

Senate Chair's remarks to UC Board of Regents

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Thank you, vice-chair Elliott, and good morning Regents. Let me tell you what the Senate has been doing in this, my final set of remarks.

1. I begin on a high note. President Drake and callers in public comment spoke just now of the Academic Senate's Memorial on the climate crisis. The Memorial, a relatively rare action, passed with nearly 85 percent approval of the faculty. It petitions the Regents to make investments in UC's infrastructure that will reduce on-campus fossil fuel combustion by at least 60 percent of current levels by the year 2030 and 95 percent by 2035.

Faculty are acting to confront the climate crisis in their own domain. They are expanding research and the teaching curriculum to address climate-related topics in nearly every scholarly discipline. Faculty are cutting back on travel to scholarly meetings to reduce their carbon footprints. They are forming committees on the campuses to help administrations implement policies and practices that reduce carbon emissions.

We hope, with the passage of the Memorial, that the Regents will do *their* part, and move with dispatch to help facilitate the electrification of campus power plants.

2. The Senate recently considered the President's Interim Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations. Last year, Senate expressed concern about plans by UC to expand affiliations with health care organizations subject to ethical and religious directives – directives that restrict health professionals from providing evidence-based treatments such as abortion, tubal ligation, or gender reassignment procedures. Many Regents also harbored those concerns, and Regents passed Policy 4405 to govern affiliation agreements with such institutions.

The President's Interim Affiliation Policy is designed to implement 4405. We sent it out for full Senate review. Campus reviewers expressed support for the goals of the Interim Policy. However, they were also troubled by ambiguities in the policy. Many of our clinicians remain unsure whether they can perform specific procedures. Senate comments reflected this uncertainty, and asked for clarity at the very least on the "emergency" provision, which requires affiliates to allow UC clinical staff to provide services without restriction.

Senate reviewers asked several questions: When, how, and who determines emergency or a “risk to the material deterioration to the patient’s condition”? Does severe psychological distress count? Can an emergency abortion even be performed if nursing staff in the affiliated hospital refuse to participate? Are the channels for posting complaints by UC clinical staff widely publicized and understood? Are those complaint mechanisms robust and truly protective of complainants?

Other Senate reviewers noted that the policy should not affect the University’s existing and future affiliations with government agencies such as the VA or longstanding affiliations that help poor and underserved communities.

But reviewers noted that both affiliated hospitals *and* UC Health facilities lack a system to address requests by clinicians to opt out of performing certain procedures – which has created lapses in care. Both UC hospitals and affiliates should have clear policies and mechanisms to identify *in advance* staff who intend to opt out of providing specific kinds of care.

3. Let me provide brief updates on two issues that have attracted public attention.

- Senate Regulation 424 would align the state law establishing an Ethnic Studies high school course requirement with UC’s A to G guidelines for freshman admission. The Senate’s Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) worked with a UC Ethnic Studies faculty working group to create a proposal on subject-matter criteria and pedagogical goals. Senate leadership sent the proposal out for full Senate review. We received a decidedly mixed set of comments from the campuses. After vigorous discussion at Academic Council, we sent the proposal back to BOARS for reconsideration and revision. This caused some tension, but BOARS and the Ethnic Studies faculty workgroup are now back at work discussing revisions.
- Then there is the matter of academic departments posting political statements on their websites. Senate leadership asked the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) to study the matter. UCAF consulted with UC Legal and professors at our law schools. The committee concluded that departments should *not* be prohibited from issuing political statements on their websites. UCAF’s memo advised that such statements include a disclaimer clarifying that the statements do not represent the views of the *University*. UCAF urged that departments clarify whose views the statement represents (Senate faculty? All faculty? Students as well?). And, to lessen the risk of individual coercion or backlash, UCAF recommended that statements be reported out unsigned.

The memo, which was sent out for full Senate review, received broad support. Academic Council unanimously endorsed it and sent it to campus Senates as a guidance document, but Senate leadership continues to engage earnestly with concerned Regents on the matter, particularly Regent Sures.

4. In another domain, the Academic Council has spent the year considering the issue of fully online undergraduate degrees. Some faculty support online degrees as a way to increase access to the university. They also see such programs as curricular innovations. Skeptical faculty point to the fact that none of our competitors offer widespread fully online undergraduate degree programs. And, for all the hoopla, the results of those universities that do – Arizona State and University of Maryland – are disturbing: the percentage of students who complete online degree programs is much much lower than in-person graduation rates. And many of their students are saddled with significant debt.

I'm pleased to report that Academic Council offers a way forward in this space.

Currently, potential online degrees at the UC are pitched to transfer students. But that violates our mandate to *integrate* transfer students into the life of the university, a mandate strongly endorsed by Regents and the reason why we have extensive transfer resource programs on every campus. Another violation rests in the fact that an online degree program would allow a department to determine the upper division elective courses that students must take – *not* for reasons of pedagogy, but solely by virtue of the modality of their instruction. Students' elective courses would be dictated by the online degree program in order to keep the degree fully online and thus keep students from setting foot on campus.

For the first time we would separate our students into two groups – those who could afford the highly enriched on-campus experience and those who could only taste a portion of it from afar – yet we would charge both groups the same fees and tuition. This is contrary to UC values of inclusion and equity.

All year in my Regents remarks I have been warning of the pedagogical and experiential downsides to online instruction. Some of you may remember my outburst at a Regents meeting last year, at which I declared that the faculty do not want the UC to become Arizona State. With deference to Regent Anguiano, I stand by that declaration. Oh, and I'm still waiting for my I Love ASU t-shirt. Size medium.

Faculty Representative Cochran organized another survey of faculty this year; she will present the results in the fall. For now, let me convey that the survey *again* highlights

the faculty's strong sense of student disengagement and learning loss, especially with remote instruction. Faculty believe that our students should spend some time on a campus experiencing campus life and taking courses in-person. --Regents themselves recognize the value of meeting in person, as evidenced by the recent announcement of meeting expectations.

Academic Council thus endorsed a proposal to restore the student residency requirement. Residency would be on a relatively minimal basis, requiring students to be on campus for at least one year during their careers, taking a minimum of 6 units of in-person instruction per quarter or semester.

This threads a needle. It allows for curricular innovations like Santa Cruz's Creative Technologies program, enabling our Santa Cruz colleagues to propose a novel online *major* – though not a fully online degree. The other needle threading is that the residency requirement, while real, is also minimal enough to allow significantly more access and enrollment of students to the campuses because of the effective platooning of students in residence at any given time.

We will be sending out the residency requirement proposal for full Senate review in the fall.

5. Finally, I want to bring to your attention a possible serious problem consequent to the unionization of Graduate Student Researchers. Faculty fully support the right of graduate students to unionize. But because of the structure of graduate financial support, there is strong threat that an employer-employee relationship will intrude upon – and displace – the all-important mentor-mentee relationship between faculty and student.

Principal investigators, particularly in STEM fields, often fund graduate students through their grants. But those grants do not expand if the university and the GSR union agree to increases in pay. Where are faculty PI's to find the money to fund those increases? How onerous will it be for PI's to honor changes to working conditions negotiated between the union and the university? Most important, how will the union and the university decide what is a student's individual work – required to satisfy degree requirements – and what is labor?

Now, contrary to lore, the fundamental aim of funding graduate student researchers is *not* to bestow faculty with research labor. Rather, it is for faculty to provide mentoring

and training to graduate students. If that mentoring relationship is displaced by an employer-employee relationship, graduate education will be under serious threat. What is needed at this time is to rebuild the graduate funding model from the ground-up, so that the *institution* is the effective employer, not the PI, and for the *University* to be fully responsible for funding. This would help safeguard the mentoring relationship.

Such assertion of *institutional* responsibility also might help restore the perception among faculty that the University has their back.

It has been a privilege to serve as chair of the Academic Senate this year and to serve as Faculty Representative to the Regents. I leave the Senate in exceptionally good hands with incoming chair Susan Cochran and incoming vice-chair Jim Steintrager.

This, Vice-chair Elliott, concludes my remarks. Thank you.