

The Regents of the University of California

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 17, 2025

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on the above date at the UCSF-Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco campus.

Members present: Regents Anguiano, Batchlor, Brooks, Leib, Myers, Park, Sarris, and Wang; Ex officio member Reilly; Advisory members Melton, Palazoglu, Scott, and Tokita; Chancellors Frenk, Gillman, Hawgood, and Larive; Staff Advisor Frías

In attendance: Regents Komoto, Kounalakis, and Makarechian, Regent-designate Craven, Staff Advisor Hanson, Secretary and Chief of Staff Lyall, Chief Compliance and Audit Officer Bustamante, Provost Newman, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Nava, Vice Presidents Brown, Gullatt, Kao, and Williams, Chancellors Assanis, Hu, May, and Muñoz, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 1:30 p.m. with Committee Chair Leib presiding.

Committee Chair Leib began the meeting by providing an update on the \$7 million that the University dedicated to addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of bias, bigotry, and discrimination. Having heard accounts of antisemitism and having experienced antisemitism himself, Committee Chair Leib wished to ensure that these funds were being spent wisely. He stated that these funds, as well as leadership changes across the system, have helped steer UC in the right direction. Approximately \$5.3 million has been allocated, and the remaining funds would support ongoing programming and new systemic interventions. UC has collaborated with Hillel, an international Jewish student organization, and other student organizations to improve the climate for Jewish students and other affected groups and to address the evolving nature of antisemitism. Committee Chair Leib reported on the progress made toward supporting safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments. One was education and training for students, staff, and faculty; about 20,000 individuals have received training thus far. Another was emergency mental health resources for students who experience hate or harassment. UC conducted a systemwide campus climate survey and launched the UC Campus Climate Initiative in partnership with Hillel. UC aimed to create sustainable, campus-specific, and systemwide structures that offer protections and uphold both civil rights and free expression. Committee Chair Leib emphasized the need for systemic change and for diversity of opinion on campus. UC sought to support the most targeted communities, promote proactive approaches, and measure effectiveness through climate and outcome data. Committee Chair Leib recognized the Office of the President, particularly Vice President Gullatt, and the chancellors.

Regent Wang asked whether demographic data from incident reporting were included in the report. Committee Chair Leib responded in the negative and added that the effort related to campus reporting was a work in progress. Forthcoming recommendations from UCLA's antisemitism task

force regarding incident reporting could serve as a model for other campuses. He sought to address how quickly one received a response and the quality of the response.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of July 16, 2025 were approved, Regents Anguiano, Leib, Myers, Park, Reilly, Sarris, and Wang voting “aye.”¹

2. DEGREE PLUS: ENRICHING CAREER PREPARATION FOR UC STUDENTS

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Provost Newman introduced the item. Even in its inception in 1868, the University has tried to reconcile the tension between liberal and practical education. Amidst an unpredictable economy and rising tuition, students and their families were questioning the value of undergraduate education despite data indicating that college graduates earned much more than non-graduates. Still, a variation in outcomes by field and the rising cost of degrees fueled concerns. Employers were choosing applicants with proven skills and actual experience because of how quickly they would add value and productivity. Some sectors sought technical skills, while other sectors sought soft skills like communication, adaptability, or critical thinking. UC must understand this in order to meet the expectations of students and the demands of employers.

The Degree Plus pilot initiative had three pillars: an undergraduate degree, a certificate provided through UC Extension that denotes mastery of particular skills, and a paid internship that provides real-world experience, contacts, and references. Internships, which were entry points into professional networks, would be paired with recognized certificates to create a portfolio that complemented UC degrees. Degree Plus was supported by the Lumina Foundation and the Strada Education Foundation, underscoring the University’s role as a national leader in innovative approaches to higher education. This initiative was exploratory; UC was listening to employers, studying how they evaluate applicants, and making UC Extension and campus career services more agile. While all nine undergraduate campuses have expressed an interest in participating in Degree Plus, UC currently only had resources to launch the program at UC Santa Barbara and UC San Diego.

David Marshall, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost at UC Santa Barbara, stated that the UCSB College of Engineering offered a Technology Management Certificate Program that included UCSB Extension units. Its courses attracted 800 to 1,000 students annually from over 50 different undergraduate majors, demonstrating a strong demand for career enhancing skills across disciplines. The Degree Plus initiative at UCSB was meant to supplement select liberal arts degree programs with new professional certificates in order

¹ Roll call vote required by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act [Government Code § 11123(b)(1)(D)] for all meetings held by teleconference.

to strengthen career readiness, employability, and access to industry-relevant training while demonstrating the relevance and value added of UCSB liberal arts degrees. The campus would focus on certificates that provide an understanding of how artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the ways in which one lives, works, and engages in business. UCSB has focused the pilot on majors in English and Film and Media Studies. The English Department offered emphases in digital humanities, environmental humanities, and cognitive science as well as a donor-funded undergraduate research program. The Department of Film and Media Studies had a very successful internship program that has placed many of UCSB students in the film and entertainment industry. The Carsey-Wolf Center at UCSB sponsored research opportunities, including a new project funded by television producer Richard Anthony “Dick” Wolf on the ways AI would change the film industry. Courses about AI would be supplemented by new UCSB Extension courses that focus on workplace skills and the effect of AI on policy, regulation, and workplace transformation. To expand internship opportunities, the campus was hiring new staff; planned to leverage relationships with chambers of commerce, workforce investment boards, and economic development agencies; and would work with the UCSB Alumni Association. As an example of employers’ existing interest in UCSB alumni Mr. Mitchell noted that ScaleAI recently hired a UCSB 2025 English Department graduate.

Committee Chair Leib suggested speaking with Regent Sures regarding internship opportunities at United Talent Agency, where Regent Sures was Vice Chairman.

Elizabeth Simmons, Executive Vice Chancellor at UC San Diego, stated that the transition from university to career was more competitive than ever. Employers increasingly sought graduates who combine disciplinary expertise with market-ready skills. Degree Plus at UCSD was a pilot program designed to equip junior and senior undergraduate students with such skills. In addition to a bachelor’s degree, the program would have three components: a professional certificate in a complementary, high-demand field; an internship tied to that skillset; and the use of labor market analytics to ensure relevance and guide decision-making. The program would bridge what students learn and what the labor market values, building on UCSD Extended Studies internships, departmental internships, and the campus’ ability to form strong partnerships with diverse employers. Funding from the Office of the President (UCOP) and philanthropic organizations would help reduce cost barriers for students and host companies. The pilot program would launch in winter 2026, run for two years, and serve 240 students along three pathways. Arts majors from visual and performing arts and creative writing and literature would be paired with a certificate in arts management, meeting needs in cultural institutions and the creative economy. Political science majors would be paired with a certificate in data science, which was relevant to government agencies, policy advocacy groups, and utility companies and other service providers. Physics and chemistry majors would be paired with a certificate in process improvement, which was sought after by biotechnology and medical device industries in San Diego. Certificate programs would be self-paced and provided online, and Degree Plus at UCSD would offer workshops in communication, teamwork, and problem solving, skills that employers valued but did not often find in new graduates. The pilot program would provide support to students sourcing internships through UC or on

their own. UCSD would leverage existing relationships with companies and work with the San Diego Regional Economic Corporation to identify further opportunities.

Ms. Newman stated that the Degree Plus pilot programs would be followed carefully over a number of years to understand their impact on students' careers. The Lumina Foundation has provided two external evaluations to assess employer interest and participation; the number and quality of job placements; the completion rates of academic and professional elements of the programs; and the outcomes of participants versus non-participants, including entry salaries, job satisfaction, and relevance of employment to field of study. If the Degree Plus initiative is successful, one hopes to expand it to additional campuses, majors, and fields. The University would work to ensure that Degree Plus students are fully covered by federal financial aid. Ms. Newman recognized the systemwide and campus alumni associations' commitment to seeking internships. She projected that she would seek the Regents' support for expanding the Degree Plus initiative in the future.

Regent Brooks, referring to the written materials, stated her understanding that the Degree Plus initiative was meant for traditional students. She asked whether it would be made available to nontraditional junior and senior students. Ms. Newman clarified that Degree Plus would be offered to any student enrolled in a bachelor's degree program.

Regent Brooks suggested that this be clarified given the connotations of "traditional" and "nontraditional" on campuses. Ms. Newman noted that UC Extension programs were created to serve working individuals, who were often older, seeking a career change.

Regent Park asked about the cost of these programs and whether there was an expectation, after the pilot period ends, that federal financial aid would cover 100 percent of costs. Ms. Newman noted that UC did not currently have per-person data on cost but responded in the affirmative. The University would seek philanthropic support in the meantime, and UCOP has provided funding to ensure that internships are paid even when firms cannot afford it. Grants from the Lumina and Strada Education Foundations would go toward adding teaching and internship support.

Regent Park asked for more information about the cost of the Degree Plus program, emphasizing that the University was in a resource-constrained environment. Ms. Newman underscored the importance of persuading people that the return on investment of a college education is robust. Mr. Marshall added that UCSB Extension programs were generally self-supporting and could generate income to support UCSB's core operations. Foundation grants went toward staffing and financial aid. If Degree Plus is eventually offered through UC Extension, it could become self-supporting.

Regent Anguiano asked how Degree Plus internship efforts compared with those of campus career services. Ms. Simmons replied that Degree Plus would build on the current effort, using contacts from career services, alumni associations, and UCSD Extended Studies, and would also broaden the range of students who pursue internships. For instance, arts majors, who were less likely to pursue paid internships due to perceived limitations in what was available, were now obtaining certificates in arts management or the use of AI.

Ms. Newman added that Degree Plus' efforts would be more curated and embraced by departments.

Committee Chair Leib stressed the importance of differentiating existing internships from this pilot program. Ms. Newman stated that one of the big differences was the certificate; a three-pronged approach would be more powerful. Ms. Simmons stated that UCSD would inform all entering students about Degree Plus, noting the challenge of persuading first-year or transfer students to consider internships or their careers. Mr. Marshall added that Degree Plus would pair students with internships that are less obvious. Technology companies were seeking students with liberal arts majors.

Regent-designate Craven remarked that this was a natural progression from the Student Success Internship Program at UC Merced. He asked how UC would identify the students who need Degree Plus the most, such as those who come from families without professional connections. Ms. Newman replied that the pilot phase would help determine demand. Degree Plus would be well promoted, and advisors for majors connected to the program would also reach out to students.

Regent-designate Craven asked if Degree Plus would only be available to students who qualify for federal financial aid. Ms. Newman responded in the negative, clarifying that one hoped that Degree Plus would qualify for federal aid. For now, UC was paying for the program using the aforementioned resources.

Regent Craven asked if there would be coursework tied to Degree Plus. Ms. Simmons replied that the academic department was working with UCSD Extended Studies to ensure that the degree program is a match with the certificate. Mr. Marshall clarified that this was not an internship program, but rather a certificate program with an internship. The certificate had a required curriculum of extension and potentially departmental courses.

Staff Advisor Hanson called attention to the hidden costs of the program: the additional strain on faculty, staff, and facilities; the additional need to promote the program, and the additional bandwidth to record outcomes. He asked whether those costs would be tracked. Ms. Newman responded in the affirmative. This was the reason that the University obtained support from UCOP and grants in order to cover these additional costs.

Regent Wang stated that the Regents needed more time to understand this program. In her view, addressing the gaps between UC degrees and the labor market would help higher education survive and would respond to the loss of confidence and trust in higher education. Ms. Newman expressed agreement, adding that Degree Plus was born out of a recognition of such gaps. The lack of confidence in higher education stemmed from the concern about whether students had the capacity to find employment. She did not know of any other public higher education system of this size with such a program.

Committee Chair Leib suggested that Provost Newman meet with Alumni Regents and Student Regents to address questions they had about the program.

Regent-designate Melton suggested that UC seek feedback from students about their satisfaction with the program and their internship experience. One did not wish for students to be placed in internships that do not meet expectations. He further suggested that UC strengthen the relationship between campus career centers and alumni associations with regard to internships.

Staff Advisor Frías stated that the structure and implementation of College Corps, which also had a curriculum component, could serve as a model for Degree Plus. Ms. Newman acknowledged the similarities between College Corps and Degree Plus and shared that she had spent significant time communicating with College Corps leadership.

Committee Chair Leib invited new Student Observer Teesha Sreeram, an undergraduate transfer student at UCLA with a major in sociology, to provide remarks. Ms. Sreeram was an advocate of transfer students, has worked as a peer health educator for the Campus Assault Resources and Education (CARE) Program, and has worked with the Title IX office on policy.

Ms. Sreeram stated that access, equity, and representation in education were values that shaped families and futures, recalling her parents' experience with education in India. She grew up in the Bay Area and was the first in her family to attend college in the U.S. Her work as an advocate began early, on behalf of her disabled sister and as the only female leader in a middle school business club. In her many roles at UC, she worked alongside students, staff, administrators, and Regents, and upheld values of responsibility, leadership, and equity. Ms. Sreeram hoped to continue to champion these values as Student Observer. Addressing this discussion, she noted that many students' resumés had gaps between academics and the technical and career experience sought by employers. The Degree Plus initiative would help students enter the workforce with confidence, and certificates would enumerate the skills that UC students bring. The initiative would enable students to transition more smoothly into full-time employment, without having to return to school or pay for more training. Ms. Sreeram underscored the challenging labor market and how discouraging it was to send dozens to hundreds of applications, only to receive a response from one or two employers. Degree Plus could offer students in humanities and other liberal arts majors, whose value was often unfairly questioned, clearer pathways to meaningful, paid employment that honors their skills. She hoped to see Degree Plus programs at more campuses, expressing her own desire to participate. Ensuring that these programs qualify for federal funding would be crucial to ensuring equity.

3. **THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH K-12 IN THE INLAND EMPIRE AND THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Provost Newman introduced the discussion by quoting from Regents Policy 2106: Policy Affirming Engagement in the Preschool Through Postsecondary Education System, as Fundamental to the University of California Mission as a Land Grant Institution: "...the

University of California is committed to excellence and equity in education for all of California's students to secure the social well-being and economic prosperity of the individual and the State." UC Riverside and UC Merced helped fulfill this commitment in the Inland Empire and the San Joaquin Valley. At nearly nine million people combined, these regions represented more than 20 percent of the state population. These regions were also some of the fastest growing and most economically challenged. The Inland Empire had low per-capita income and relied heavily on low-income jobs in the logistics industry; about 40 percent of U.S. consumer goods passed through the region. The San Joaquin Valley contributed over half of California's agricultural output and was home to some of the nation's poorest communities. As of 2020, more than 20 percent of residents' incomes were below the federal poverty line. Less than 25 percent of the populations in these regions held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 38 percent statewide. Examples of the work of UCR and UCM in these regions included credentialing programs, leadership academies, and professional development for K–12 teachers. Ms. Newman discussed the impact of these programs. UC has reached 1,755 schools, nearly 70 percent of schools in the Inland Empire and the San Joaquin Valley, through educational partnerships and regional collaboratives. In 2023–24, 96 percent of students who participated in UCR's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) completed A–G requirements, compared with 52 percent statewide and 47 percent in the Inland Empire, and students who participated in the UCM Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) programs had a 59 percent A–G completion rate, compared with 52 percent statewide and 38 percent in the San Joaquin Valley. In 2024–25, the number of CEP students who completed A–G requirements rose 16 points to 75 percent.

Joi Spencer, Dean of the School of Education at UC Riverside, stated that UCR's Teacher Education Program addressed the need for high-quality teacher preparation in the Inland Empire, a racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse region that was home to over 4.6 million residents. Over 816,000 students attended public school, representing 14 percent of public school students in the state. In 2022–23, 13.8 percent of high school graduates came from the region. Despite an 88.5 percent high school graduation rate, higher than the state's 86.2 percent, the Inland Empire had a lower UC eligibility rate of 48 percent, compared with the state's 52 percent. Of the 284,000 teachers in the state, over 37,363 of them, about 13 percent, taught in the Inland Empire. Many college students from the region were the first in their families to do so, bringing their experiences, multilingualism, and a strong commitment to giving back to the community. In addition to lower UC eligibility, the Inland Empire faced poverty, lower rates of college enrollment, and limited access to educational pathways. The UCR Teacher Education Program was building an educator and teacher-leader pipeline, working with local school districts and community colleges to create a "grow your own" model. One example was a teacher residency program in partnership with the San Bernardino City Unified School District, which placed students in school sites to train in areas such as special education; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and dual language immersion. Students were paired with expert mentor teachers and received \$40,000 in financial support and professional development. The residency's \$2.8 million grant would sunset in June 2027, followed by a two-year liquidation period. This summer, the program launched with 11 residents and aimed to produce 70 new teachers over the course of the grant.

Ms. Spencer welcomed the Regents to visit the campus and learn more about its programs. In addition to teacher preparation, UC Riverside had programs for K–12 student experiences. The Middle School Initiative focused on college eligibility with college days, webinars, and an essay contest, and the STEAM Summer Academy was a two-week, on-campus experience in which underserved middle school students learn from UCR scientists, mathematicians, educators, and students.

Orquídea Largo, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor at UC Merced, stated that, since its inception in 2002, the UCM Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) has secured over \$69 million in funding to improve education and increase the number of students eligible for postsecondary education in the most rural and underserved regions in the San Joaquin Valley. To date, CEP has served over 100,000 students through Student Academic and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP), including EAOP, TRIO Talent Search, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). Because of CEP's strong presence in the Valley, its relationships, and its data systems and accountability frameworks, UC Merced was well positioned to lead a K–16 regional collaborative, and CEP was involved in four of 13 Community Economic Resilience Fund regions. UCM has secured over \$22 million in K–16 funding through June 2026, and CEP and SAPEP served nearly 12,000 students and over 1,000 schools in 2023–24. The Merced campus currently led the We Will! Workforce and Education K–16 Collaborative, comprised of members of the K–12 system, public and private postsecondary institutions, and over 20 workforce and industry partners. UC Merced was awarded and managed \$18.4 million and has released \$14.5 million to 51 subawards for We Will! to develop pathways in health care, education, and economic recovery. This collaborative aimed to increase transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions through enrollment offerings, assistance with financial aid applications, work experience, and more A–G course offerings. We Will! subawards have made possible 12 events promoting A–G completion, workplace learning, and dual enrollment. The Early Education Workforce Pipeline subaward offered paid internships, professional development, and permanent employment. Through this program, 47 students have taken courses through UCM Extension, 12 have completed internships, and eight secured substitute teaching positions through Merced County Head Start.

Committee Chair Leib praised this effort and underscored the lower A–G completion rates and need for teachers in these regions.

Regent Anguiano noted that, at 4.6 million, the population of the Inland Empire exceeded that of 26 states, including Utah, Kentucky, and Oregon. She emphasized the importance of expending resources and leveraging talent in these regions.

Regent Wang shared that she grew up in the Inland Empire and credited her teachers for the fact that she enrolled at UCLA.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff