August 15, 2018

Ólöf Einarsdóttir
Chair, Academic Senate

RE: Review of Draft of Strategic Academic Plan and Implementation Playbook

Dear Ólöf,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) met on August 9, with member Jeff Bury absent. We discussed the draft Strategic Academic Plan (SAP) that has been sent to the Academic Senate for consultation. We appreciate the goal of developing a plan for the future of the university. However, we believe that substantial work is still needed before the SAP can be finalized. Our observations and recommendations are below:

A. General Comments

- The entire SAP deals with research and resource generation. Teaching is only discussed in ways that are intrinsically connected to research: experiential learning and research opportunities. But the academic life of students at UCSC cannot be reduced to only courses in academic programs and departments; the student experience depends on college and departmental advising, small-scale learning environments, and non-traditional modes of engagement between and among students and teachers. There is no acknowledgement of these aspects of the student experience, which are strengths for which we are known as an institution. We request that this should be corrected before the SAP is finalized.

- Although this is not in our purview, we observe that there is almost no discussion of graduate education. Given the heavy emphasis by the Administration over the last few years on graduate growth, this is a striking omission. "Grow number of doctoral degrees granted" (slide 22) is unobjectionable, but nowhere in the Initiatives is there any indication of how this would be achieved (or funded). We request the administration to include plans from the Graduate Dean in the SAP.

- It is not clear to us if the Academic Priority Areas are where all faculty growth will take place, or if they are part of a larger plan for the campus. If it is the first, we have three concerns:
  - How will student demand in areas that are not the three Academic Priority Areas be dealt with?[1] Will this be a separate imperative, independent of the SAP, that will drive resource allocation? Or will enrollment in a large number of programs be tightly managed, either

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[1] Some of the biggest majors on campus are Computer Science, Psychology, Economics, and Biology; the fit between these and Digital Interventions, Justice in a Changing World and Earth Futures respectively is, at best, strained.

through impaction[2] or other means? What we *cannot* afford is an assumption that a formula-based allocation of resources will enable divisions to increase course offerings in these areas and hire enough lecturers, and that this will fulfill all curricular needs.

○ Although the bottom-up development of the Academic Priority Areas has led to valuable input from the faculty in the Strategic Academic Plan, a consequence of the process is that areas that are far removed from the expertise of our faculty are excluded, such as other departments in the School of Engineering (Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, etc.) and professional schools. There may be very good reasons not to expand in these areas, but this is a discussion that we should have.

○ It is not clear if we should assume that the plan is simply meant to address issues and areas where substantial improvement is deemed to be possible and important, while existing strengths of UCSC will be retained, or if existing strengths will be eroded by an exclusive focus on the SAP priorities.

This is especially important because the current draft of the SAP has no concrete information about how much money might go towards promoting the goals and priorities identified in it, where it will come from, or whether and how other areas might be affected.[3] We note that all the metrics in the SAP are designed to measure outcomes in the priority areas identified in the plan, and there are no mechanisms to track effects on other areas. As a result unit leaders are effectively encouraged to abandon non-prioritized strengths of UCSC.

We strongly urge the administration to clarify how much money will go toward promoting the SAP priorities in the plan, and to include as part of the plan an account of how the plan's priorities will be balanced with other campus needs. This revised plan should be re-submitted for Senate review, as the plan cannot be effectively reviewed without such fundamentals.

● The Academic Priority Areas are broadly defined. This may be a deliberate big-tent approach, but carried too far, if everyone can fit into the areas, there is not much that is strategic about them:
   ○ The descriptions on slide 33 make it difficult to understand what is included and what is excluded. The overviews on slides 34, 38 and 42 are almost identical. All three areas claim to be associated with "social justice" (slides 34, 38, and 42), and somehow the third area (Digital Interventions, slide 42) is aligned with our commitment to diversity, but the first (Earth Futures, slide 34) is not.

   ○ The details of the priority areas are internally incoherent. On one hand, the Grand Challenges listed within each have a strong science and engineering flavor to them (see

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[2] Which, our experience with Computer Science shows, runs the risk of arriving when the momentum of past events will carry a program to the brink of collapse.

[3] As just one example, more hands-on learning opportunities for students sounds great. But where will the faculty time come from, and what might the unintended curricular effects be for other sorts of class offerings?

slides 34, 38, and 42). Even Justice in a Changing World (slide 38) lists grand challenges as "leveraging science and technology…", "using innovation, web and mobile technologies…", saving the lives of mothers and newborns, and the incongruous and vague "advance personalized learning." The same phrasings are used to describe the grand challenges of Digital Interventions (slide 42). On the other hand, in the Funding Opportunities, all the agencies listed for Digital Interventions deal with the humanities and the arts (except the Sloan Foundation with its broad scope), and the National Endowment for the Arts is included in the agencies for Earth Futures[4].

○ It is also worth noting that the same four universities are used for comparison for each of the priority areas; either they are world-leaders among universities, and we have been unaware of this fact, or every university is invested in these areas, and they are in no way distinctive for UCSC. The selection of this comparator group seems indicative of a poorly researched effort by the consultants.

We recommend that the administration list the TAWGs that each of the Academic Priority Areas are supposed to include, to resolve the confusion. As written, the disconnect between the aims, Grand Challenges and funding for each Academic Priority Area will leave all faculty wondering if their ideas and interests fit in this framework.

● Although the overarching Design Principles (slides 20-29) are more general and inclusive, many of the Key Outcomes and Potential Initiatives for Principles 1, 2 and 5 are defined in terms of patents, IP licenses, internships, which are only well-suited for some fields (slides 22, 24, and 30). Also, while we understand the desire to create quantifiable outcomes, there are other important outcomes where we do not just count things--such as judging quality, rather than counting quantity. It would be highly desirable if the administration could create a more well-rounded set of outcomes and initiatives.

● A significant fraction of the SAP is devoted to initiatives that could increase resources available to UCSC. There is no doubt that resource generation has to be very important for this campus; many of our problems would be solved if we could afford a faculty to undergraduate ratio comparable to UC Santa Barbara, a campus of roughly similar size. At the same time, we wonder if the steps proposed in the SAP for resource generation are the most promising. In our letters earlier this year, we pointed out that we are approximately $10 million per year in contract and grant funding (direct and indirect costs combined) short of where we should be in comparison to UCSB, while the mismatch between our most recent capital campaigns is much greater. We reiterate the recommendation in our letter of January 12 that the administration, with the assistance of the Committee on Planning and Budget, should compare broad categories of revenue and expenditure between UCSC and UCSB, to see whether we are lagging the most in generating a certain category of revenue or controlling a certain category of expenditure.

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[4] The Kresge Foundation's annual budget is a small fraction of that of the National Science Foundation.

● There is scant mention of achieving excellence as being a goal of the Strategic Academic Plan. At least in public perception, UCSC is in the bottom third of the University of California campuses. Improving this situation, and our ranking among research universities, should surely be one of the key priorities of the SAP? Instead, it is only half the scope of one design principle (Design Principle 1). From the perspective of undergraduate education, we observe that the College Scholars program is not even mentioned in the SAP.

● The current draft suggests that new structures should be created to streamline processes and prioritizes removing needless barriers. The second goal is unobjectionable, but we wonder if what the campus really needs at present is more structures (and the additional administrative burden they entail). Moreover, we are concerned about whether these changes will be proposed during the academic year with enough time provided for proper Senate review, in keeping with faculty prerogatives regarding shared governance. Beyond questions about shared governance, some of the proposals in the SAP fall within the Senate's plenary authority: the development of course offerings, cross-listing courses, and requiring computational skills for undergraduates.

The administration will need to request and accommodate appropriate Senate review of any structural and processual changes proposed.

● The SAP makes no mention of *lecturers,* despite their critical role in educating our students. We have specific comments in this regard when we discuss Design Principles 2 below.

● The SAP also does not recognize the role of *staff.* A strategic plan should address staff wellness since this underpins the success of any academic plan (student advising, research support, fundraising, etc.). This is recognized as Barrier #9, but is not otherwise addressed. We view this as a critical omission, and also as an area with great potential for benefitting the campus with minimal outlay of resources and effort.

The fact that UCSC staff are, in practice, unable to get a pay raise unless they move to a different position results in high turnover and a lot of inexperienced employees in key positions. This is generally acknowledged as being counterproductive, but no one seems to do anything about it. Of special significance to CEP is the pay of advisors and preceptors in colleges and departments, whose job keeps getting more complicated — most recently due to the surge in transfer students — without adequate corresponding pay increases. Lead preceptors are now being shared between pairs of colleges, instead of having one for each college. Advisors are the frontline of UCSC's efforts at retention and timely graduation of students. We recommend that the SAP should have concrete initiatives to improve staff working conditions.

B. Design Principles

1. Drive research and creative work that transform our world (slide 22).
In the "Goal," this immediately changes to *applied* research and creative work. We do not believe that a focus on applied research is what campus groups wanted, or what was indicated to the Senate during the

academic year. What defines applied research in the Arts and Humanities? Or, is basic research supposed to be included in creative work? This optimistic interpretation is belied by the first three Key Outcomes, which clearly focus on applied research.

Key Outcomes

The first item (citations) should be broadened, or alternative measures should be included that reflect the breadth of how research and creative work is evaluated in various fields. For instance, exhibitions, performances, recordings etc. are often the expression of creative work in the arts. The Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), which deals with this issue all the time, is best suited to advise in this regard. Target percentages should reflect the expectations of each discipline; it may be easier to garner citations in a field where research is published in papers rather than books. Also left out are lecturer and staff contributions to our campus community and to identified outcomes.

The second and third items (patents, IP licenses) are rather narrowly focused. This is presumably because revenue generation has been one of the concerns driving the SAP. But if this *is* the motivation, they should be combined into one: there is no financial benefit to a patent that is not licensed.[5] And why not make the outcome simpler, to increase external funding, instead of focusing exclusively on patents and IP?

The fourth outcome (public faculty appearances) is too weak. Faculty recognition of and awards for faculty from academies and professional societies would be better; this is what enhances reputation.

All of these outcomes are purely quantitative; none allow for any way to judge recognition or support except for in terms of numbers. Again, CAP is constantly in the position of judging quality, and use qualitative evaluations significantly, in part because quantitative measures do not translate well across fields. While CAP's model may not be easily translated to the needs of this plan, the plan must find some way of evaluating the goals' successes qualitatively, not just quantitatively.

Outcome prioritized by CEP: A broadened, re-thought version of DP 1.

Potential Initiatives

a. "Formal administrative processes" are proposed three times, and repetitively. We believe that the item "create and support research clusters around specific challenges where there are known research funding opportunities" is sufficient and is a better formulation of what is intended. However, even here, there is no reason to limit oneself to *research* funding; there is considerable funding available in educational areas such as involving undergraduates in research.

b. The items about "lack of incentives and support for faculty to generate resources" and "provide support for faculty to discover and secure new sources of support for their work" are also repetitive and should be combined into one.

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[5] The "annual number of IP and licenses" should presumably be "annual number of IP licenses."

c. Doctoral growth is something that the campus has been attempting, without any clear strategy, for the last several years. Success would be welcome; however, growing doctoral programs without adequate support is not likely to drive the research and creative work that will positively transform our world. Our caution about masters' programs has already been expressed earlier this year, in response to other initiatives from the administration; they may be useful in some cases, but not all.

d. A messaging campaign, if it is launched, should be *externally* focused. We are too internally focused already.

e. The "project management affiliate nonprofits" are unclear, and therefore we are unable to comment about them.

f. We do not see much value in networking and collaboration events or an Annual Breakthrough Award.

Initiatives prioritized by CEP: a, b and d, in modified forms as suggested above. Also c, if it comes with adequate support for graduate students.

2. Create enriching experiential learning and research opportunities for students (slide 24).
We support this goal in broad terms, but it is not clear how it will be achieved, or at what expense. We also believe that it should be defined as "experiential learning" without specifically mentioning research opportunities, which are included; research experience is not suitable for every student and is not the correct measure of accomplishment or success for every field.

If faculty involvement is to be meaningfully expanded, this will be at the expense of other activities — which should be spelled out and discussed — or require more faculty to be hired. If faculty are not going to be involved, there are real issues about oversight of the educational activities. Done well, experiential learning opportunities such as internship programs require a tremendous amount of staff time for management and oversight.[6]

Key Outcomes
Items 2 and 3 should be re-thought and combined. The total percentage of students in these two paths should be increased if that reflects students' desires; the best path and timeline will depend on the field. *Neither* path may be appropriate for some disciplines; the real question should be how many students are on a path appropriate for their discipline soon after they graduate.

Outcome prioritized by CEP: 2+3, modified.

Potential Initiatives
a. It is surprising that improvements in the Career Center are not in this list. There is no better way to achieve employment metrics. We request that this should be corrected.

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[6] Environmental Studies has one full-time internship coordinator for approximately 300 graduates.

b. We do not understand what the Potential Initiative "Create study away applied experiences in research and create work, focused on responsible innovation and commercial venture impact." (Slide 24) means.

c. Research quarters are already available to students, in the form of Independent Study courses and field studies. The limiting factor is a lack of faculty time to supervise these students, especially in our largest majors, which is a bigger problem. If this can be improved, this will be a positive development.

d. Offering central funds for developing experiential learning courses is reasonable, but in order for this yield real benefits, they have to be **funded** (at a greater than normal per-student cost) when they are developed. Also, this opportunity should explicitly include lecturers, who provide many of our current experiential learning opportunities, and provide course equivalencies for doing such development work.

e. Developing research and internship partnerships with government, NGOs and industry (repeated in two initiatives) may be a good idea, as long as **the students' labor is recognized and internships** are consistent with students' interests *and* with the educational goals of our curriculum. However, government, NGOs, and industry are three quite different things, with very different sorts of opportunities. Each program ought to be able to set its own goal for what kinds of sponsors are appropriate for its educational goals for its students, and flat target numbers should not be applied. Meaningful oversight of these types of educational opportunities **as well as the economic consequences of unpaid internships** (which therefore exclude many of our students who can not afford to take them; and which displace paid labor in the workforce generally) is critical to their success and requires substantial time and effort.

f. Creating or growing undergraduate research fellowships would be welcome.

g. Incentives in the merit and promotion process, if introduced, must be coordinated with CAP and the Committee on Privilege and Tenure. (For lecturers, this would involve discussions with their union; for ladder rank faculty, with the Santa Cruz Faculty Association.)

Initiatives prioritized by CEP: a, d, e if modified very significantly as indicated above (otherwise, this is not a priority, it may be in fact damaging), and f. We repeat our overall point that if Design Principle 2 is a serious goal, it must be funded properly.

3. Engage and support diverse faculty, staff and student body (slide 26).
There seems to be some inconsistency between the goal, which mainly deals with hiring and recruitment, and the key outcomes, which are much more about retention. Also, the only measures of success are tied to retention, and the possibility that faculty, students and staff can experience hate/bias even when they are retained is ignored. Finally, it is problematic that "underrepresented minority" is viewed as a monolithic category.

Key Outcomes
Once again, two items (1 and 2) are repetitive. We would prefer to have item 1 deleted; it is not clear who the third parties will be, and why achieving Outcome 2 will not suffice.

URM student retention and graduation rates are better at UCSC than for such students with comparable levels of academic preparation nationwide.

The plan should include some way to evaluate the success in qualitative ways, and not just quantitative, such that experiences of hate and bias are evident even if the student/faculty/staff is "retained," and so that the different challenges faced by different groups are recognized and evaluated (rather than "URM" retention generically measured). We believe that the Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity is well placed to advise about this.

Outcomes prioritized by CEP: 2 and 3 in highly modified form as suggested above.

Potential Initiatives
a. These are so vague that they are difficult to assess: "Systematically assess the root of our student body's challenges… remove those barriers" is a platitude. We might as well say, "Find out what will make us excellent and do it" for Design Principle 1. What does including experiential learning in diversity training mean? What are the perceived deficiencies of the first year experience or the summer orientation/preparatory program? Where in the curriculum is it proposed that students will be educated on "key diversity and inclusion issues"?

b. Mapping the full onboarding experience for all employees and the full student lifecycle experience to identify key pitfalls and remedying them seems like a good idea, but it is not clear how this will be done, e.g. Slug Success for students?

c. There is no concern for the impact on retention of women faculty and staff of our practices regarding partner hires, our lack of support for family amenities such as daycare, and the limited employee housing opportunities.

Initiatives prioritized by CEP: Among those that are listed in the SAP, b. mapping the student lifecycle and faculty/staff onboarding experience to identify and fix problems may be useful. We recommend that the items outlined in c. should also be included.

4. Support generative interdisciplinary connections in research and teaching (slide 28).
While there is value in interdisciplinary research, it is not inherently *more* valuable than disciplinary research. Presumably, the goal here is to encourage research and teaching in all areas which have potential, with an underlying belief that the boundaries between the well-trodden standard disciplines are likely to be more promising.

Key Outcomes
If one accepts the premise that interdisciplinary work should be privileged above disciplinary work, the goal is a reasonable one. However, there are three significant problems with how it is enumerated, as an outcome:

First, many of the ways the outcome is broken down (co-authorship, team-teaching, collaborations, and co-productions) are not in themselves indicators of interdisciplinarity. They are indicators of scholarly work done in teams or by collaboration, which is typical of some fields, and not of others. Interdisciplinary work done by individuals is not captured here; perfectly within-a-single-discipline work done by groups, is.

Second, the outcome (and potential initiatives) makes no distinctions between the types or quality of interdisciplinary work that will be rewarded; just *being* interdisciplinary is supposed to be an achievement. This will likely result in a race to the bottom.

Third, by measuring success in terms of an *increase* in interdisciplinary activity, there is the danger that departments and programs that are already interdisciplinary in nature and have less scope for improvement will be considered as not having succeeded.

We recommend that this outcome should be modified to address these three problems.

Potential Initiatives
a. Cross-listing of courses may attract different students, but does not generate research connections. We do not see why this is useful *per se,* e.g. how it is it better than encouraging electives outside the major sponsoring department in any academic program. We also feel that the process to cross-list a course is already quite simple, and are not sure how the SAP proposes to support this further. However, keeping in mind that this issue is within the Senate's purview, we are prepared to work on any unnecessary barriers that face departments that *want* to cross-list their courses.

b. Joint appointments, especially at the pre-tenure stage, are considered problematic by faculty in most universities. Obstacles also exist for including lecturers in co-teaching endeavors.

c. It is not clear what a "facilitation system" to promote partnerships would look like. The narrative (on slide 27) mentions the need to create new connections between departments and divisions, which shows a severe lack of understanding of how research is driven. Connections are made at the individual level, and this is generally the result of searching for someone with a certain expertise or happenstance, which cannot be forced. However, if there are ideas for how this could be done, recognizing that collaboration cannot be imposed top-down, they would be useful.

d. Providing seed funding to get interdisciplinary efforts off the ground (Academic Priority Areas, Centers of Excellence, and Institutes) may also be useful, but this is subsumed in Initiative a for Design Principle 1.

e. It is not clear to us what "optimize application of research management software" means.

f. It is striking that one of the biggest obstacles to interdisciplinary *curricular* interactions was clearly stated as being the rigid divisional structure for how resources are distributed, and the complete autonomy that deans have in managing these resources. Especially considering the limited budgets with which they

operate, it is natural that they have to view each proposal from a strictly divisional perspective. No mention of this is found either in the Potential Initiatives or in the Barriers section.

Initiatives prioritized by CEP: d. and (if there are clear ideas for how this will be accomplished) c. We also recommend consideration of f.

5. Expand excellence and innovation in areas distinctive to UC Santa Cruz, such as social justice[7], diversity and sustainability (slide 30).

This seems like a rehash of Design Principle #1 together with the Academic Priority Areas (except that, inexplicably, Digital Interventions have been left out). Reflecting this fact, the key outcomes could all be placed in Design Principle #1, and are minor variations of the outcomes there[8]. The Key Outcomes listed here appear to have no content specifically related to social justice, diversity, or sustainability, and in some cases would likely work against those things (as social justice, diversity, and sustainability are not in themselves particularly profitable, they are not likely to result in many IP licenses.)
The Potential Initiatives seem hastily written; the second one is pure management-speak, and the third one is copied almost verbatim from the Potential Initiatives for Design Principle #1, with the exception that in this iteration, a specific corporation is named, that began life providing technical expertise to the US military (social justice? sustainability?).

It would seem to make more sense to truncate this design principle at "... distinctive to UC Santa Cruz", and lead directly to the Academic Priority Areas.

C. Implementation Plan

The following are the proposed initiatives we support (insertions in italics, deletions in strikethrough):

Initiative	*Dept*	*First Proposed Yr*	*Yr CEP recommends*
Map the full student lifecycle experience for all students to identify key pitfalls and challenges for diversity and inclusion.	Student Success, UE	1	2
Map the full employee onboarding experience for all ~~students~~ *employees* to identify key pitfalls and challenges for diversity and inclusion.	~~UE~~ ?	1	2
Provide support to faculty to discover and secure new sources of support for their work.	OR	2	1
Create and support research clusters around specific	OR, UR	2	1

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[7]As seen in the Appendix, Social Justice was rated at or near the bottom by almost all focus groups, and yet has made it to this list.
[8]with the exception of the first Key Outcome, which belongs to Design Principle #4.

challenges, *especially but not exclusively* where there are known research funding opportunities.			
Run ~~internal~~ *external* messaging campaign to highlight the importance of innovative research and creative work.	EVC, OR, UR	2	3
Create/grow undergraduate research fellowships.	UE	2	1
Invite individual units to d~~D~~evelop partnerships with govt/NGO/corporate sponsors, *as appropriate for their academic goals,* for structured research experience internships or coops. *Support structured research experience in all programs, whether or not appropriate government, NGO, or corporate sponsors exist.*	EVC, OR, UR	2	
Create a course development fund (one time payment) or allow for a course release to redesign courses to be more research or experientially focused.	EVC, Divns	4	1

The following are the proposed initiatives whose meanings are not clear, may not be useful, or which require caution or detailed Senate consultation:
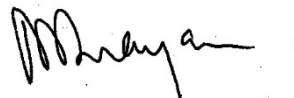
Initiative	*Dept*	*First Proposed Yr*
Launch fifteen new research partnerships with industry/non-profit partners in Silicon Valley	OR	3
Build into tenure and promotion, incentives to include students in research programs	EVC, VPAA, Divns	4
Launch project management affiliate non-profits that are tasked with partnering with the private sector R&D	UR, OR	4
Optimize application of research management analysis software	OR, ITS	1
Revamp summer orientation/preparatory program for undergraduate students to improve success rates for first generation, URM, and non-traditional students.	UE, Student Success	1

The following are initiatives that we recommend should be considered, even though they were not listed:

1. Examine the functioning and the success rate of the Career Center (for all disciplines) and compare with other universities, to see if it can be improved.
2. Examine UCSC's success rate for generating revenue from IP and patents, as compared to similar UC campuses, to see if it can be improved.
3. Strengthen the College Scholars program.
4. Provide better opportunities for staff pay increases without having to move to a different job.
5. Increase the availability of employee housing, and examine how to improve the partner hire process.
6. Examine how to improve University Relations and make them more productive. (We commented on this in our January letter about the SAP.)

The proposal (Implementation Plan, Year 5) to require computational skills as part of the undergraduate curriculum across all majors is within CEP and the Senate's purview. Any reform to the campus general education requirements is always complicated, and in the present precarious state of the Computer Science curriculum, this change is not something we are enthusiastic about.

Sincerely,

Onuttom Narayan, Chair
 On behalf of Committee on Educational Policy
Noriko Aso via email
Ben Carson
Patrick Chuang
Joy Hagen, NTSF Rep.
Suresh Lodha
Francis Nimmo
Tonya Ritola
Tchad Sanger, University Registrar
Megan Thomas

Cc: Incoming Senate Chair Lau