

Office of the President

TO THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA:

ACTION ITEM

For Meeting of January 25, 2024

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE REGULATION 630.E

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regents Bylaw 40.1 states that “The Academic Senate, subject to the approval of the Board, shall determine the conditions for admission and for certificates and degrees.” Pursuant to this Bylaw, the President recommends that the Board consider approving or declining to approve the Academic Senate’s recommendation of Senate Regulation 630.E, a systemwide “campus experience” requirement to earn an undergraduate degree.

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Regents Bylaw 40.1, the President recommends that the Regents consider approving or declining to approve Academic Senate Regulation 630.E, a systemwide “campus experience” requirement to earn an undergraduate degree, as recommended by the Academic Senate and as shown in Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND

In February 2023,¹ the Academic Senate adopted Senate Regulation 630.E, which created a “campus experience” requirement that students must complete in order to earn an undergraduate degree, which had the effect of precluding the creation of any fully online undergraduate degrees by campuses and preventing any individual students, with the exception of incarcerated students, from being able to obtain an undergraduate degree by enrolling only in online classes. The campus experience requirement in SR 630.E requires enrollment in a minimum number of units in courses with at least 50 percent in-person instruction.

¹ In May 2019, the Academic Council endorsed a recommendation by its Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) not to approve a proposal by UC Irvine’ School of Business for a fully online degree in Business Administration for transfer students. See: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/rm-mb-uci-online-ba.pdf>. In 2022, UC Santa Cruz proposed a fully online BA in Creative Technologies. In response to UCEP’s feedback and to conform with Senate Regulation 630.E, it was modified to include some in-person coursework and was approved in July 2023. See: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/sc-pg-ucsc-creative-technologies-ba.pdf>.

The text of Senate Regulation 630.E is below and is in Attachment 1:

Each undergraduate student must complete a campus experience requirement. A minimum of six units of course credits per quarter (or semester) for three quarters (or two semesters) completed by each candidate for the bachelor's degree must be earned in courses designed to deliver to any enrolled student at least 50 percent of in-person instructional hours on any campus of the University of California or physical locations affiliated with programs listed in SR 630.D or in prison environments. To satisfy this requirement, at least two quarters or one semester must be completed during the regular academic year, with no more than one quarter or semester completed during the summer. "In-person" means instructors and students are in the same physical location. "Instructional hours" refer to time when instructors are presenting to or interacting with students during designated class times (e.g., lecture, laboratory, discussion, field work, problem sessions). For the purposes of this regulation, instructional hours do not include office hours, or recorded lectures provided as a supplement to designated hours interacting with students. Individual Divisions may maintain a higher threshold for required in-person course credits per term or for the number of terms in which a threshold applies.

Regents Reservations of Authority and Delegation of Authority to the Academic Senate

The Board has expressed its strong commitment to shared governance in Bylaw 40.1, which recognizes "that faculty participation in the shared governance of the University of California through the agency of the Academic Senate ensures the quality of instruction, research and public service at the University and protects academic freedom."

However, shared governance does not mean independent authority. As the Board's General Counsel has opined, the Board always has the right to review and approve or decline to approve the recommendations of individuals and entities to whom they have delegated powers. While the Regents have delegated substantial responsibility to the Senate to oversee academic matters out of respect for the expertise of the faculty, in Bylaw 22.2(b), they explicitly reserved authority for "approving criteria for University admissions and conferral of certificates and degrees" "(u)pon recommendation of the Academic Senate." Similarly, Regents Bylaw 40.1 states that the "Academic Senate, subject to the approval of the Board, shall determine the conditions for admission and for certificates and degrees. . ." Thus, the Academic Senate recommends – and the Board of Regents approves – conditions for undergraduate degrees such as the campus experience requirement.

In this item, the Regents are requested to consider approving or declining to approve the Academic Senate's recommendation of Senate Regulation 630.E, the "campus experience requirement," as a systemwide requirement to earn an undergraduate degree.

Campus Administration of Undergraduate Degree Programs

Local campus divisions of the Academic Senate and campus Administrations are vested with the authority to approve most undergraduate degree programs. Per the *Compendium: Universitywide*

Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, and Research Units, which is a joint Senate-Administration document that provides guidelines for the approval of academic programs:

“all actions involving undergraduate degree programs are administered by the individual campuses and do not undergo system-level review. Examples of campus-only action include creating a new undergraduate degree program, changing the name of an existing undergraduate degree program, and consolidating, transferring, or discontinuing an existing undergraduate degree program.” (Emphasis in the original).

Exceptions that trigger system-level review must fall into one of four categories:

1. establishment of a hybrid undergraduate/graduate degree program (Section II.A.1);
2. creation of an undergraduate degree title unique to the campus (e.g., the first- ever B.F.A. program on the campus) (Section II.C.);
3. discontinuance of an undergraduate degree title that is the last of its kind on a campus; (Section II.C.) and
4. discontinuance of an undergraduate degree program that is the last of its kind in the UC system (Section A).”

Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs

In addition to the consideration of Senate Regulation 630.E, the Academic Senate also requested, and based on campus interest in creating fully online degrees the President agreed, to establish a Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs. The charge of the Task Force is to recommend quality standards for campus consideration as they develop UC online undergraduate courses, majors, and degree programs (see Attachment 5). The Task Force will examine the effectiveness of instructional modalities, suggest evaluation criteria to ensure quality, and analyze resource requirements for supporting fully or partially remote undergraduate degree programs. The Task Force, which is a collaboration between the Administration and the Academic Senate, will issue a final report by September 1, 2024, and will present its analysis and recommendations to the Board for any further action.

Further information about the Senate’s deliberations and rationale for proposing the Senate Regulation, as well as information about online courses at UC provided by UCOP Academic Affairs, can be found in the Attachments.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment 1: Senate Regulation 630.E](#)

[Attachment 2: UC Campus Experience Requirement \(Academic Senate\)](#)

[Attachment 3: Online Education Brief \(UCOP Academic Affairs\)](#)

[Attachment 4: Letter from Board Chair Leib and Academic and Student Affairs Chair Park to Academic Council Chair Steintrager and Vice Chair Cheung](#)

[Attachment 5: Charge of the Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs](#)