

The Regents of the University of California

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

March 15, 2006

The Committee on Educational Policy met on the above date at Covell Commons, Los Angeles campus.

Members present: Regents Dynes, Island, Johnson, Kozberg, Lansing, Marcus, Moores, Parsky, Rosenthal, and Ruiz; Advisory members Coombs, Ledesma, and Schreiner; Staff Advisor Bell

In attendance: Regents Blum, Gould, Hopkinson, Juline, Pattiz, Preuss, Rominger, and Schilling, Faculty Representative Oakley, Secretary Trivette, General Counsel Holst, Interim Treasurer Berggren, Acting Provost Hume, Senior Vice Presidents Darling and Mullinix, Vice Presidents Gomes, Gurtner, and Hershman, Chancellors Birgeneau, Bishop, Carnesale, Córdoba, Denton, Drake, Fox, Tomlinson-Keasey, and Vanderhoef, Laboratory Director Anastasio, University Auditor Reed, and Recording Secretary Nietfeld

The meeting convened at 10:15 a.m. with Committee Chair Kozberg presiding.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of November 17, 2005 were approved.

2. **UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING**

Acting Provost Hume recalled that a series of presentations to the Committee had commenced in January 2005 with a description of the Master Plan for Higher Education. Because the Master Plan designated the University of California as the state's primary public research university, faculty members are able to deliver knowledge through teaching and create it through research. UC's undergraduates have daily access to some of the world's finest minds, both inside and outside the classroom. The Master Plan gave the University the responsibility for offering degree programs from the baccalaureate through the doctoral degree, which provides undergraduates with the opportunity to work directly with graduate students. These interactions inspire many undergraduate students to pursue graduate degrees. The Master Plan provides access to higher education for all of the state's high-school graduates, with UC taking the top 12.5 percent. The motivation of these high-achieving students inspires the faculty to create challenging learning experiences.

Mr. Hume observed that the University's size is a distinct advantage in that the vast number of fields covered by the faculty make it possible to offer thousands of classes and hundreds of majors, allowing each student to pursue a tailor-made education, with no two

undergraduate careers being exactly alike. As a research institution, the University offers an array of instructors, including professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants. Large lecture courses are supplemented by smaller discussion sections, and undergraduate students are able to enroll in smaller classes such as seminars that encourage their participation. UC students contribute to the richness of their educational experience through their varied backgrounds, beliefs, and academic and social experiences. As a systemwide institution, the University is able to offer educational opportunities to students on campuses other than their own, as well as in off-campus settings such as the Education Abroad Program and UCDC. Technology is being used to teach subjects across campus lines, which is particularly useful in teaching less commonly taught courses.

Faculty Representative Oakley noted that The Regents had delegated to the faculty the responsibility for developing the curriculum for the baccalaureate degree. The faculty expect all students to learn along the two dimensions of breadth and depth and to integrate their knowledge broadly across fields. It is important that this education prepare students for lifelong learning, as the faculty fundamentally seek to teach their students how to learn. The undergraduate curriculum begins with general education and skills courses, progresses through the preparation for the major, and culminates in the major. The faculty set major and graduation requirements; individual faculty members develop their own courses which are reviewed by the Academic Senate. Each campus has its own Senate structure for approving proposed courses and majors which involves both the departments and campus-wide committees. Once courses and majors are approved, the academic administration provides the funding resources that allow the programs to proceed.

Professor Judith Smith, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Honors and Undergraduate Programs at UCLA, recalled that early in the 1990s a systemwide conference on undergraduate education had called for the campuses to establish an academic position to advocate for undergraduate education. Vice Provost Smith explained that in this position she works closely with the faculty to ensure high-quality academic programs. She promotes student success through counseling and collaborative learning programs and works with the faculty to create scholarships to support students who participate in the campus' enrichment programs.

UCLA has recently introduced or expanded a number of innovative programs; Vice Provost Smith noted that her focus would be on the bookend seminars, the freshman cluster courses, and undergraduate research opportunities. UCLA students are required to complete a series of courses in four areas: general education, pre-major, the major, and electives. This structure is supported by the freshman and senior bookend seminars. The goal of the freshman seminars is to encourage first-year students to explore and discover, and each seminar is designed to motivate open discussion among the participants, while the goal for the senior seminars is to encourage advanced students to integrate and reflect on concepts learned. The freshman seminar program at UCLA, called *Fiat Lux*, was established in 2002 with an initial 50 seminars enrolling 750 students. Since then the number of seminars and their enrollments have grown steadily to 200 seminars in 2005 enrolling 3,000 students.

Vice Provost Smith displayed a sample of the *Fiat Lux* seminars offered by the faculty, which include topics such as Building Digital Cities, Managing Global Corporations, and Rethinking National Security, a course developed by Chancellor Carnesale following the events of September 11, 2001. Chancellor Carnesale has offered this course each winter quarter for the past five years. Students are engaged in the discussion of two fundamental questions regarding national security: (1) what are the near-term threats to the security of the United States and other nations and (2) how might those threats best be met. Vice Provost Smith shared some of the positive comments made by students who have enrolled in *Fiat Lux* seminars

Vice Provost Smith discussed the freshman cluster program, founded in 1997. At present, nearly 45 percent of freshmen enroll in one of the ten clusters offered each year. A cluster sequence consists of a lecture and discussion section in the fall and winter quarters and a small seminar in the spring. The cluster courses are taught by faculty who work as a team, supported by teaching assistants, librarians, and writing instructors. Each cluster focuses on a broad theme, including The Global Environment, Race Dynamics in America, and Inside the Performing Arts. Over 8,000 freshmen have enrolled in the cluster program, and 97 faculty have participated. Vice Provost Smith explained that campus had achieved the three major goals of the cluster program:

- Year-long learning communities facilitate the freshman transition to UCLA.
- The course work helps to elevate the academic skills needed for success.
- Students use an interdisciplinary approach to master complex issues.

Vice Provost Smith described some of the research opportunities that are available to students at UCLA. There are three levels of engagement: the apprentice, who explores and volunteers; the fellow, who learns basic techniques and begins to develop ideas for a project; and the scholar, who designs and completes a comprehensive project. Approximately 85 percent of the seniors on campus have completed an apprentice experience, half have experience as fellows, and one-third have completed a research paper in the role of scholar. Research scholars often complete a senior thesis and present their research at professional meetings. These activities are funded at a level of \$2 million per year, with most of the funding from donors who wish to support the program. Most research scholars go on to attend graduate school. Vice Provost Smith shared some of the projects under way between a faculty member and a research scholar. Students report that research is a priceless experience that underscores the value of a research university.

Acting Provost Hume discussed the undergraduate experience survey, which asked all students to look back and describe their skills when they arrived on campus relative to those skills upon graduation. Seventy to seventy-five percent of seniors rate their skill levels as “very good” or “expert” in writing, critical thinking, and understanding of culturally diverse viewpoints, while 60 percent rank their research and quantitative skills at least as “very

good.” Less than one-third believed that their skills were at this level when they were freshmen.

Having had the opportunity to attend some cluster courses, Regent Juline observed that one of the most exciting elements for students had been to see professors disagree on a subject matter, thereby forcing the students to come to their own conclusions. He asked for comment on the degree to which student input factors into the decisions made on curriculum at the University. Vice Provost Smith reported that feedback from students is critical in developing new areas of study. Each department provides seniors with the opportunity to suggest new courses, and there are one-unit, student-initiated seminars. Acting Provost Hume continued that student surveys of individual courses are particularly important to a faculty member’s career, but the data are also used in curriculum design.

Committee Chair Kozberg asked how the campus had been able to grow the programs in an era of budgetary cutbacks. Vice Provost Smith recalled that the cluster program had originally been supported by dedicated funds which the campus has been able to use effectively. Funding is also provided by foundations and other donors. The faculty are interested in teaching in innovative programs, and many volunteer their time.

In response to a question from Regent Marcus, Vice Provost Smith explained that the cluster program is unique to UCLA. Regent Marcus saw this as an opportunity to attract the top high-school scholars who have also been admitted to Harvard or Yale to the Los Angeles campus. Vice Provost Smith reported that admitted students receive information about the cluster program; the drawback is that the campus can offer these courses to only about one-half of the entering freshman class. The campus is pursuing newer, less-expensive programs that would still involve a cluster-like experience.

Faculty Representative Oakley observed that the faculty at the University of California are deeply committed to teaching and to the public nature of the institution. Many faculty undertake voluntary teaching overloads.

Regent-designate Ledesma observed that the undergraduate experience on the Los Angeles campus often involves civic engagement and asked about the opportunities to volunteer in the community at other locations. Acting Provost Hume reported that, in preparation for the presentation, he had requested examples of innovative activities throughout the system. He found that there are many research-focused activities and many first-year programs. There are only two that focus on civic engagement. The President has engaged the chancellors in addressing this issue.

Regent Johnson asked about the approval process for student-initiated courses. Vice Provost Smith explained that the proposed course would go through the regular channels. The student would first undertake independent study with the faculty member to develop the course, and a course proposal would be submitted to the department for faculty approval. These one-unit classes are graded “pass” or “not pass.” Regent Johnson pointed out that

some of these student-led courses address controversial subjects. Vice Provost Smith noted that at UCLA the topic must be consistent with what is normally taught in the department.

3. **EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS: TRAVEL ADVISORY POLICY REVIEW**

Acting Provost Hume recalled that considerable interest had been expressed by Regents and others in reviewing the University's position relative to EAP study programs in countries where the United States Department of State has issued travel advisories, in particular the program in Israel. He proposed that a small committee be established to review the nature and intent of State Department travel advisories, the policies and practices of other universities, and the experiences of UC students who are or have been in Israel, and to recommend any changes at the May meeting. Acting Provost Hume noted that he would convene a group consisting of Regents Island, Pattiz, and Rosenthal, and representatives from the community, the Office of the President, the Education Abroad Program, and the Office of the General Counsel.

(For speakers' comments, see the minutes of the March 15, 2006 meeting of the Committee of the Whole.)

4. **QUARTERLY REPORT ON PRIVATE SUPPORT, SECOND QUARTER, OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2005**

In accordance with the Schedule of Reports, the **Quarterly Report on Private Support** for the period July 1 through December 31, 2005 was submitted for information.

[The report was mailed to all Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary.]

Regent Hopkinson requested that the chart which breaks out gifts by categories also show the percentage of each category. Regent Juline asked for an explanation of what is encompassed by the category "Operations."

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Attest:

Secretary