Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

<u>**DISCUSSION ITEM**</u>

For Meeting of July 14, 2010

UNDERGRADUATE ONLINE INSTRUCTION PILOT PROJECT

Eventually, there will be academically high-quality online credit-bearing courses and B.A. degrees in the selective research university sector. That much seems certain. The questions are: Who will develop and deploy the first successful model, when will they do it, and can it be at a scale sufficient to make a meaningful difference in access to higher education? A recommendation presented to the UC Commission on the Future proposes that UC should be first, as soon as possible, and our ambitions should err on the side of boldness.

Christopher Edley, Dean of the University of California Berkeley School of Law and Special Adviser to the President, will introduce the potential and capacity for online instruction at the University of California, and a bold plan to explore how, whether, and with what costs and benefits UC can migrate online its high-quality undergraduate instruction while maintaining a richly interactive student experience.

The UC Office of the President is raising external funds and preparing to launch a Pilot Program to develop 25 to 40 online undergraduate courses focusing primarily on the "gateway," "impacted," and general education courses with the heaviest enrollments system wide, and in most demand by community college students planning to transfer.

In addition to state of the art online video material, the courses will use the latest social networking software, videoconferencing with graduate student instructors (GSIs), innovative forms of online coaching, and so forth. To create and deliver courses, the Program will award grants to UC faculty with stellar teaching records using a competitive RFP process. The grants will include funding for summer salary, or for teaching relief. Each course must be approved through the normal Academic Senate process, and a joint Administration-Senate advisory panel has been formed to help guide the project, especially in the design of an evaluation.

The single most important question to be answered is whether this mode of delivering instruction can be done at a level of quality equal to, although different from, traditional on campus instruction. Additional study questions include production costs, administrative systems, revenue potential, GSI training, and scalability.

For short video examples of UC's current capacity to develop online courses, please visit the following website: http://groups.ischool.berkeley.edu/onlineeducation/demo.