

Resolution to Create a Standing Committee on the Climate Crisis

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Rationale

The climate crisis¹ is posing urgent and accelerating challenges to society that will endure for the foreseeable future. With their considerable factual and technical information, unique capability to generate new knowledge, and ability to serve as forums for the discussion of both technical and philosophical/ethical issues, universities are on the front line for assisting societies with mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Owing to the extraordinary breadth and gravity of these matters, dealing with the impacts of the climate crisis within the university will require coordinated action from different disciplines in a way that is not well supported by traditional disciplinary organization. It is probable that UCSC will need to adopt new organizational arrangements, new roles and responsibilities, and new methods for rewarding and incentivizing its employees. Many of the most important changes will involve the spheres of research and teaching, and thus fall under the purview of the faculty and the Senate to design and implement.

The complexity of these challenges could easily lead to a fragmented and fractured response in which each campus unit devises its own solution when in fact all solutions need to mesh across the institution. Examples include the need for uniform policies for incentivizing and reviewing faculty in new roles; a comprehensive yet non-duplicative curriculum on climate change; campus-wide policies to facilitate new research groups and interdivisional collaboration; and strategies to enhance UCSC's impact on our local community, state, and nation.

A Senate Committee on the Climate Crisis would play a valuable role in this process. Its chief function is to provide a central forum for parties to share different views, explore the unintended consequences of proposed solutions, and develop optimal strategies. This new committee will coordinate closely with other committees to facilitate their work, for example by collecting and circulating relevant information and helping the Senate

¹ "Climate Crisis" is the term chosen here for the proposed the new committee, but the words are intended as a shorthand for the full array of impacts that are expected due to global warming, such as the impacts of a changing climate on people, infrastructure, and the biosphere; the impacts of dwindling natural resources; the challenges of providing citizens with adequate access to energy, food and water; the problem of general environmental degradation; and the combined economic, governmental, and societal impacts that all of the above factors will have.

Executive Committee stay abreast of the big picture. The chair of this committee should accordingly be a member of the SEC.

In addition, the committee will research, collect data, and provide the Academic Senate and Administration with reports on the most urgent and substantive climate initiatives within the Senate's purview that UCSC could enact, particularly regarding climate teaching and research. An initial report on possible climate education pathways will be submitted to the Academic Senate in advance of its May 22, 2024 meeting.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Senate shall form a

Standing Committee on the Climate Crisis

There are six Santa Cruz Division members on the committee, one from each Academic Division and one at large. In addition, as non-voting members, the Committee will include one undergraduate student, one graduate student, one Unit 18 non-senate faculty member. And, serving as a point of interface between the Academic Senate and the Administration in promoting faculty engagement in campus climate change and sustainability planning, the Committee will also consult regularly with the Vice Chancellor for Finance, Operations, and Administration and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Sustainability. All members will be selected on the basis of their expertise and breadth of knowledge on the relevant issues.

With the concurrence of the Chancellor, two members of this committee shall be designated as faculty representatives to the Joint Senate/Administration Committee on Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resilience.

The committee shall have the following duties:

1. Develop an integrated vision of the campus's engagement with climate issues; build connections and visibility for climate change initiatives related to research, teaching, and service across campus;
2. Serve as a point of interface between the Academic Senate and the Administration to promote faculty engagement in campus climate change and sustainability planning;

3. Design and develop specific campus initiatives relating to research and teaching on climate change, such as studying and making recommendations on whether and how UCSC should institute a climate literacy breadth requirement;
4. Coordinate with other campus groups to create and maintain a user-friendly and visible listing of climate and sustainability-focused courses offered on campus;
5. Liaise with other campus groups, individuals, and relevant committees of the Academic Senate, and serve as a hub for climate-related information, teaching resources, events, and research opportunities on campus;
6. Consult and communicate with the University Relations Office, the Office of Sustainability, and the Vice Chancellor for Research about projects and funding possibilities; and
7. Identify crucial issues facing the state and nation on which UCSC can offer special expertise.

Respectfully submitted:

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