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

The University of California is committed to providing a demanding, engaging, stimulating experience for our undergraduate students. We aim to equip them with enduring skills and the tools to ask probing questions, pursue unknown pathways, and collaborate with one another and with the faculty. Above all, we aim to instill in them foundational and major-specific knowledge they need to be both effective citizens and contributors to society. Whatever the modality of pedagogical delivery, the University pledges to ensure students' educational experience is second to none.

As the University continues to refine and enhance the traditional in-person educational experience, the institution is also forward looking and seeks innovative pedagogies to meet evolving student needs. Across the system, our faculty have long developed and delivered online courses, and we expect the number of them to increase. Moreover, the pandemic accelerated the adoption of technologies that support distance learning pedagogies.

The time has arrived for the University to consider the entire range of instructional modalities comprehensively (in-person, online, hybrid, mixed enrollment, etc.) and to recommend quality standards that should guide UC undergraduate degree programs that may be delivered online in part or in whole.

Task Force Charge

- Examine the current status of undergraduate instructional modalities with regard to both frequency and effectiveness, with particular focus on online undergraduate courses, majors and minors, and programs;
- Establish fundamental principles and evaluation criteria to ensure UC quality for students who choose to enroll in fully or partially online undergraduate degree programs;
- Determine infrastructure and resource requirements to support fully or partially online undergraduate degree programs; and
- Ensure distance education courses and degree programs are compliant with governmental and accreditor regulations.

The Task Force is charged with approaching these issues analytically, with data where possible, to explore how current and emergent teaching modalities can best serve undergraduate students and the University, with particular focus on fully online degrees. The overarching goal of the Task Force is to develop recommendations for implementation at individual UC campuses, which are guided by Academic Senate regulations on undergraduate admissions, courses and curricula, and requirements for the conferral of a bachelor's degree.

Key Questions

The Task Force shall address the following key questions with the understanding that additional questions might arise with further inquiry and discussion:

<u>Instructional Modalities Overview</u>

- What forms of student engagement should be developed, altered, or augmented to ensure that every modality of delivery provides the most impactful educational experience?
- Should we alter our assessment practices and their frequency (particularly at the program/degree level) in order to fully capture student experience, learning outcomes, and academic success in relation to instructional modality?

UC Quality Assurance

- Above and beyond coursework (e.g., research and community engagement opportunities, student life activities, etc.), what are the essential components of a quality UC education? How could those enrichments be re-imagined for a remote student?
- What are the expectations about who delivers the instruction (e.g., only the regular faculty) when it comes to ensuring a quality UC online education?
- What role can fully online degree programs play in enhancing the UC learning environment, time flexibility, financial considerations, and personal circumstances? Are there ways to open up participation in campus events and accessing services that would encourage the participation of students studying remotely?
- How should UC quality for fully online degree programs be measured? What are the metrics of success for fully online undergraduate degrees (student retention, sequential course progression, graduation rates, debt levels, etc.)?
- Should the Senate compile an annual report at the system level (vis a vis these evaluative dimensions), for both online and in-person programs, in order to create a useful portrait of our evolution?

Infrastructure for Online Degree Programs

- Should admissions criteria differ between in-person and remote students who enter the University as a first-year students or as transfer students? Or should they be the same? What are the implications for enrollment management and intercampus enrollment competition?
- How do we build infrastructure for remote students that provides substantially equivalent experiences relative to traditional in-person students (e.g., access to advising, healthcare, libraries, athletic facilities, etc.)?
- How can academic integrity be maintained across various instructional modalities?
- How do we ensure that the development of online degree programs advances our equity and diversity goals?
- What privileges would students admitted to fully online programs have regarding access to campus facilities (including dorms) and ability to change their program type?
- What training opportunities and other resources would instructors need to produce UC quality online undergraduate degree programs? What are the implications for faculty labor, course- and workload calculations, copyright ownership of course materials, etc.?
- Are there other regulatory implementation considerations that should be considered?

Accreditation and Regulatory Considerations

- What steps would need to be taken to secure accreditation for fully online undergraduate programs at UC?
- What are the implications of fully online degrees for student financial aid and regulatory compliance?

Timeline

The Task Force will develop and circulate an initial report and findings by May 2024; representatives from the group will provide an update at a Systemwide Academic Congress focused on online education, to be held in early May 2024. The Task Force will issue a final report to UC President Michael Drake on or before September 1, 2024.

Task Force Membership

Academic Senate Representatives

1. Steven Cheung, Academic Council Vice Chair & Task Force Co-Chair
2. Melanie Cocco, Chair, University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP)
3. Amani Allen, Member, University Committee on Planning & Budget (UCPB)
4. Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, Vice Chair, University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW)
5. Ruth Hellier, Member, University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF)
6. Patty Gallagher, Senate Division Chair, UC Santa Cruz
7. Max Auffhammer, Senate Division Chair, UC Berkeley
8. TBD – not yet confirmed
9. TBD – not yet confirmed
10. TBD – not yet confirmed

Administration Representatives

1. Doug Haynes, Vice Provost, Academic Personnel and Programs (APP) & Task Force Co-Chair
2. James Soto Antony, Dean of the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs, UC San Diego
3. Pamela Brown, Vice President for Institutional Research & Academic Planning, UC Office of the President
4. Rolin Moe, Executive Director, UC Online
5. Michael Dennin, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and Dean, Division of Undergraduate Education, UC Irvine
6. Lori Kletzer, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, UC Santa Cruz
7. Katya Armistead, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Dean of Student Life, UC Santa Barbara
8. Richard Edwards, Executive Director for the Center for Teaching & Learning, UC Riverside
9. Malisa Lee, Vice Provost of Enrollment Management, UC Davis
10. Darnell Hunt, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, UCLA