

August 24, 2018

Ólöf Einarsdóttir  
Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: Full Draft of Strategic Academic Plan and Implementation Playbook**

Dear Ólöf,

During a special summer meeting on August 24, 2018, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the full draft of the Strategic Academic Plan (SAP) and Implementation Playbook. For each design principle, committee members focused on evaluating potential initiatives and their relationship to desired key outcomes. The committee's overall and specific feedback on each of the 5 design principles may be found below.

In general, members noted that there appeared to be a disconnect between the design principle and key outcomes, and between some key outcomes and potential initiatives. The most salient example is Principle 5: "Expand excellence and innovation in areas distinctive to UC Santa Cruz." It is unclear why faculty appearance or IP and licenses granted would be chosen as central outcomes to this principle. Equally unclear is the selection of the idea campaign, innovation management, and project management as examples of potential initiatives. If the potential initiatives are supposed to be ways of achieving the outcomes, in many cases, it is not obvious that they would be effective. While CFW appreciates the effort put in producing this Implementation Playbook, several members felt that more useful feedback could have been garnered if the connection driving each design principle / outcomes / initiatives was better articulated in the document.

In several instances, members found the design principles commendable while the key outcomes largely irrelevant to further or to assess the implementation of the principles themselves. We elaborate on this point and we make specific examples below. In addition, CFW noted that many of the design principles are tied to the idea of cross-disciplinary work, which due to numerous barriers including a lack of resources and the presence of internal administrative and structural barriers, is not possible for many faculty, and far less strategic than collaborations between UCSC and other UC or non-UC campuses nationally and internationally: Although the committee recognizes the benefit of interdisciplinary work when it occurs organically on campus, overall, CFW contends that the reality of a research university is that connections with other institutions are much more significant and critical than cross-departmental collaborations. As such, CFW recommends that this should be emphasized in the Strategic Plan, while the repeated emphasis on cross-disciplinary work re-assessed.

As in previous Senate SAP reviews, members noted that the PowerPoint-like report with bullet points was not helpful. Many of the bullet points were vague and/or unclear and not well-enough articulated. As in its review of the SAP Phase I Landscape Report<sup>1</sup>, members once again determined that a comprehensive executive report with full sentences would have been more helpful.

### Design Principle #1 – Drive Research and Creative Work that Transform Our World

CFW noted that many key outcomes under Design Principle #1 are field specific and not applicable to all departments. For instance, key outcomes 1 and 4 appear to apply to the whole campus, whereas 2 and 3 do not. In addition, it is not obvious how the key outcomes relate to the design principle. Increasing the annual number of citations (key outcome #1) is not obviously connected to driving research that transforms our world. Equally not obvious is that connecting researchers across divisions (the first potential initiative) is effective in increasing the number of citations or in achieving the ideal of the design principle.

The key outcomes appear to be using grants, patents, citations, and public appearances (this latter being largely ambiguous and ill-defined) as a metric to evaluate the amount of research being done on campus. Although members agree that a metric for research impact is needed, it is not clear if citations and public appearances are clear indicators of this impact. Further, concerns were raised that such metrics may be biased since in some disciplines, gender plays a large factor, for example in whether or not female faculty are invited to speak at some conferences and not others. In addition, there may be departmental/divisional barriers preventing faculty to attend conferences such as a lack of resources for travel, time away from teaching, etc. CFW recommends that if public faculty appearances are to be a desired outcome of the campus's Strategic Academic Plan, then central resources should be allocated for this purpose.

Members suggested that the following potential initiatives may result in key outcomes and benefit research and creative work on campus:

**3. Create a formal administrative process to assess proposed collaborations between specific divisions and programs.** – Members agree that a formal administrative process, infrastructure, and a contact person, could be helpful, particularly in the case of cross divisional teaching and research, which currently appears to be done on a case by case basis.

**4. Address identified campus barrier: Lack of incentives and support for faculty to generate resources.** – Members noted that there is a need for course relief to write proposals, and additional support from the Office of Special Projects (OSP) in terms of resources for helping with the budget, assistance in writing proposals, and project management with non-profit organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Profumo to Einarsdóttir, 4/12/18, Re: SAP – Phase I Landscape Report

Faculty lines to advise graduate students, more graduate students to assist with teaching, awards for faculty who are taking on more, and appropriate mention in personnel review department statements, were additional suggestions for support and incentive.

**5. Grow number of doctoral degrees granted.** – Members noted that graduate growth has been a goal of the campus for years, but there are few incentives and resources to support it. Although members agree that productivity would be increased if faculty were able to hire more graduate students, members also noted that additional masters students create more teaching work for faculty. CFW emphasized the need for financial resource support for this initiative, not only for increasing the numbers of graduate students, but improving the quality of life for UCSC graduate students including support resources and affordable housing.

**9. Create and support research clusters around specific challenges where there are known research funding opportunities.** – Members noted that there have been calls for interdisciplinary clusters before, but questioned whether resources will be provided for such work.

**11. Provide support to faculty to discover and secure new sources of support for their work.** – Although this sounds positive in theory, members noted that this initiative is vague and questioned what kinds of actual support would be provided (e.g. teaching relief, etc.).

Members noted how other potential initiatives seemed less likely to result in the key outcomes.

### Design Principle #2 – Create Enriching Experiential Learning and Research Opportunities for Students

Overall, CFW noted that an increase in graduate students takes away from faculty time to advise undergraduates. Therefore, members suggested that faculty who do so should be rewarded.

Members raised concerns about Key Outcome #1, but strongly supported all other initiatives, noting that most if not all, will require resources and additional support. The consideration of Net Promoter Score (satisfaction rating) is typically used in the context of evaluating business client satisfaction. CFW found this key outcome to be inappropriate in the context of public education. Students should not be viewed as business clients.

**1. Create research experiences for undergraduate students in the form of research quarters as part of all curricula across divisions.** – CFW suggests that a better potential initiative would be to provide resources to support undergraduates' pursuit of research experience by creating scholarships, thus releasing them from other obligations to dedicate time in research. Other initiatives such as connecting students to and assisting them with

getting external internships would also be a great benefit. Members also suggested that students who would like to have lab experience could be matched with graduate students.

10. **Create/grow undergraduate research fellowships** – Although CFW supports this initiative, members noted that current resources cover only research supplies and are not as helpful as they could be. Members suggested that undergraduate researchers require substantial support and should be supported much like graduate students. In particular, stipend or other support which would allow them to stay on campus over the summer to do research would be beneficial, as there is no time to do such intensive research during the school year. Members noted that undergraduate researchers will require additional resources and affordable housing to support their stay in Santa Cruz as well as their research.
5. **Provide faculty with research funds or a course release to incentivize the development of new courses, or revision of existing courses, to create more hands-on research or experiential opportunities for students.** – Members strongly support this initiative and recommend that it be placed higher on the list of potential initiatives, but recognized the many nuisances to supporting the development of courses, particularly hands-on courses. In addition, continuing resources would be essential for maintaining such courses. Members noted that a one-time course release or one-time funds may partially help with the development of a course that would create more hands-on learning opportunities, but it is inadequate to sustain the quality of such courses. CFW also noted that hands-on courses will significantly reduce the size of classes and enrollments, which will need to be centrally recognized and supported.

### Design Principle #3 – Engage and Support Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Student Body

Members noted that although good concepts, none of the initiatives under this design principle are very specific, actionable, or measurable. In addition, members noted that there are already programs in place to assist underrepresented students, such as the Writing Program, which is largely under resourced. In fact, some faculty have expressed fears that the UCSC Strategic Academic Plan may take additional resources away from programs like the Writing Program. As such, CFW suggests that there is no need to create something new, but rather a need to strengthen existing programs. Such strengthening could take the form of adding more tutors, more support in writing and math for students who need to catch up (an example would be a student who attended a high school that didn't offer calculus and may find themselves a year behind), more scholarships, and affordable tuition. Members noted that some students are disadvantaged in their high school education before they get to UCSC and will take more than 4 years to graduate, and require additional support and resources. Further, CFW notes that it would be helpful to aim to get faculty familiar with existing programs so that they can direct students accordingly.

Members noted the need for mentorship for new faculty, which could help to retain a diverse faculty. Members noted that mentorship across departments varies radically and is not at all consistent. Concerns were raised about new faculty members not being informed about how to arrange their personnel files in preparation for review. CFW recognizes that there is now a cross divisional mentorship program on campus for new faculty (the UCSC Faculty Mentorship Program), but noted that few faculty are aware of it.

Members agreed that previous online trainings have been unhelpful, and recommend that thought be given to how such trainings could be restructured to be more engaging for faculty. In addition, and instead of penalizing employees for not completing trainings, CFW suggests that faculty be rewarded for completing trainings. Members additionally raised concerns about the lack of consequences for faculty who do not follow the UCSC Principles of Community and committee agreements and policies emphasized by said trainings.

Finally, CFW takes this opportunity to once again emphasize the immediate need for on-campus childcare, precisely to “support diverse faculty, staff, and student body”. In our faculty survey last year, the need for childcare was spelled out loud and clear.<sup>2</sup> CFW looks forward to the timely creation of the on-campus childcare facility this coming academic year.

#### Design Principle #4 – Support Generative Interdisciplinary Connections in Research and Teaching

As previously mentioned, CFW recognizes the benefit of interdisciplinary research and teaching when it happens naturally on campus, and, although it should be supported, CFW does not recommend that it should be a design principle in the SAP. In addition, members found key outcomes 1 and 2 too field-specific to serve the majority of campus, and overall, could not determine how the potential initiatives or key outcomes would lead to the goal of reducing boundaries for interdepartmental and divisional collaborations. Again, members suggested that promoting collaborations with other institutions, both internationally and in the U.S., would be of better service and of greater strategic value. In addition, members noted that some of the language used in the design principle is so field specific that members were unable to understand it and provide useful feedback.

#### Design Principle #5 – Expand Excellence and Innovations in Areas Distinctive to UC Santa Cruz, such as Social Justice, Diversity and Sustainability

CFW members recognize the importance of this design principle, but deemed the key outcomes and menu of potential initiatives as completely unrelated to social justice, diversity, and/or sustainability. Members agreed that the initiatives in this principle are the least helpful of all the

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<sup>2</sup> Profumo to Lee, 3/06/17, Re: Top 5 Welfare Priorities for Senate Faculty

design principles and do not at all connect with the overall goal. Further, members Googled the referenced non-profit MITRE @MIT listed in the 3rd potential initiative and found that it was linked to the military and national security, which members found inappropriate and offensive, particularly under a design principle focused on social justice.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the Strategic Academic Plan.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stefano Profumo, Chair

On behalf of the Committee on Faculty Welfare

*Tesla Jeltama*

*Grant McGuire*

*Nico Orlandi*

*Su-hua Wang*

cc: Incoming Senate Chair Kim Lau