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November 3, 2022

## **ACADEMIC SENATE DIVISION CHAIRS**

### **Re: UCEP White Paper on Online Undergraduate Degree Programs**


Dear Colleagues:

At its October 2022 meeting, the Academic Council endorsed the attached University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) white paper: “Understanding Online Undergraduate Degree Programs: Definitions, Status, Process, and Questions at the University of California.” The paper synthesizes information and feedback about online undergraduate degree programs gathered from campus Committees on Educational Policy as UCEP considered questions related to online courses, online majors and minors, and the questions surrounding the viability of fully online degrees within the UC context.

To be clear, neither UCEP nor the systemwide Senate is prepared to approve fully online degree programs. However, we also understand that faculty are discussing the future role of online education at UC, including potential online majors and minors. The white paper identifies specific metrics related to online course and program design, content, and pedagogy that can serve as guides to campuses as they develop online majors and minors, particularly in terms of their quality and alignment with the UC undergraduate education model. The Academic Council also expects to discuss later this academic year a separate set of UCEP guidelines for approving online majors and minors that will pull concepts from this white paper.

I ask that you forward the white paper to your respective Committees on Educational Policy, Undergraduate Councils, and other interested faculty. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



Susan Cochran, Chair  
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council  
UCEP  
Campus Senate Executive Directors  
Executive Director Lin

Encl.



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)  
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October 4, 2022

**SUSAN COCHRAN, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**RE: UCEP White Paper “Understanding Online Undergraduate Degree Programs: Definitions, Status, Process, and Questions at the University of California”**

Dear Susan,

I am pleased to formally submit UCEP’s white paper “Understanding Online Undergraduate Degree Programs: Definitions, Status, Process, and Questions at the University of California” to Academic Council. This document, prepared by UCEP in 2021-2022, attempts to synthesize the information about online undergraduate degree programs UCEP has gathered since 2019. The committee believes this white paper will be a valuable resource to the campuses as they explore the development of online majors and minors for undergraduates. We ask that Academic Council endorse and transmit the white paper to the divisional Senates.

UCEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Cocco".

Melanie Cocco, Chair  
UCEP

## **Understanding Online Undergraduate Degree Programs: Definitions, Status, Process, and Questions at the University of California**

### **Overview and Summary**

Members of the University of California Academic Senate’s Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) have pursued a variety of exploratory and deliberative processes related to online undergraduate degree programs (OUDPs) since 2019. The purpose of this white paper is to synthesize knowledge gained from that work into one reference document. Drawing from this work, we also append a draft process to review OUDP proposals based on current approvals processes used by campuses for in-person degrees augmented with a variety of items capturing broader concerns and unique characteristics of OUDPs (Appendix D).

This paper is written in the spirit of an FAQ document, to answer questions about what we know so far and provide a preliminary but concrete picture of what a review process could look like should one become needed. The exercise is meant only to facilitate deliberations by offering background information, and to help ready UCEP should the Senate decide to receive proposals in the future. This document is not intended to offer any recommendation regarding whether the University of California should offer OUDPs—that is not UCEP’s charge but is up to the broader Academic Senate.

The information below can be summarized as follows:

1. **General definitions.** Accreditation standards define distance education courses and degree programs using a threshold for offerings.
  - a. Distance education courses are those for which at least 50 percent of instruction and interaction occurs using remote technologies, either synchronous or asynchronous.
  - b. Distance education programs are those where at least 50 percent of course credits required to complete the program are offered through distance education courses. The first undergraduate distance education program (major) on each campus will be subject to [Substantive Change Review](#) by the Western Senior College and University Commission.
  - c. Federal regulations specify that where there is a lack of substantive interaction between students and instructors, a course is not distance education but instead a correspondence course.
  - d. Lack of reciprocity means that online programs offered by UC to out-of-state students may require accreditation by the relevant body covering each of the other 49 states.
2. **Unevenness in Senate regulations and policies.** Senate regulations related to online education, a term similar to distance education, but used more broadly by some to encompass various hybrid and flex formats, vary across Divisions, and contain a loophole.
  - a. Divisions have widely varying ways of defining online courses, and differ as to whether they treat online courses and hybrid courses as distinct from in-person courses in approvals processes. Thresholds to trigger reviews for online courses vary from 25 percent to 75 percent remote instruction. Not all campuses apply transcript designations for distance education courses.

- b. The Academic Senate currently has no definition for what classifies as an online undergraduate degree program, or any trigger to initiate approvals for existing degree programs that create online versions of all of their courses. This is called the “loophole.”
  - c. The Academic Senate may wish to consider amendments to the Compendium to clarify the period that it will review proposals for OUDPs (and whether it will review both majors and minors, or only majors) at the systemwide level.
- 3. **A clear example of OUDPs of the kind being deliberated within the UC is not evident at peer institutions.** Peer institutions generally offer OUDPs through extension or through an online unit.
  - a. Arizona State University offers a broad set of programs, but with substantially higher student-to-faculty ratios compared to ASU in-person programs or the average UC campus and very low graduation rates (less than 20 percent as of 2022).
  - b. Although a number of R1 university systems offer OUDPs, there is no clear comparison case at a peer institution for a fully or mostly OUDP offered *through a regular academic unit with the possibility of a wide variety of academic units proposing programs*, as is under deliberation now within UC.
  - c. A joint UCEP-UCPB working group under the leadership of the Academic Council Vice Chair could be helpful to support the system’s understanding of models that may be more consistent with program viability and Senate responsibilities for oversight and degree quality. Such a group or the Academic Planning Council might wish to explore ways to ensure student success by preserving the ability to change majors and access campus facilities.
- 4. **Lessons from the Academic Council’s Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (OUDTF).** The report by the OUDTF and subsequent Systemwide Review in 2020 yielded a number of important lessons for OUDP development.
  - a. High-quality online instruction may save on housing and physical structures, but the online instruction itself and support services for students are at least as costly as in-person instruction and require significant investments in IT infrastructure, staff, and course development.
  - b. Completion rates for online Master’s degree programs suggest that low student-to-instructor ratios are important for student success. *There is evidence of a tradeoff between student-to-instructor ratios and degree completion.*
  - c. OUDPs are not a panacea for equity or access.
  - d. Unresolved issues surrounding assessment in online environments threaten the viability of OUDPs.
  - e. Although centralizing administrative structures for OUDPs may garner some cost savings, the quality and sustainability of programs likely would be best ensured by keeping OUDPs within existing College budget frameworks.
- 5. **Draft review process and template for OUDP proposals.** UCEP has processed feedback from the Systemwide Review of the OUDTF Report; consulted with WASC and UC Online; composed companion memos to Academic Council proposing ways to close the loophole and to amend the residency requirement; and engaged in additional exploration and extensive consultations with Academic Council and campus education policy committees. Drawing on all of this work, UCEP offers a draft review process and template for OUDP proposals in Appendix D.

## I. What is an “online” course or degree program?

The Western Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC, also known as WASC), uses a definition of distance education courses that encompasses much of what the Senate has been considering within the realm of emergency remote, online, virtual, and some hybrid and flex modalities. It also has formalized its own definition of distance education (degree) programs. State and federal regulations also use the term distance education, though the Senate may wish to formalize its language by settling on either the term “distance education” or the term “online education.” Given that both are currently in use across the Senate and outside education policy bodies, we use the term distance education as interchangeable with online education. Neither term encompasses correspondence courses.

### I.A Online courses

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) considers a **distance education** course to be a course “in which 50% or more of the instruction and interaction occurs using one or more of the technologies included in the definition of distance education ([WSCUC Substantive Change Manual](#), p.17).” These technologies include the internet and other types of broadcast media used to support instruction when instructors and students are not in the same place.

Note the presumption that instruction and interaction are not necessarily the same, allowing asynchronous instruction. However, WSCUC makes clear that even asynchronous online modalities still require an instructor interacting with students. The *WSCUC Substantive Change Manual* provides additional detail showing that it expects “regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor,” even if instruction and interaction are being supported by these technologies and asynchronously delivered. This interaction includes “engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment” through direct instruction, assessment and feedback, responding to questions, facilitating discussion, or other instructional activities.

### I.B Online courses versus correspondence courses

WASC’s definition of distance education was adopted from the [Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 600.2](#). This federal regulation explicitly differentiates distance learning from a correspondence course not by the mode of transmission of instructional materials (mail versus electronic transmission), but with the feature that “Interaction between instructors and students in a correspondence course is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.”

Therefore, the WSCUC definition of distance education and federal regulations make clear the expectation that substantive interaction occur between students and instructors in a distance education course, even in asynchronous settings. Otherwise, a course could instead be categorized as a correspondence course.

### I.C Accreditation processes

WASC Assistant Vice President and Director of Substantive Change and Committee Relations John Hausaman reported in consultation with UCEP that although some UC campuses have a number of online graduate degree programs in place that have passed WSCUC’s Substantive Change Review, the first OUDP (for an individual major) on each campus almost surely will undergo Substantive Change

Review. It was unclear whether subsequent OUDPs may, as well—the possibility was left open. In addition to the first online major, he indicated that having a critical mass of GE courses offered in distance-learning formats on a campus also could trigger a Substantive Change review for undergraduate programs. Finally, because California is not party to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, he flagged that online programs offered to out-of-state students may require accreditation (and related fees) by the relevant body covering each of the other 49 states.

#### I.D Online degree programs

WSCUC defines ***distance education programs*** as “programs in which 50% or more of the program (units for completion of the program) will be offered through distance education (p.17).” The use of the word “offered” is significant. The metric is not based on enrollments or even the fraction of course credits a student takes or applies toward graduation, only what the program or campus offers. Within the context of the UC system, WASC Assistant Vice President Hausaman reported to UCEP that WSCUC does not include cross-campus enrollments facilitated by UC Online in the calculation of what fraction of units for completion of the program are offered through distance education. The definition as operationalized by WSCUC is entirely program- and campus-specific.

## II. Relevant regulations, policies, and proposals underway within the UC system

### II.A Divisional online course approval policies

Currently, the Academic Senate allows Divisional course approval bodies to determine when a course must be categorized as being in a virtual format. Table 1 summarizes the definitions available. Appendix A contains more detail and links to the relevant course approval policies from each campus for which a known policy exists. Not all Divisions have a fully formalized policy: some have conventions, evolving interpretations, or no policy. Others vary as to how they define hybrid courses, and whether hybrid courses face a specially tailored approval process, or only 100-percent online course formats do.

Notwithstanding, for most campuses there is a threshold: If more than a set fraction of instructional hours per week on average through the term are delivered in a modality where the instructor and student are not in the same place, then the course must be categorized as some type of virtual modality and is subject to an approvals process modified to take into account the online format. This threshold is sometimes stated in terms of credit hours, sometimes in terms of a percentage of instruction. The lower-bound for labeling a course as virtual or online is 1 credit hour (UCD) or 25 percent, the upper-bound is 50 percent (UCSD, UCSB, UCSC) or all but one credit hour (UCLA, though this is under review). The threshold for labelling a course as hybrid varies more widely and hybrid courses are not subject to special review on all campuses. Related regulations are in flux on at least three campuses.

It is important to note that some innovations to in-person instruction, like “flipped classrooms,” are being labelled as hybrid. These flipped formats where asynchronous lectures are posted online but students still come to class would not classify as online or distance education, as students are expected to spend at least half of designated course credit hours each week in a classroom engaged in substantive interaction with instructors. This is in direct contrast to formats also labelled as hybrid where a fraction of students are expected to receive most instruction and interaction online, seldom if ever in the same place with the instructor. This latter category would be online/distance education.

Table 1: Divisional course policies defining distance education (and related online) courses

<b>Campus</b>	<b>Policy defining online courses (if any)</b>
<b>Berkeley</b>	No formalized threshold to trigger review or categorize online courses. COCI Best Practices for online courses apply to any course with an online component. There is no longer any transcript designation for these courses.
<b>Davis</b>	Courses in which one or more contact hours per week are conducted online are classified as hybrid or virtual. This is equivalent to a 25-percent threshold for 4-credit courses, or a 33-percent threshold for a 2-credit course to trigger approvals process and transcript designation.
<b>Irvine</b>	Any course with contact hours online, either synchronous or asynchronous, must be approved by the Subcommittee on Courses (SCOC) for either hybrid or fully-online delivery.
<b>Los Angeles</b>	Courses are defined as fully online when offering less than 1 hour of pedagogically significant in-person contact with the instructor of record each week. Courses are defined as hybrid when offering at least one pedagogically significant hour in-person with the instructor each week (not counting office hours or secondary sections), with no distinct approval process for hybrid courses. For a 3- or 4-credit course, this is equivalent to a 67 percent or 75 percent online instruction threshold to trigger online categorization.
<b>Merced</b>	30 percent online instruction threshold for hybrid, 80 percent threshold for online courses. (Separately, Registrar also alerts students when reaching 25 percent of degree credits online, approval needed once 30 percent degree credit threshold is reached.)
<b>Riverside</b>	Labels a course as remote-learning (RL) if face-to-face contact with an instructor represents less than 1/3 of the total hours of required work per week.
<b>San Diego</b>	A course will be considered a Distance Education course if (for some or all students) less than 50% of student-instructor interaction time was designed to occur face-to-face (meaning physically in the same room).
<b>San Francisco</b>	N/A
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	Courses with up to 49 percent of instruction delivered online are considered hybrid, without special review. Courses with at least 50 percent of instruction occurring online are subject to approvals processes for online courses.
<b>Santa Cruz</b>	Courses that will not have at least 50% of the standard contact hours in person should use either the Asynchronous Online or the Synchronous Online course approval processes.

## II.B Online degree definition and approval/review process

While some definitions for what WSCUC calls distance education courses exist within the Academic Senate, currently there is no Senate definition for online undergraduate degree programs. Senate Regulation 610 defines residency in a way that does not restrict the modality of coursework, only the campus which approved the courses students take.

Due to the existence of online enrollments, the senior residency requirement in Senate Regulation 630 appears to be the only regulation that presents a lower-bound for the number of courses a student must apply toward graduation from their home campus. But this regulation uses the residency definition from Senate Regulation 610, so it does not restrict modality of courses presented toward graduation, either.

In the loophole memo, UCEP has presented options to Academic Council to close the loophole by instituting a threshold for course credits offered by programs in virtual modalities that would trigger program-level approvals processes tailored for online degree programs. In a follow-up memo at Academic Council's request, UCEP provided draft language to amend the residency requirements in Senate Regulation 630 to require approximately one year of coursework during which a minimum number of course credits are taken in-person on a UC campus.

In addition to the lack of a definition to trigger a process to approve or review proposals for new or loophole-conversion OUDPs, the Senate currently has no formalized policy to be used to assess incoming proposals, or to review them once established.

## II.C Proposals submitted or being designed

UC Irvine submitted a proposal for an OUDP in Business Administration during the 2018-2019 academic year for consideration by the systemwide Academic Senate, which the Academic Council declined to approve. Divisional Senate bodies also had declined to endorse the proposal, prior to the Academic Council's review. Since that time, the relevant academic unit has been piloting additional online courses as options alongside in-person options and is in the process of collecting and reporting data on outcomes to Divisional and systemwide Senate bodies.

An academic unit at UC Santa Cruz has designed a proposal for an online major in Creative Technologies, which has undergone extensive review and revision within Divisional Senate processes and is viewed by some as ready for systemwide review should the Academic Council decide to receive proposals for OUDPs.

During the inaugural meeting of the UC Online Advisory Committee in Winter 2022, UC Online reported among their activities support for the development of two new online minors, in Native American Studies and in Education.

## II.D The Compendium

The deliberations over the submission of the proposal for an online Business major at UC Irvine were significant in that they established the first-of-its-kind nature of an online degree, in the sense of the Compendium Section II.A, item (2) on p.9. This makes an OUDP distinct even from existing undergraduate degree programs within the same discipline. The "first-of-its-kind" term implies the necessity of systemwide review of every proposal for an OUDP on a campus until the first one is



approved, after which time approvals revert to that campus, but continue for other campuses until the first OUDP is approved on a campus-by-campus basis. Underscoring the distinct nature of OUDPs, the Academic Council established the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force to study the general nature and feasibility of such programs.

It is unclear whether the approval of a minor would trigger a Substantive Change Review by WSCUC, or disqualify a subsequent proposal for an online major on each campus from being considered a first-of-its-kind in the sense of the Compendium. Academic Council may wish to clarify this in the Compendium or other policy document. Since UC Online has reported supporting the development of online minors, and online minors do not entail the full removal of students from campus that may be implied or embraced by some forms of OUDP majors (see section IV), Academic Council may wish to establish separate processes for consideration of online minors and protect the first-of-its-kind status for majors.

Some in the Senate (see the OUDTF Report recommendations below) have suggested amending the Compendium to assure that proposals for OUDPs are subject to systemwide review for a number of years, or that more than only the first-of-its-kind, but rather all proposals for OUDPs should be subject to systemwide review up through the first 10 approved, for each campus, so that the entire system has a chance to troubleshoot the approvals process and see data on degree completion before final approvals return to Divisions.

### **III. OUDPs at peer institutions**

An exploration undertaken and presented to the Academic Assembly in February by Academic Council Vice Chair Susan Cochran suggests that peer institutions generally offer OUDPs through extension or through an online unit. Few universities report data for online programs to the National Center for Education Statistics separately from their in-person program data, obscuring outcomes from OUDPs. Arizona State University (ASU) does report some of these data separately. ASU offers a broad set of online programs, but with substantially higher student-to-faculty ratios compared to ASU in-person programs or the average UC campus. The ASU online programs have very low graduation rates (less than 20 percent as of data reported to NES in 2022).

Although a number of R1 university systems offer OUDPs, there is no clear test or comparison case at a peer institution for a fully or mostly OUDP offered through a regular academic unit as is under deliberation now within UC. Other programs appear to be either (1) offered through a separate unit dedicated to online programs, or (2) are very narrowly targeted to a major with a specific purposes, such as specialized professional training. *A joint UCEP-UCPB working group under the leadership of the Academic Council Vice Chair Cochran may be helpful to support the system's understanding of models that may be more consistent with the Senate's statutory responsibilities for program oversight and expectations for degree quality.*

### **IV. Lessons from the Senate's Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force**

In response to the submission of the proposal for an online undergraduate degree in Business Administration from UC Irvine, the Academic Council formed an Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force (OUDTF) in 2019. The OUDTF issued its report in July 2020, which Academic Council then submitted for Systemwide Review during Fall 2020. Divisional bodies submitted more than 100 pages of

feedback on the content and recommendations of the report. Themes from the report and systemwide consultations include the following.

#### IV.A. Closing the loophole

The OUDTF is clear on its recommendations that the loophole described in section II.B above be closed:

...the task force recommends 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... policy needs to be in place to trigger comprehensive review as majors approach some critical threshold of the percentage of courses that are offered online... [the review] should be triggered for all new remote degree programs or if the proportion of coursework in an existing program that either may or must be completed in a remote format increases to more than 50% of all required courses in the major.  
(p.40)

The OUDTF also recommends system-wide reviews of all proposals for new or remote-conversion OUDPs for at least six years, through a committee devoted to this purpose with a representative from each campus. After consultation with UCRJ, it is UCEP's understanding that reviews past the first approved OUDP for each campus would require a revision or amendment to the Compendium.

#### IV.B. Equity

Input from across the entire system almost universally reflected a concern that fully online degrees could result in a "two-tiered" system, creating groups of students who receive second-class treatment in terms of services, instruction, and degree quality, and groups of faculty who are not research-active and receive lower salaries. The report and subsequent review noted that physical proximity to advising, health, peers, and faculty can provide support to first-generation and underrepresented students that may be difficult or impossible to replicate or connect students to in a remote environment. Although not the same as carefully designed online education, most student respondents reported to UCUES that their level of engagement with faculty and TAs declined under remote instruction during pandemic closures, and their sense of loneliness grew.

Faculty expressed concern that many students from socio-economically vulnerable groups may lack adequate computer equipment, reliable internet, and a quiet place to engage in online classes and assessments. It is important to distinguish the experiences during the pandemic from the experience of a student intentionally signing up for an online program. During the pandemic, a number of students, particularly from socio-economically vulnerable groups, lacked computing equipment or a suitable learning environment at home. That was not an expectation for them when they started at UCSC as an in-person student. In contrast, for students intentionally signing up for an online program, it may be possible to structure financial aid to take into account hardware needs for fully online students. Nevertheless, some may feel less able than others to turn on their camera to participate in classes due to the personal nature of revealing one's surroundings.

In addition, the report and comments noted that the in-person campus experience helps students develop a great deal of social capital and new networks that can aid success both in their studies and after graduation. Chat groups and breakout rooms can help facilitate some of this connection and information flow, but not fully replicate it. There are many types of lab-based and experiential learning

proliferating on campuses that could not be reproduced online. To have a group of students for whom these experiences are less plentiful or simply unavailable creates an indelible disparity.

#### IV.C. Access

The OUDTF report and subsequent review highlighted nuances demonstrating that “access” cannot and should not be applied as a blanket term in discussions of OUDPs. Rather, there is *logistical accessibility*, versus *seat availability*. One can be resolved through online courses or OUDPs, the other cannot.

First, faculty noted that students who work to support themselves or are engaged as caregivers or in other obligations may benefit from classes with asynchronous content or offered early in the morning or in evening hours. Online courses eliminate the need to find housing near campus or to commute, which may benefit students who wish to get a degree from Divisions in communities with housing constraints that drive up rents, or who live far from campus. To the degree that they reduce the need for residential services and classroom space, OUDPs also could reduce some constraints on enrollments imposed by limitations in campus infrastructure like classroom space. In all of these ways, OUDPs could increase *logistical accessibility* in important ways for some student populations.

Second, some parties may mistakenly understand online instruction as a way to reduce the need for student engagement with faculty. Online education does not automate student engagement with faculty. The OUDTF report makes clear that even asynchronous material must be frequently updated and redesigned to provide quality instruction. WSCUC establishes that substantial interaction and engagement between students and instructors is expected even for distance education. The type of engagement required for high-quality instruction and mentorship of undergraduates—responses to questions and emails, being able to welcome and respond to students during office hours, writing letters of recommendation—does not decline with a switch to online instruction.

The OUDTF report underscores that this interaction—which the report correlates with smaller class sizes—is critical for degree completion rates. To make the idea concrete, the OUDTF report emphasizes small class sizes as a likely factor in the success of UC online Masters degrees in computer science at UC Berkeley and engineering UCLA as reflected in their 95-percent degree completion rates, in contrast to much lower completion rates in an online Masters program in computer science at a peer institution with larger class sizes (p.26). A response letter from the Graduate School of Management Faculty Executive Committee at UC Davis likewise says that maintaining small class sizes during synchronous aspects of instruction has been “essential” to maintaining quality comparable to their existing programs.

Responses to the OUDTF in the systemwide review included strong concerns about increases in student-to-instructor ratios for exactly this reason. They underscore that it is important to dispel the notion that OUDPs could expand access in the sense of *seat availability* outside of what would be possible in traditional courses absent classroom space constraints—through increased hiring of faculty, teaching assistants, and advising staff.

#### IV.D. Quality

Closely related to issues of equity and access, the Senate struggled with the question of whether OUDPs could provide a degree with the same quality as existing degrees. Respondents thought of quality in two ways—quality of overall experience, versus quality of instruction and mastery.

Many faculty felt the quality of the overall UC experience could not be fully upheld within an OUDP. Some acknowledged that aforementioned issues of geographic access may offset these considerations for some students. Some faculty felt that quality of instruction and mastery might be upheld for carefully designed programs in some disciplines, and that this should be left to groups of faculty and academic units to determine. Others were concerned that access to research opportunities for undergraduates would necessarily be compromised in a remote setting, or felt the risks to the university's reputation given the uncertainties over quality were so great that it is extremely premature to support the establishment of any OUDPs.

The Senate response reflected a strong feeling that engagement with research-active faculty is key to the quality of UC instruction and degrees. In her letter dated January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, summarizing the Systemwide Review of the OUDTF for Provost Michael Brown, Academic Council Chair Mary Gauvain wrote:

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 Senate expressed concern that the University may look to a less rigorously selected and reviewed body of instructors—who are not engaged in research to inform their teaching and mentorship of students—to specialize in teaching online courses. Divisional feedback generally supported the OUDTF argument that

If the State of California wishes to create lower-cost programs using lower-cost instructors who are not active researchers, those programs should be created by another university system. (p.45)

#### IV.E. Assessment

Assessment has been a troubling issue to many faculty in online settings, yet is core to maintaining quality of instruction. Faculty experience with remote assessment during the period of pandemic instruction has been enormously fraught. Measures essential to discouraging violations of academic integrity during online assessments clash with issues of student privacy and the equity concerns regarding students reluctant to turn on cameras. Some students do not have adequate space or internet connections to allow synchronous, proctored online assessment. Online proctoring also often involves commercial third-party services and introduces questions of personal privacy when under surveillance during the period of testing.

The OUDTF report encouraged a centralized approach to supporting academic integrity that does not place the majority of the responsibility on individual instructors for preventing and addressing violations.

Some OUDPs may incorporate some in-person exams or projects, for which appropriate space and accommodations must be planned.

#### IV.F. Budget models

The OUDTF report provides extensive discussion of budgetary issues within a number of contexts, but with several overarching recommendations.

*Student success and welfare.* The report took to heart the risks students take when they enroll in an OUDP, given the inherently weaker systems of social support and diminished opportunities for personal contact with a variety of support services, compared with the campus residential experience. It advocates allowing students to switch majors to and double-major in in-person degree programs, if students wish.

In addition, the report and Divisional feedback strongly highlight the need for the strongest possible network of services to be provided to students to support successful outcomes—including advising, tutoring, career counseling, mental and physical health services, IT infrastructure and support, and access to campus. Combined with the costs of establishing, updating, and delivering online courses, including maintaining modest class sizes where needed to ensure student engagement and success, this means any cost savings from OUDPs would at best be from long-term reduced pressure on physical infrastructure linked to residential services and classroom space.

Finally, the OUDTF report makes a case that programs associated with higher student-to-faculty ratios are associated with lower degree completion rates. The latest data from ASU Online, a model based on lower instructor salaries and other cost-saving approaches, reports a degree completion rate of less than 20 percent. It does not report the average debt load of students who enroll without completing their degree, but the cost to students per credit hour is comparable to that of ASU's in-person programs.

*Strength of academic units and programs.* The report also argues for mitigating budgetary risks to academic departments, who with their faculty, are at the heart of UC-quality degrees, research excellence, and program rankings. For this reason, while acknowledging the cost-efficiency that may arise from centralizing OUDPs into one administrative unit, as in the case of ASU Online or University of Florida Online, the report leans more heavily toward an approach to OUDP administrative structure that centers on campuses. The authors argue that OUDPs centered within the campuses can append themselves more naturally within existing budgetary structures linking funds to Colleges and academic units (p.37), where they will be reinvested in hiring top-flight instructors—both faculty and graduate teaching assistants.

Preserving a campus-centered budget model may also be most consistent with maintaining Senate oversight. The Senate's Division-level oversight of undergraduate courses and programs, which has supported the excellence of UC undergraduate programs for decades, is already integrated (in its advisory role) into campus budgetary planning processes. If OUDPs eventually take root within the UC after a period of systemwide review and monitoring, existing Divisional bodies are well-placed to observe and raise alarms should existing programs become neglected.<sup>1</sup>

*Misconceptions about potential cost savings.* Overall, the OUDTF shows based on the experience of other university systems that cost savings from the cost of instruction itself are unlikely if not

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<sup>1</sup> The Senate also has been unsuccessful, after several years of requests, at securing the data and materials usual for undergraduate program reviews from the UC Washington Program, which is concerning as a bellwether for how well Senate oversight of centralized UC OUDPs could be preserved.

impossible, with costs of maintaining top-quality online courses and IT infrastructure offsetting much of the savings from other areas. A great deal more exploration of budgetary models is essential before key questions about the feasibility and desirability of OUDPs at the UC can be answered with any certainty. The Senate's statutory purview stops at education policy; it does not encompass resource allocation. Yet in this case, structural issues and the lack of a congruent model on other campuses make it very difficult to design appropriate education policy without better understanding resource issues. More work on this front is urgently needed.

## **V. Drafting a tailored process for OUDP approvals and reviews**

UCEP has done additional work during the 2021-2022 academic year carrying out a charge from Academic Council to gather information and formulate a process to review future proposals for OUDPs. As a first step, UCEP distributed a set of questions formed with input from Academic Council to campus CEPs/UGCs. Divisional representatives to UCEP reported back the campus responses to these questions. UCEP Chair Mary Lynch conducted a thematic analysis, the results of which are in the table in Appendix B. These are being presented to Academic Council on April 27<sup>th</sup> in the context of creating a structural framework to illustrate and understand the implications of OUDPs for UC campuses.

The thematic analysis both reinforces and updates the feedback from Divisions and systemwide committees during the Systemwide Review of the OUDTF report. This new input stresses the importance of considering fee structures, ability to change major, and access to campus to creating an inclusive and equitable experience supportive of student success. Key points include the following:

1. While online education may help relieve pressures on physical space and infrastructure, there is no indication that it can support increased ratios of students to faculty or students to advising staff, as substantive interaction between students and faculty, and students and advisors is crucial to degree quality and to student success. Therefore, shifts toward online coursework or degrees will not resolve some of the core resource issues constraining enrollments.
2. Support services and accommodations for students may need to be re-designed for settings with a heavy online component.
3. Conversion of in-person courses to an online setting often requires heavy investment in instructional design.
4. Protection of student rights within online settings is a crucial issue, including whether students will be able to switch majors or access campus facilities and experiential learning opportunities, especially those that provide research experience. There are questions about whether transfer student success will be adequately supported.
5. Many questions exist regarding admissions processes for OUDPs, as well as cross-campus enrollments and complexities.

In addition, UCEP Policy Analyst Brenda Abrams gathered the campus policies on approvals processes both for online courses (described above in Section II.A and shown in detail in Appendix A) and for review of establishment of in-person majors (linked in Appendix C). Given that program approval is part of the Regent's charge to the Academic Senate to oversee curriculum—a statutory authority—it is advisable that reviews of proposals to establish new OUDPs or to convert existing programs to OUDPs be built on the foundation of existing approvals policies, modified to take into account the many considerations and serious concerns described above.

UCEP has also written a memos to Academic Council proposing ways to close the loophole mentioned in sections II.B and IV.A, as well as a memo at Academic Council's request proposing an amendment to the residency requirements for undergraduate degrees in Senate Regulation 630. These memos are companions to this white paper.

Based on this UCEP work and building on common elements of Divisional course and degree approvals processes, one possible draft review process is included in Appendix D, should Academic Council wish to deliberate over its form, or charge UCEP to review proposals for OUDPs in the future. The format of the draft is modeled on the UC Santa Cruz policy for approving undergraduate degree programs, as this was itself modeled on the policy for approving graduate programs approved by the system for inclusion in the Compendium. The draft incorporates additional features from existing undergraduate program approvals processes from other campuses. Features incorporated drawing on issues specific to OUDPs are highlighted in yellow.

In summary, this document gathers information from a number of different workstreams by UCEP and Academic Council related to OUDPs, and proposes a draft review process for system-level approvals should the Academic Council decide to receive proposals in future years.

## Appendix A: Campus policies on approvals processes for distance education courses, April 2022

Analysts for Divisional Committees on Educational Policy and Undergraduate Councils were asked in Winter 2022 for the campus policies governing when a course has to be approved as an online course. Divisional Representatives shared some additional information where possible.

Campus	Policy defining online courses (if any)
<p><b>Berkeley</b></p>	<p><a href="#">COCI</a> Best Practices for online courses: As part of a commitment to 'truth in advertising', be sure that the course syllabus and related information provide a clear account of the requirements and expectations for student engagement in online and classroom instruction. For example, consider including a grid in the syllabus that documents how much time per week is spent in online discussions, viewing online lectures, and similar activities versus traditional classroom-based lecture, discussions, or off-line work. As part of this, the syllabus should make clear any non-UC online platforms or third party applications that a student will need to access in order to participate in the course. Note that a similar breakdown of instructional formations will be required for the course proposal itself. <i>[Note: There is no longer any transcript designation specific to online courses, or a formalized threshold to trigger review according to COCI Best Practices for online courses.]</i></p>
<p><b>Davis</b></p>	<p>UC Davis Committee on Courses of Instruction's <a href="#">Virtual and Hybrid Courses policy</a>: Courses in which one or more contact hours per week are conducted online should be classified as hybrid or virtual. Contact hours are defined as time when instructors are presenting to or interacting with students (e.g., lecture, laboratory, discussion). Contact hours do not include office hours. Courses taught entirely online are referred to as 'virtual' courses; while courses that are mixtures of online and in-person contact hours are referred to as 'hybrid' courses. <i>[One credit hour amounts to a 25-percent threshold for 4-credit courses, or a 33-percent threshold for a 2-credit course to trigger approvals tailored for hybrid/virtual courses.]</i></p>
<p><b>Irvine</b></p>	<p>Any course with contact hours online, either synchronous or asynchronous, must be approved by the Subcommittee on Courses (SCOC) for either hybrid or fully-online delivery. Any course currently approved as a traditional course must be resubmitted for approval before it may be offered as hybrid or online.</p>
<p><b>Los Angeles</b></p>	<p><a href="#">UCLA policy</a> defines "fully online" undergraduate courses (requiring Senate approval) as courses offering less than 1 hour of pedagogically significant in-person contact with the instructor of record each week. Approval is not required to</p>



	<p>offer undergraduate courses in hybrid form when the instructor of record interacts in person with students for at least one pedagogically significant hour each week (not counting office hours or secondary sections).  <i>[Note: For a 3- or 4-credit course, this is equivalent to a 67 percent or 75 percent threshold, respectively.]</i></p>
<b>Merced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Face-to-Face (approximately 0-29% online): content is typically delivered orally or in writing, may use web-based technology for class facilitation (e.g. posting syllabi online, uploading assignments, etc.) but online delivery of content is minimal</li> <li>- Hybrid/Blended (approximately 30-79% online): blends online and face-to-face delivery, has some in-person meetings but a substantial portion of the content is delivered online (e.g. class lecture meets face-to-face whereas discussion groups are online)</li> <li>- Online (approximately 80-100% online): most or all of the content is delivered online and usually has no face-to-face meetings</li> </ul> <p>Course units per weekly hours for online or hybrid courses are calculated at the same rate as traditional in-person courses.</p> <p>Separately, the Registrar alerts the student when they reach 25% of degree credits online as a warning and when they reach 30% they will not be able to register for more online credits without approval.</p>
<b>Riverside</b>	<p>UCR's <a href="#">Committee on Courses Guidelines for Remote Learning Courses</a>:</p> <p>A course shall be labeled remote-learning (RL) if face-to-face contact with an instructor represents less than 1/3 of the total hours of required work per week.</p> <p><i>[The Committee is working to update these guidelines to provide guidance that is more up to date with current practices for online education.]</i></p>
<b>San Diego</b>	<p><a href="#">UCSD's Policy on Distance Education Courses</a>:</p> <p>A course will be considered a Distance Education course if (for some or all students) less than 50% of student-instructor interaction time was designed to occur face-to-face (meaning physically in the same room).</p>
<b>San Francisco</b>	N/A
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	<p>By convention, courses with up to 49 percent of instruction delivered online are considered hybrid, without special review. Courses with at least 50 percent of instruction occurring online are subject to approvals processes for online courses.</p>

<b>Santa Cruz</b>	<a href="#">CEP, Graduate Council, and CCI policy on hybrid and online courses:</a> Courses that will not have at least 50% of the standard contact hours in person should use either the Asynchronous Online or the Synchronous Online course approval processes.
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**Appendix B: Thematic Analysis of Divisional CEP/UGC Input on OUDP Questions by UCEP Chair Mary Lynch**

<b>Divison</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Berkeley</b>	To be completed
<b>Davis</b>	Need to define what is meant by “online”; new structures for evaluating OUDPs and online courses may be needed, they fall between the cracks; using continuous improvement practices at College of Engineering to ensure that courses in those programs undergo more frequent and directed examination.
<b>Irvine</b>	Don’t have the resources to offer all GE courses online; limit on amount of asynchronous instruction?; define quality; canned lectures – ladder faculty would think of lectures as their IP and would not be comfortable with someone else delivering a part of their course; working on course evaluation form with questions specific for online courses, enthusiasm for having assessment measurement; not just looking at OUDPs but courses should be reviewed regularly; transfer students should have access to these programs; policies for TA support – OUDPs should have same level of TA support; concern that faculty teaching in OUDPs would become alienated, others in department may not appreciate time a faculty member puts into these courses; clear definition of contact hours and teaching credits for online courses; students should pay lower fees if no access to campus services; students in CA who live more than sixty miles away from a UC campus and from underrepresented groups.
<b>Los Angeles</b>	People not happy that these questions are being asked [with so little contextual information]; need more concrete questions – look at rubrics and data from graduate education; look at British Open University; quality – small consensus is to not make distinction between online vs in person degree; support for a UC campus that is online; increased access – University Extension is a failed model, offer versions of regular classes, starting to offer certificates, concerns about quality.
<b>Merced</b>	Divisional committee has suggested that OUDPs should only be offered if they are unique to the system. If a student wants to attend UCB to attain an OUDP, presumably the student will have to meet UCB’s eligibility requirements. It is not clear how students in an OUDP count for a campus’s enrollment. UCM registrar will track how many units from online courses students are taking.
<b>Riverside</b>	See outcomes of current programs – employment opportunities graduates have; quarter vs semester – how is that reconciled; if cross campus enrollment which campus funds the TAs; quality; how faculty receive credit for their course load – problem for people with appointments in two departments.
<b>San Diego</b>	Just started looking at this on Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup> and committee felt that the questions are complicated and UCSD has not thought much about OUDPs; should involve other stakeholders including faculty welfare, center for teaching and learning; should have something for the April UCEP meeting; questions seem general and vague, can’t be used for vetting an online degree.

<b>San Francisco</b>	N/A
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	Resistance to accepting the idea of OUDPs; proposers could suggest what UC quality means; process for approving online courses with robust questions and these could be reframed for an OUDP; what does pedagogical reasoning mean? there may be other reasons for offering OUDPs; confusion about how students would transition to another program from an OUDP.
<b>Santa Cruz</b>	Creative Tech program is not considered a degree completion program; portfolio admission requirement; much of the general education will be completed and every GE department has at least one online offering; provisional approval – temporary approval and then write a report approving efficacy (e.g. performance in downstream classes); respect for center for teaching and learning spends a lot of time collating research, discuss how quality if evaluated anywhere; hard to get an asynchronous class approved and are reviewed every three years; only want to offer what the faculty are proud of; intellectual property –lots of protections; tend to trust faculty colleagues.

**Appendix C: Divisional Policies for Establishment or Revision of Undergraduate Degree Programs, March 2022**

<b>Berkeley</b>	<a href="https://opa.berkeley.edu/berkeley-compendium">https://opa.berkeley.edu/berkeley-compendium</a>
<b>Davis</b>	<a href="https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk3876/files/inline-files/Revised%20August%202018%20UGC%20Policy%20re%20estab%20or%20revision.pdf">https://academicsenate.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk3876/files/inline-files/Revised%20August%202018%20UGC%20Policy%20re%20estab%20or%20revision.pdf</a>
<b>Irvine</b>	<a href="https://senate.uci.edu/committees/councils/council-on-educational-policy-cep/council-on-educational-policy-manual/guidelines-for-establishing-undergraduate-majors/">https://senate.uci.edu/committees/councils/council-on-educational-policy-cep/council-on-educational-policy-manual/guidelines-for-establishing-undergraduate-majors/</a>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<a href="https://ucla.app.box.com/s/v9vf0js91wf73olvyx0xr1fq7hm7vgvh">https://ucla.app.box.com/s/v9vf0js91wf73olvyx0xr1fq7hm7vgvh</a>
<b>Merced</b>	Campus: <a href="https://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/dp_policy_0.pdf">https://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/dp_policy_0.pdf</a> UGC: <a href="https://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/ugc_pol_degree_prog_approval_feb_26_2009.pdf">https://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/ugc_pol_degree_prog_approval_feb_26_2009.pdf</a>
<b>Riverside</b>	<a href="https://ucr-senate-public.s3.amazonaws.com/committees/10/committee_resource/cep-gl-for-establishmen-of-new-prog-approved-11-6-20-60df779a106c5-.pdf">https://ucr-senate-public.s3.amazonaws.com/committees/10/committee_resource/cep-gl-for-establishmen-of-new-prog-approved-11-6-20-60df779a106c5-.pdf</a>
<b>San Diego</b>	Guidelines to establish a new major/minor: <a href="https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/518371/ugc-proposal-procedures-for-new-majors-and-minors.pdf">https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/518371/ugc-proposal-procedures-for-new-majors-and-minors.pdf</a> and here are the guidelines to make changes to an existing major/minor: <a href="https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/67486/ugc-proposal-procedures-for-changes-to-exisiting-majors-and-minors.pdf">https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/67486/ugc-proposal-procedures-for-changes-to-exisiting-majors-and-minors.pdf</a> .
<b>San Francisco</b>	N/A
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	<a href="https://senate.ucsb.edu/policies-and-procedures/policies-related-degree-programs-academic-units/establishment-undergraduate-degree-program.pdf">https://senate.ucsb.edu/policies-and-procedures/policies-related-degree-programs-academic-units/establishment-undergraduate-degree-program.pdf</a>

## Appendix D: Draft Review Process for Online Undergraduate Degree Program Proposals, University of California Committee on Education Policy

### I. INTRODUCTION

This policy document defines academic units and online undergraduate degree programs, the relationships among these entities, and the steps required to create an online undergraduate degree program.<sup>2</sup>

The procedures presented reflect that the University of California assigned responsibility for courses, curricula, and degrees to the faculty, and responsibility for academic units and budgets to the administration.<sup>3</sup> They are written to promote mutual endorsement of any proposed action because both faculty and administration support are necessary for an online program to thrive. Processes in place support administration and designated Academic Senate committee consultation prior to final decision. The Academic Senate may consult among its various committees consistent with their authorities and responsibilities.

It is important at the outset to differentiate academic programs from program faculty and academic units:

- **Academic Program:** An academic program is a set of course offerings and a set of requirements that lead to a degree or focus student interests on specific topics. The curriculum of all academic programs is supervised by a program faculty and overseen by an academic unit. Academic programs do not hold faculty provisions.
- **Program Faculty:** A program faculty is a group of faculty approved to offer one or more academic programs.
- **Academic Units:** Academic units are organizations approved to offer curriculum and administer academic programs. Units are defined on each campus and may vary. Some units may or may not offer degrees.

A *department* is the principal academic unit to which Senate faculty are formally appointed. Departments hold faculty provisions. Senate faculty members have Bylaw 55 rights. Department faculty comprise a committee of a Senate Division.

An academic *division* is an academic unit comprising a portion of a college or school. A division typically is headed by a dean. (In rare instances, when there is a distinct delineation within the discipline, a department may be divided into administrative

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<sup>2</sup> Standing Orders of the Regents 105.2 -

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/bylaws/so1052.html> Standing Orders of the Regents 100.6 - <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/bylaws/so1006.html>

<sup>3</sup> UC Compendium - [http://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/compendium\\_sept2014.pdf](http://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/compendium_sept2014.pdf)

components called divisions, but we do not use this meaning for the purposes of this document.) Academic divisions might offer curriculum, hold faculty provisions, or be headed by a dean. Academic divisions within a campus are not to be confused with Divisions of the Academic Senate.

A *school* is an academic unit typically comprising one or more departments that offer one or more professional degree programs. A school can hold faculty provisions and is headed by a dean.

A *college* is an academic unit that may offer courses and degrees and which may superimpose undergraduate graduation requirements beyond degree and general campus requirements. College faculty comprise a committee of the UC Academic Senate.

An *interdepartmental group* is an academic unit consisting of program faculty approved to offer at least one academic program. The program faculty are appointed to various departments, divisions, schools, or subject matter units. Interdepartmental groups do not hold budgeted faculty provisions.

## II. FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

### Nature of an Online Degree Program

An academic program leading to conferral of an undergraduate degree is an undergraduate degree program, commonly referred to as a “major” at the undergraduate level. Undergraduate degree programs are a structured set of courses and requirements leading to a degree at the undergraduate level.<sup>4</sup> An academic program must be approved as an online undergraduate degree program (OUDP) by the Divisional and in some cases Systemwide program approval body of the Academic Senate under the following conditions: [*Conditions pending Academic Council deliberation and Systemwide review*].

The curriculum of an OUDP is subject to review and approval by relevant Divisional and Systemwide committees of the Academic Senate.

An OUDP is supervised by a program faculty. A program faculty may consist of the departmental faculty, a subset of the members of a department, or faculty members from several departments. Programs themselves do not hold faculty provisions.

An OUDP must have stable leadership, Senate Faculty commitment, administrative and teaching resources, and suitable mechanisms of oversight and review. These resources,

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<sup>4</sup> UC Senate Regulation 735 (<http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart3.html#r735>)

commitments, and mechanisms must, at a minimum, be sufficient to see any current group of students in the program through to its completion or degree.

### **Criteria**

For a curriculum to serve as a major program, it must have the following characteristics:

1. A set of requirements, which, when satisfied, lead to a degree or certificate that bears the official UC seal.
2. A set of courses, offered on a consistent schedule.
3. Some structure to the course offerings, so that some courses build on the work of other courses (reflected in prerequisite structures, *etc.*).
4. A meaningful and measurable set of program learning outcomes (PLOs) that are supported by the curriculum.
5. A commitment by senate faculty members to the oversight of the program (the program faculty must include some senate faculty members and the chair must be a senate faculty member).
6. A comprehensive set of mechanisms and auxiliary support structures sufficient to guarantee that the program is viable. Viability requires sufficient resources to assure that all students currently pursuing the program can complete the degree requirements in a timely manner.
7. Mechanisms for responding to student demand and interests.
8. Oversight of program administration and resources by a department chair, academic dean, or college provost.
9. An administrative structure including relevant services or arrangements to support student success and cohort belonging, tailored to doing so in an online environment.

### **Establishment**

Any faculty group may develop a proposal for a new degree program. If the program faculty members fall primarily within a single department, the program chair will normally report to the department chair. If the faculty members span several departments, they may comprise an interdepartmental group and report to either a department chair or directly to an academic dean. It is the responsibility of the faculty to seek the most suitable administrative home for the academic program, based upon discussions with the relevant department chairs and academic deans.

The department manager or equivalent should be consulted in order to determine an appropriate level of staffing resources for the new program. Consultation with the Divisional education policy committee or with UCEP is encouraged if questions regarding the most appropriate program faculty configuration and administration arise. The academic proposal must be complete, including feedback letters, before submission to the Senate for further review.

Once designed, proposals should progress through normal Divisional sequences for



establishment of new programs (even if the proposal is the conversion of an existing in-person program into an online variant). At the point that the OUDP proposal has passed College review and goes to the Divisional Senate Office, the Divisional Senate Leadership should notify the Academic Council of its consideration of the proposals. Should the Divisional Senate executive council and campus representative assembly endorse the proposal, it can be submitted to the central Academic Senate Office for processing and review by appropriate system-level bodies. *[Academic Council may wish to determine the final form of the approval process—which committees vote, whether to require an endorsement by the Academic Assembly or only UCEP and the Academic Council, whether proposals must go out for Systemwide review and consultations prior to a vote by UCEP, the Academic Council, or the Academic Assembly.]*

Degree program proposals that are sufficiently advanced should, upon recommendation of the overseeing dean, be included in the campus's annual "Five Year Perspectives" submission to the University of California Office of the President (UCOP).

Note that approval of the degree program in turn confers acceptance of the program curriculum but does not confer approval of individual courses contained therein. All new course offerings must be approved independently via the normal process established by the Divisional course approval body. All degree requirements and course descriptions shall be specified and published annually in the campus catalog following approval by the relevant Divisional course and program approval bodies. The campus catalog is the official document of record for the degree requirements of each academic program, and students are entitled to catalog rights as defined by the Division.

### **Review**

Academic degree programs are subject to review as part of the regular academic program review of the department in which it is housed, by the relevant Divisional or Systemwide body. The first review for a new program (including existing programs converting to OUDPs) should take place three years after its establishment, based on an interim report. The interim report must include:

1. Documentation and analysis of enrollments, student learning outcomes, student persistence in the OUDP, and graduation rates if applicable within the period.
2. Documentation of financial flows related to the program and its position within the college or campus budget model, including data related to cross-campus enrollments.
3. A response to any data requests stipulated in the initial approval documentation.
4. An update of student demand for the program.
5. A list of any revisions to the curriculum since program approval.
6. A summary of any ongoing programmatic needs.
7. An outline of future plans to ensure the curriculum can be sustainably mounted.

### **III. ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

## **PART 1. Online Undergraduate Degree Program Proposal Submission**

A completed submission packet should include:<sup>5</sup>

- Undergraduate degree program proposal (see Part 2, below).
- Endorsement letter from the sponsoring department chair to the overseeing dean.
- Endorsement and resource commitment letter from the overseeing dean to the relevant Divisional Senate body.

Completed submission packets for interdepartmental undergraduate program proposals offered by faculty from *multiple departments* should also include:

- Interdepartmental Program Charter and By-Laws.
- Endorsement letter(s) or memoranda of understanding from contributing department chairs and divisional deans.

## **PART 2. Undergraduate Program Proposal Format**

The proposal template for undergraduate programs is modeled after the format for new graduate degree program proposals which is established by the University of California.<sup>6</sup> The template has been augmented with descriptive details necessary for UC OUDP approval.

### **TITLE**

A proposal for a program in \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. English/Biology Online) for the \_\_\_\_\_ degree[s] (B.A., B.S.).

### **DATE OF PREPARATION**

#### **SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION**

A statement setting forth the following:

1. Purpose and objectives of the program. Describe distinctive features, including pedagogical underpinnings. Explain the rationale for using online modalities as the main mode of instruction. Articulate program learning outcomes, which are student competencies that are achieved in the program.
2. The timetable for development of the program and enrollment projections. Specify the timing for:

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<sup>5</sup> UCEP or the Academic Council may request additional information before approving a proposed program

<sup>6</sup> <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/resources/2014CompendiumFINAL.pdf>

- a) Program Approval.
  - b) New faculty hires.
  - c) Course approvals.
  - d) First availability and frequency of core offerings.
  - e) Availability of space/facilities and other resources needed for program.
  - f) Coordination of outreach efforts.
  - g) Development of articulation agreements with community colleges.
  - h) Admission year for first cohort of frosh.
  - i) Admission year for first cohort of junior transfers.
  - j) Anticipated year of awarding first degrees.
  - k) Anticipated reviews by any outside agency (e.g. ABET).
3. Catalog copy. This should be in the format that undergraduate program statements in the General Catalog are supposed to follow.
4. Contextual features of the program
- a) If the program has any special requirements or enhancements (e.g., Education abroad, internships), please explain.
  - b) Are necessary articulation agreements in place with community colleges?
  - c) List similar programs, if any, in the University of California or other comparable institutions.
5. Relationship of the proposed program to existing campus programs and current campus academic plans.
- a) Could the curriculum be offered just as effectively within an existing structure (e.g. as a pathway within an existing major program)?
  - b) Why is the program being offered primarily through online courses? What goals does this modality serve?
  - c) What overlaps exist between the proposed curriculum and the curricula of other units on this campus or on other campuses?
  - d) Effect of the proposed program on other programs offered by the sponsoring departments. State if any other programs on this campus or other campuses may have their enrollments reduced in order to accommodate the proposed program. (This will help with future planning.)
  - e) Documentation of consultation with affected units (e.g., Departments, Programs, Centers)
    - i. Describe overlap or conflict with existing majors or minors within the Division and in other Divisions.
    - ii. You must consult with affected units and include letters from such units stating their feedback. Proposals may still be submitted even if affected units are not supportive. UCEP and the Academic Council will only review proposals that include:
      - Feedback from affected units; or
      - If affected units choose not to provide feedback,

documentation of reasonable attempts to receive this feedback.

- f) Documentation of student opinion on the proposed major or minor (e.g., surveys).
6. Student demand.
    - a) Provide statistical evidence of student demand, such as enrollment trends, admissions trends, student inquiries, or course enrollments in related majors.
    - b) Provide evidence supporting the view that this demand will be stable and long lasting.
    - c) Describe the options and procedures for students to switch majors, either to another online program where available or to a program delivered primarily in-person.
    - d) Graduate career placement opportunities; cite employment prospect data and literature where possible. Append relevant statistics and clippings.
  7. Comprehensive strategy to connect students with campus resources, services, and cohort activities to build a sense of belonging and support in the remote setting. Considerations include:
    - a) Advising
    - b) Tutoring
    - c) Career counseling
    - d) Mental and physical health services
    - e) IT infrastructure and support
    - f) Access to campus
  8. Contribution to University of California's mission
    - a) Describe how the program will advance [UC's goals for diversity](#).
    - b) Include a plan that details what steps the program will take in its first five years to move it toward the identification, recruitment, and retention of underrepresented minority students.
  9. Program Evaluation. Program reviews will occur according to established campus review guidelines and consolidated with the sponsoring department's review. Interdepartmental undergraduate program reviews will be consolidated with the administrative home department's review. State which departmental review will include the proposed program.

## **SECTION 2. CURRICULUM**

1. Courses:
  - a) List required courses and elective courses.
  - b) For all courses that are not in the catalog, a syllabus of the course and the proposed catalog description must be provided.

- c) For all courses with substantial online components, a course syllabus and related information that provide a clear account of the requirements and expectations for student engagement in online and classroom instruction. For example, consider including a grid in the syllabus that documents how much time per week is spent in online discussions, viewing online lectures, and similar activities versus traditional classroom-based lectures, discussions, or off-line work.
  - d) A description of how all courses, both existing and new, fit in the curriculum of the proposed major (e.g., their relationship to specific fields of emphasis) must be provided.
  - e) A curriculum map showing the prerequisite structure of the courses in the program and the term(s) in which each course will be offered should be included.
  - f) A table of the number of hours that a student gets live instruction.
  - g) Provide letters of support from all units whose courses are used and whose faculty are providing instruction and/or mentoring:
    - i. From Chairs/Directors: Confirm courses have capacity to accommodate frequency of offerings and number of projected students; comment on any other levels of unit/program support required.
    - ii. From Faculty: Comment on value of the courses for new major or minor; comment on scope and level of faculty participation in existing courses and in developing new courses
  - h) Report whether the program designers have checked the availability of offerings and whether spots are available for students in the proposed major.
  - i) List any courses intended to serve cross-campus enrollments.
  - j) List any courses on other campuses included as electives via cross-campus enrollment by students in the new major.
2. Curriculum Plan. Describe how the new course load will be distributed among existing faculty and future hires for five years taking into account existing course loads and projected Senate faculty leaves and absences.
  3. Program Learning Outcomes:
    - a) A multiyear plan for assessing effectiveness of instruction of learning outcomes noted in Section 1, part 1.
    - b) A curriculum alignment matrix showing how the curriculum supports the learning outcomes and where they are assessed.
  4. Continuous improvement cycle:
    - a) Describe strategies to ensure (between formal review cycles) that courses are updated and deliver substantive interaction between the instructor and students.
    - b) Describe plans to monitor and troubleshoot (between formal review cycles) issues with student engagement, content mastery, and wellbeing.

### **SECTION 3. FACULTY**

1. Describe program faculty, include immediately pending appointments, and projected future hires. Briefly describe the relationship of the program to faculty research and professional interests. If the program faculty is not the same as the faculty of a department:
  - a) List program faculty, core faculty first and then affiliated faculty.
  - b) For participating faculty outside of the sponsoring department, append copies of letters indicating their interest and commitment to the program
2. List the anticipated student-to-faculty (FTE) ratio in the proposed program, as well as any related existing programs on the campus (or on other UC campuses if relevant) as points of reference.
  - a) Explain any difference in the anticipated student-to-faculty ratio in the proposed program relative to these points of reference.

#### **SECTION 4. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

List:

1. Department or other academic unit that which will administer the program. (The administrative home for purposes of student major advising is listed in the catalog copy, and should generally be the same as the administrative home of the program.)
2. If the program faculty is not the same as the faculty of a department: specific provisions for program faculty oversight, including chair succession, student advising, and other leadership responsibilities.
3. How the new program fits within campus budgetary structures.
4. The advising structure and staff that will be utilized (including the physical location of staff).
5. Provisions for IT support.
  - a) The unit is responsible for IT support
  - b) The hours that live support will be available to students using online course and program facilities.
  - c) Mechanisms to supply students in need with support securing necessary computer hardware, software, and equipment to ensure reliable connection to the internet in a suitable workspace.
  - d) Support for adequate proctoring of online assessments and safeguarding of intellectual property within course materials.

Append:

1. Agreements assuring that any courses and other faculty effort essential to the program will be available to any current cohort of students for timely major completion. If the course sponsoring department cannot agree to provide capacity in its courses, a justification for the denial must be provided.

2. A signed interdepartmental charter if the proposal is sponsored by program faculty from multiple departments and/or divisions.

#### **SECTION 5. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Include a fully specified budget of anticipated revenues and costs for the first 5 years.
  - a) If applicable, state that no new resources will be required and describe how the program will be funded. If new resources are required, estimate for the first 5 years the additional cost of the program, by year, for each of the following categories for which new resources are required:
    - i. FTE faculty.
    - ii. Library acquisitions (consult with librarians).
    - iii. Computing costs.
    - iv. Equipment (append inventory of current equipment and future needs).
    - v. Space and other capital facilities (append inventory of current facilities and future requirements).
    - vi. Instructional technology and course development.
    - vii. Other operating costs (supplies and expense, maintenance of labs and other facilities).
    - viii. Teaching Assistants.
    - ix. Technical and administrative/advising staff, including IT support staff for enrolled students (append description of current staffing level and future requirements).
  - b) Describe the student fee structure and schedule, and any differences between the fee structure for this program versus others on campus.
2. Indicate the intended sources of funding for all new costs, including instructors, advising staff, and IT support.
  - a) If the program is to be funded by internal reallocation, explain how internal resources will be generated and/or realigned and the effects of reallocation on existing programs.
  - b) Clearly separate out any unmet needs.
  - c) Describe opportunities/activities for securing external support.
  - d) What resources (soft funding for instructors and staff, space, etc.) are indispensable to the operation of the proposed program; clearly separate basic requirements from long-term desires.
  - e) For the program's first five years, describe the schedule on which these resources need to become available.
  - f) Relate phasing of funding to targets for enrollments, majors, degrees, or other measures of workload accountability.

#### **SECTION 6. CHANGES IN SENATE REGULATIONS AND WASC APPROVAL**

The proposal should state clearly whether or not any changes in Senate Regulations at the Divisional level or in the Academic Assembly would be required. If changes are necessary (e.g., for all proposals for new degree titles), the complete text of the proposed amendments or new

regulations should be provided.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) is the accrediting agency for the University of California. New degree titles or new programs that involve instructional activities at off-campus locations or use distance-learning technologies may require Substantive Change Review.