half-funding.

BOARS does not support any of the three options, but finds that option 1 would be the least harmful. We look forward to future recommendations.

Thank you,

Eddie Comeaux
BOARS Chair

cc: Members of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS)
Executive Director Baxter

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November 17, 2020

ACADEMIC SENATE CHAIR MARY GAUVAIN

Dear Chair Gauvain,

CCGA discussed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at their November 3, 2020 meeting. We were guided by two main principles.

1. The future of higher education will involve online instruction. CCGA has already approved online Masters degrees and expects more remote graduate degrees to be created.
2. The University of California has high educational standards that must be adhered to by all the degrees it offers. A graduate of any degree offered by the University of California is a graduate of this renowned institution. When CCGA approves a Masters degree, it maintains the same high level of scrutiny and excellence. We do not distinguish between F2F and Online degrees. They are both of the highest quality and we expect this of all UC degrees.

Based on these two principles, we feel the most reasonable option is Policy 2. Policy 1 is too restrictive, while Policy 3 creates a schism between online degrees and our regular in-person degrees. In particular, we are opposed to the creation of a category of students that receive a "distinct" degree, which runs the danger of creating a two-tier system at the University. This option would not uphold the high caliber of a UC education nor would it reflect the values of equity of our public institution.

While supporting Policy 2, CCGA feels strongly that there must be:

1. Investment in faculty development and faculty compensation.
2. Campus infrastructure for online pedagogy and ongoing technical support.
3. A robust plan for implementation.
4. Ensure that any adoption will not eviscerate entire disciplines whose campus contribution is invaluable but that do not readily translate into an online environment.

There are also persistent inequities surrounding access to internet and technology that need to be part and parcel of any proposal to ensure equity, especially for diverse students from possibly lower economic status.

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Amr El Abbadi
Chair, CCGA

cc: Senate Vice Chair Robert Horwitz
CCGA Members
Hilary Baxter, Senate Executive Director
Michael LaBriola, Senate Assistant Director

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November 30, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN
CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Mary,

UCORP discussed the "Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force" at its meetings on October 12 and November 9, 2020. Committee members felt that "Policy 3 Instruction-Only Remote Degree Programs" does not sufficiently take into consideration UC's role as a premier research university, and therefore should not be seriously considered as an option. "Policy 2 UC-Quality Remote Degree," while not ideal, offers some flexibility and framework for research engagement by UC faculty and undergraduates *if* online undergraduate degrees are to be created. "Policy 1 UC-Quality On-campus Degree," which includes both online and in-person learning, would allow the best opportunity for undergraduates to engage in research, which is an important part of the undergraduate experience in some disciplines.

The Covid-19 pandemic has no doubt exposed more data about remote instruction and distance learning results than was available at the writing of this report. UCORP expects that the current experience will help to inform decisions for online degree creation going forward. The role and support for undergraduate research as a benefit and virtual requirement for future graduate work in several fields taught at UC remains a fundamental issue not addressed in these proposals.

UCORP appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on this report.

Sincerely,

Richard Desjardins
Chair, University Committee on Research Policy

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UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE (UCFW)
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December 14, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report

Dear Mary,

The University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) has discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report, and we have several comments. First, we acknowledge the thoughtful and detailed work done by the Task Force in evaluating fully online degree programs. However, we were surprised that the Task Force did not make a clear recommendation, but instead advanced three options for consideration. This lack of consensus raises concerns that many unanswered questions remain and that it would be premature to adopt fully online degree programs at this time. We also noted that none of the three options specifically addressed either cost effectiveness or pedagogy effectiveness. UCFW acknowledges that fully online degree programs could, potentially, promote access for some types of students, such as those with significant work or family obligations or who reside far from a UC campus. However, the report provided no evidence that online degree programs as proposed would achieve this. We therefore question whether the potential for poor student outcomes and erosion of a UC quality education would overall justify taking this step without further in-depth analyses.

UCFW did not support either Option 2 or Option 3, which are both versions of fully online degrees. Only the first option -- a mix of online and in-person instruction -- seems reasonable but, again, it does not overcome the identified structural obstacles. UCFW believes that a UC quality education must include intimate interaction within an intellectual community, which online courses do not afford at this time, especially considering the well documented unequal access to digital technologies among underrepresented and under-resourced communities. Exposing undergraduates to hands-on research is also a key component of a UC education, and we have not yet successfully identified online alternatives to lab work, creative output, and the like. Some individual departments have been highly successful in online instruction, but UCFW believes that this is more related to course content and subject matter than to the success of the technology. Education quality must remain a foremost consideration.

UCFW also notes that the leading market model in online instruction, the programs at Arizona State University, relies heavily on contingent, low-paid instructors and has a high student drop-out rate. UCFW worries about the creation of a second tier of students and instructors, and, indeed, we wonder whether UC students truly desire fully online degree programs for their undergraduate education.

Improved financial aid and expanded student support services are proven ways to improve access and student success.

Finally, we note that during the COVID crisis is a poor time to make such critical, perhaps paradigmatic, decisions. UCFW does not endorse any of the options, and we look forward to future proposals.

Sincerely,

Shelley Halpain, UCFW Chair

Copy: UCFW
Hilary Baxter, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Robert Horwitz, Academic Council Vice Chair

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December 15, 2020

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR,
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE TASK FORCE REPORT

Dear Mary,

UCPB appreciates the opportunity to review the final report on the Online Degree Task Force and commends the group for its thoughtful work on this important subject. While degree requirements fall outside the routine scope of our committee's work, we did have three observations about this report and the various options that it presents.

1. There was a general rejection of option 3. The committee is wary of going down the road of Arizona State University and its fully online degree model and concerned that doing so might create a tier of "second class students" whose experiences and degrees might not match that of our more traditional students. We also strongly agree with the report's recommendation that we not consider under any circumstances the creation of online degrees taught by a separate set of faculty.

2. While opinions varied on the question of online degree programs, there was a consensus that the door should be left open to the possibility provided they could be demonstrated to meet UC quality. Making this determination, however, would require substantially more research as despite the good work of this task force there is simply not enough data on the effectiveness of such programs from truly peer institutions to make a sound judgement on the question of what would be necessary to meet the bar of UC quality in an online degree. Such an exercise would also need to clearly define what we mean by "UC quality" at a time of shrinking budgets and overstretched faculty and staff. While a messy and imperfect example given the circumstances, the experience of remote teaching in the pandemic would

at least provide us some additional data on faculty and student experiences and outcomes that could form a useful part of such a larger study.

3. Among the subjects for future research must be a rigorous study of budgeting required to make such programs successful for both students and the institution. Experience thus far has shown that high quality online education does not necessarily save money when compared to the more traditional brick and mortar model. While it is possible that advances in technology and practice might reduce such costs, particularly after initial investments in infrastructure and course development are made, we must always keep in mind that online education is not going to be the low-cost enrollment generator that is sometimes promoted by Regents and administrators. Any accounting of cost must not be limited simply to those associated with developing and maintaining such courses and degrees, but also include the subsidiary resources required to ensure student success in the online environment. Research has shown that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to do better in such environments as a result of greater access to resources and technology. Were the UC to seriously consider such degrees as a regular part of our offerings we would need to be ready to provide the kind of support, technological and otherwise, necessary to ensure that students of all backgrounds could excel.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions for you regarding this change.

Sincerely,

Sean Malloy, Chair
UCPB

cc: UCPB