

June 10, 2011

SUSAN GILLMAN
Chair, Academic Senate

Dear Susan:

Re: SEC Proposal to Align Admissions and Retention under VPDUE

I appreciate receiving the Senate Executive Committee's recent proposal for restructuring the several units currently under Student Affairs Division and moving their oversight to the office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE). The Senate's time and effort in thinking about these important functions is obvious in their proposal, and it is helpful that the Senate has highlighted issues of concern. In this response I will provide a perspective from my position, and outline a strategy for moving forward.

First, let me address the underlying suggestion of increased funding. This is not explicit in the SEC proposal but has been raised by various units in response to the proposal. As you know, state funding is unlikely to improve. Much of the funding for the units mentioned in SEC's proposal comes from student services fees and the student-initiated fees, which cannot be used for instructional purposes. It is therefore unlikely that there will be significant increases in either one-time or permanent allocations to these units.

In the following section, I will address the two areas proposed for movement and propose actions to address the foundational issues.

Retention Services

Retention of undergraduate students is a multidimensional issue. Initial reports by the VPDUE and VCSA, a follow-up report by VCSA, and data from Planning and Budget suggest that there are a range of reasons why students are either not retained or are delayed in their progress.

A portion of these appear to be truly academic and may include inability to successfully complete classes, desire for a greater challenge, lack of appropriate major, inability to complete a gateway or capstone course, or disqualification from the major. This portion of the retention issue clearly lies within the purview of the VPDUE.

There are also students for whom academic issues may be the consequences of, or irrelevant to, other problems: Lack of financial resources, inexperience with university life, mental health issues, lack of support structure, inability to develop local community, and difficulty in handling disabilities (including learning challenges and invisible disabilities), for example. These issues lie best in the realm of student life under the Division of Student Affairs.

Data generated by the Office of Planning and Budget and submitted for the Interim Report to WASC (the Western Association of Schools and Colleges), and more recent data from the UCUES survey, provide a more considered view of our retention capabilities. This report shows that, by

comparing our expected and actual graduation rates using regression equations based on the 1998-through 2002 cohorts, our predicted rates would remain stable but our actual rates have improved. This suggests that improvements in graduation are not due to “better students” and are more likely attributable to effective retention initiatives. Analyses by race/ethnicity suggest we do have problems integrating students into their majors despite success in integrating them into the “social and academic milieu of UCSC.” We continue to lose high-achieving students but the data do not distinguish whether these are leaving due to lack of challenge, a poor fit with the campus, or that they see UCSC as a means to transfer to their intended choice of institutions.

In these analyses, it appears that: 1) We need more information on students who leave early in their UCSC careers, 2) We are making good progress on retention issues for our students of color and from low-income backgrounds¹, and 3) We have more critical issues with students transitioning to and making progress within their majors².

The question that we face is how to combine these various approaches to retention into a comprehensive and manageable package from both the faculty and the student perspective. I propose that we consider that retention will require a two-pronged approach. One prong, already established and working within Student Affairs, integrates students into university life. These efforts will become increasingly important as we increase our enrollment of first-generation students and those from currently under-represented groups. There will be areas where this will need to be expanded, especially with regard to non-resident and international students (one area where we currently do not perform well). Data collection on efficacy of these programs must be stressed.

The second prong lies, appropriately, within the jurisdiction of the VPDUE and affects the more academic functions. The areas here include: 1) Development and implementation of an honors program; 2) Academic advising in the colleges; 3) Transition advising into the major; 4) Development of major maps that show clear entry points, gateway courses, and support systems for sustained progress through to a degree; and 5) An emphasis on course capacity to ensure that students can enroll in the courses they need for their degrees. We are starting to see achievements in these areas but this must be accelerated.

Of all of the units currently under the umbrella of “Retention Service,” the Learning Support Services unit, in that it is directly supportive of academic accomplishment and of specific courses, is a candidate for realignment with VPDUE, a move that I will further consider over the summer.

By establishing concrete goals for retention, defining the multiple strategies for improvement with clearly articulated outcomes and responsibilities, and defining and collecting data on program efficacy, I believe that we can establish administrative accountability. Collaboration with the Senate will also be enhanced by clear areas of purview.

¹This is supported by recent studies of our 6 year retention survey from IPEDS which shows that all student groups by gender and by race/ethnicity appear to be graduating close to the normal rate for the campus

²Analysis of the UCUES data suggest that overall adaptation to campus life is more critical to loss of students in the first year but overall academic factors increase more markedly in the third and fourth years.

Admissions and Registrar's Office

Enrollment management is the second area under consideration in the SEC proposal. As you know, enrollment management now influences many aspects of our campus. On the academic side, we need to understand how students decide on the courses, how they migrate through classes, what courses will be needed and at what capacities, where do students stall in their progress and what factors assist in their completion. On the Student Affairs side, the campus must be prepared to accommodate the students, incorporate them into the community, make sure they are housed and fed, that there is the appropriate level of medical and mental health support, as well as many other functions. With the shift to the funding streams model of developing our campus budget, the integration of our enrollment targets and data with the system-wide view and monitoring of the campus capacity, the Office of Planning and Budget has an integral role to play in Enrollment Management. Finally, the Senate Committees on Admissions and Financial Aid and Educational Policy have purview for the admissions and educational policies that directly impact the demographics of the students we enroll and the consequent need for curricular and support systems.

Because of the diversity of interests, I am establishing an Enrollment Council, chaired by me and comprised the following individuals (or their designees): VPDUE, VCSA, VCP&B, CAFA Chair, CEP Chair, AVC Enrollment Management, and the Director of Institutional Research. The role of the Council will be to set priorities for the Campus Enrollment Management units, which will continue to report to Student Affairs. The charge and responsibilities of the Enrollment Council will be developed over the summer in consultation with all appropriate stakeholders, including the Senate.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,



Alison Galloway
Campus Provost and
Executive Vice Chancellor

cc: Chancellor Blumenthal
Interim VP/DUE Cioc
Vice Chancellor Delaney
Interim VPAA Lee
Vice Chancellor McGinty