

September 14, 2018

Marlene Tromp  
Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor  
Chancellor's Office

**RE: Strategic Academic Plan Implementation Playbook**

Dear Marlene,

The Academic Senate has completed its initial review of the Strategic Academic Plan and Implementation Playbook (SAP/IP). Several members of the Senate committees on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Academic Freedom (CAF), Academic Personnel (CAP), Educational Policy (CEP), Faculty Welfare (CFW), Planning and Budget (CPB), Scholarly and Library Communications (COLASC), Privilege and Tenure (P&T), and Graduate Council (GC) responded. The Senate was specifically asked to provide feedback and advice on “key outcomes and initiatives listed under each design principle and their tentative implementation timeline.” In particular, the Senate leadership was asked to produce one prioritized list of outcomes and initiatives considered most pressing by the Senate. Some of the committees, including CPB and GC, were not able to do so because of lack of articulation of the academic priority areas (APAs) and how the initiatives would advance the APAs. The SAP/IP also lacked a focus on graduate education in the design principles and initiatives, which seemed misaligned in the current draft. The Senate strongly believes that the plan needs go through another revision before the initiatives guiding the implementation of the plan can be prioritized. I should note that several committees (both verbally and through email) raised concerns about the time frame and short turnaround time for the review of the SAP/IP. Some of the committees, including CFW and P&T, also noted that the PowerPoint-like report with bullet points was not very helpful and recommended a comprehensive revised report with full sentences, which we understand VPAA Lee is in the process of creating.

I will first summarize concerns raised by several committees and then point out selected comments regarding the design principles, initiatives, and outcomes. The individual letters are enclosed, and I strongly encourage you to read them carefully as they contain valuable feedback and detailed recommendations beyond what is possible to cover in this letter. The committees applaud the goal of developing a future strategic academic plan (a task the Senate has pushed for several years) that aims to guide resource decisions for research, creative work, and the education of our students. The committees also appreciate the opportunity Senate faculty members had in contributing to the development of the SAP last academic year. However, the committees agree that as articulated, the SAP/IP falls “well short” of meeting its intended goals and strongly recommend that the plan be revised to include the feedback from the various Senate Committees and other campus constituencies.

**Academic Priority Areas:** CAF deftly summarizes the question a strategic academic plan should address: “At the moment of serious secular decline in public university funding, it is more important than ever that we continue to ask, ‘What kind of university do we want?’ and to do everything we can to bring that university into being.” Several committees noted that the draft SAP/IP fails to provide a rationale for why the particular academic priority areas (APAs) were chosen as well as a description of each of the areas and what TAWGs will be included in each one. As the SAP/IP is currently articulated, faculty and faculty groups are unclear about if and how their proposed research, creative work and other educational activities fit into the proposed APAs. As articulated in CPB’s letter: **“The central weakness of the draft SAP..... is that it fails to provide any intellectual specificity or coherence that could have been distilled from the efforts of faculty in their TAWGs”** (emphasis in original). CAF also notes that “all three [APAs] focus on the contemporary moment and the future... which raises questions about how fields that address the past (history, art history, aspects of sociology, anthropology, geology, history of science and technology, etc.)

fit into the vision of the university.” The Senate believes it is imperative that a revised plan build on the energy and excitement generated this last academic year in the TAWG process. The Senate strongly recommends that faculty leaders from relevant TAWGs be asked to help articulate and provide an intellectual basis for the APAs and the most pressing initiatives to focus on and barriers to remove in order to make progress in each area.

***Design principles, goals, initiatives and outcomes:*** While many of the Senate committees found the design principles “commendable,” several pointed out misalignments and disconnects among the design principles, goals, initiatives, and outcomes, and between the goals, grand challenges, and funding opportunities in the draft SAP/IP. (This will be discussed in more detail below.) In many cases, the initiatives are not connected to the design principles nor are they tied to the APAs. Both CPB and CAP point out that the design principles are in fact the true goals in terms of reflecting our aspirations to improve future research, creative work and educational activities, and that in many cases the stated goals detract from the aims stated by the design principles. P&T echoes this sentiment, pointing out that the design principles are not principles but rather “things UCSC as an institution might choose to do.” P&T also notes lack of arguments for why the stated disciplines or many of the initiatives were chosen and why issues such as interdisciplinarity, diversity, growing number of graduate students, and experiential learning are good goals to strive for; not that they are not but “why should we think [they] are.” CFW found, in several instances, the key outcomes largely irrelevant to “further or to assess” the principles themselves. The Senate strongly recommends realignment among the different categories in the revised plan and that supporting arguments be provided for the choices of the various categories. Furthermore, the Senate committees observed that the same initiative was listed in different years for different design principles, and a rationale for why certain initiatives were put in year 1 versus year 2 or year 5 was not provided. It is also important to point out that most of the initiatives fall within the charge of one or more Senate committees; however, the Senate committees are not listed among the units “responsible” for the various initiatives. To simplify the menu and rectify this omission, CPB eliminated duplicative initiatives in the menu and added the relevant Senate committee(s) that has/have purview over the respective initiative or need(s) to be consulted by the corresponding administrative unit(s).

CPB, CEP, CAP, CAF and CAAD all point out that many of the initiatives and key outcomes are expressed primarily quantitatively, namely, in terms of number of patents, IP licenses, citations, etc., and that while quantitative measures may work well for Science and Engineering, they work much less well for many disciplines in the Arts and Humanities. Therefore, the Senate recommends broadening the definition of the outcomes and initiatives to include qualitative measures, such as, exhibitions, shows, etc., to evaluate research and creative work in different fields. In the words of CAP: “In its assessment of research and creative activity, CAP values quality, first and foremost.” COLASC also recommends valuing open access and open source, as is done for the Human Genome and Cancer Genome Browsers. Finally, CAAD notes that “this over-reliance [on quantitative metrics] signals a reductive understanding of the diverse forms and impacts of academic research and creative work, and of varying modalities of student learning and success.”

Several Senate committees, including CPB, CAP and P&T, raised concerns about the heavy emphasis on reputation metrics in the draft SAP/IP plan. P&T goes so far as to state that “as expressed, [the outcomes] are nothing more than labels for ways of measuring success.” While CPB acknowledges that reputation metrics are important, it stresses that meaningful outcomes should not be confused with metrics, which measure accountability, but rather should reflect “impact on actual people, institutions, and environments, [which] would more meaningfully demonstrate the campus’s commitment to supporting such research and creative work. **We fear that a strategic academic plan whose loftiest stated goals focus on where we stand rather than on what we stand for will undercut the purpose of the plan and the commitment of the faculty supporting it**” (emphasis in original). CAP echoes this sentiment: “Thus the impression conveyed is of focusing on appearance and external recognition rather than substance.” In the context of academic freedom, CAF also recommends that some of the outcomes (slides 22 and 30) be “explicitly

understood as being used only to assess the university's collective movement toward strategic goals" rather than being used to assess individual faculty research based on funding support.

Several committees noted inconsistencies between the description of the APAs and the funding sources in the draft SAP/IP. For example, CEP points out that the grand challenges noted for each APA have "a strong science and engineering flavor to them, while on the other hand all the funding agencies for Digital Interventions focus on the humanities and the arts." CAAD raises concerns about the directives associated with the grand challenges being limited to the same two sources, The National Academy of Engineering and USAID for the three APAs. CAAD writes: "The dependence on these two sources suggests either lack of meaningful research or experience in academic contexts on the part of the consulting firm (Entangled Solutions), or a decided bias towards certain kinds of research. Either way, such dependence contradicts the capacious rhetoric of the three categories."

**Comparison Institutions:** CPB, CEP, and CAP are all critical of the fact that the same four universities were used for comparison for all three APAs. CEP notes that the "selection of this comparator group seems indicative of a poorly researched effort by the consultants," and CPB writes: "It is unclear how a comparison to the same four universities is of any useful value toward the campus honing its strategic plan." "Global leaders in each of the specific priority areas would have provided more useful perspectives." CAF also notes that the list of comparator institutions gives "very little useful information." CAP asks why "nearly identical National Post-Secondary Enrollment metrics [were] provided for each area."

**Resource allocation:** The draft SAP/IP is silent on where the resources for the implementation of the SAP will come from, and both CPB and CEP note the lack of guidance as to how resource allocation decisions will be made. CEP specifically asks how a balance between resources directed toward the APAs versus other campus needs, including improving the quality of undergraduate education and student demand in areas unrelated to the three APAs, will be ensured. The Senate recommends that more details on this issue be included in the revised plan. CPB also laments the overemphasis in some of the initiatives on putting resources toward "administrative activities" and "awareness and internal messaging," and emphasizes the need to "put resources closer to core student and faculty activities" that promote excellence in research, creative activities and teaching. P&T, while acknowledging that identifying resources for campus research should always be a top priority, asks whether this is not already a "central part of the mandate of the Office of Research and University Relations." Furthermore, CAP notes that some of the initiatives, particularly those related to collaborative research, "seem to be construed as driven by a top-down process," and, like CPB, recommends a more bottom-up approach with faculty taking the lead. P&T echoes this sentiment. CAAD also points out the lack of attention to enrollment growth and the need to hire more faculty and staff, and improve student/teacher-staff ratios.

**Barriers:** The draft SAP/IP does not address why the 10 barriers selected for reduction and elimination in year 1 are the ones most important to address first or how these barriers are related to addressing the design principles or the three APAs. CPB is also concerned that the emphasis of the Implementation Working Group (IWG) on the cost and complexity in terms of reducing barriers runs the risk of the "lowest-cost, low-hanging fruit being addressed at the expense of barriers of highest benefits toward achieving the strategic plan." CPB also notes that specific structural barriers that prevent the campus from allocating resources nimbly and strategically in response to shifting student interests and new emerging research areas were not among the 10 barriers listed for "reduction or elimination" in the first year, nor were they among the 75 initiatives listed in the draft SAP; these barriers were highlighted in CPB's responses in earlier stages of the SAP process.

**Shared governance:** CPB, CEP, and P&T all point out the lack of stated Senate participation in the outlined menu of initiatives. Many of these initiatives fall within the charge or under the purview of the various Senate committees. This oversight must be remedied in the revised SAP/IP, and to help guide this process,

CPB lists the committees that should be consulted on the various initiatives. For example, requiring computational skills as part of the curriculum across all majors is under CEP's purview. The initiatives are also short on *how* they will be accomplished, particularly considering already overtasked units.

**Graduate Education:** GC, CPB, CEP, CAP and CAF all note the glaring omission of any discussion of graduate education in the draft SAP/IP. This is particularly surprising considering the key role graduate students play on campus as researchers and as mentors and role models for undergraduates, and the fact that the FTE allocation in the last few years has been in large part based on enrollment of Ph.D. students. GC notes that "while the three priority areas identified in the SAP Implementation Playbook are certainly broad enough that they could potentially encompass [the goals for graduate growth], they do not specifically identify or address any of them. In fact, it appears that graduate education, and more significantly the crucial role that graduate education plays in the campus' larger ambitions of every sort, is completely absent in the plan." CPB echoes these sentiments: "**We are stunned that generating graduate student funding and increasing graduate student enrollment are totally missing among the initiatives**" (emphasis in the original). While not in CEP's purview, the committee notes the striking omission of graduate education in the plan and the lack of initiatives on how the campus proposes to increase the number of doctoral degrees granted. CAP also weighs in on the issue and notes that "little if any attention is paid to addressing graduate student experiential learning and research experience in [Design Principle 2] and other design principles." CAF notes: "The neglect of concrete goals in this area, especially considering the ongoing push to admit more graduate students, suggests that something has not worked properly in the strategic planning process." In relation to growing the number of doctoral degrees granted, CFW emphasizes the need for financial resources to support graduate growth as well as for "improving the quality of life for UCSC graduate students including support resources and affordable housing." Finally, GC writes: "From Council's perspective, one of the grand unfulfilled initiatives of the campus is graduate growth." "Without established targets for balanced growth, and the intentional inclusion of graduate-specific research and thinking into virtually every initiative, the goal of graduate growth (especially doctoral and MFA) will not be achieved. Council is left with the question of whether graduate growth is still a primary campus objective." GC is also concerned that "UCSC may no longer be able to attract top faculty and graduate students, especially in fields where faculty and student research is not directly overlapping, and where research dollars must be separately generated for both supervisors and students."

**Undergraduate education:** CEP points out that the draft SAP/IP focuses primarily on research and resource generation and that teaching is only addressed peripherally as it relates to research. Specifically, the committee notes the lack of acknowledgement of important issues such as "small-scale learning environments," "non-traditional modes of engagement between and among students and faculty" and "college and departmental advising." The committee requests that these aspects of teaching be included in the revised SAP/IP. The committee also points out the "scant mention of achieving excellence as being a goal of the Strategic Academic Plan," and in the context of undergraduate education, specifically highlights the absence of the College Scholars program. CEP also notes that the SAP/IP does not mention or recognize the important roles lecturers and staff play in the academic mission of the university and recommends this be addressed in the revised SAP/IP. Finally, CAAD finds the emphasis on teaching to the job market "shortsighted" and stresses the importance of preparing our students "to think outside the box, critically and inventively."

**Interdisciplinarity.** There is a heavy emphasis on interdisciplinarity in the SAP/IP. P&T notes that nowhere in the plan is there an argument articulating why interdisciplinarity is a goal to strive for. CAF asks: "How does the campus plan to support more fully those already-existing interdisciplinary departments and research centers?" COLASC suggests that an "additional initiative should build incentives into the merit and promotion process for participation in collaborative/cross-divisional research/endeavor." CFW notes that while the committee "recognizes the benefit of interdisciplinary work when it occurs organically on campus," members stress the importance of collaborations between UCSC and other UCs and non-UC

campuses nationally and internationally. CFW recommends that this latter point be emphasized in the revised SAP/IP. Furthermore, CAAD stresses the importance of transdisciplinary research being shaped by relevant faculty and is concerned about “top-down research, corporate model in which faculty need incentives to generate and direct research...”

*Specific Comments:*

In addition to the general comments articulated above, the committees provided valuable feedback on the relative importance of the disciplines, and the various initiatives and outcomes, although several were unable to make recommendation regarding the timeline for implementation of the initiatives. In particular, CEP generated a list of the proposed or modified initiatives the committee supported and the recommended implementation year. Based on its various concerns, CEP also recommends several initiatives, not listed in the draft SAP/IP, aimed at advancing our design principles.

CAF finds the disconnect between **Design Principle 1**, “*Drive research and creative work that transform our world,*” and its associate goal, key outcomes and initiatives “particularly problematic.” CFW echoes the sentiment and notes that many of the key outcomes are very field specific and not applicable to all departments. For example, “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.” Both CEP and CAP recommend broadening the outcomes to include qualitative measures to evaluate research and creative work in different fields, and modifying and/or combining initiatives. Several committees (CEP, CAP, COLASC, and CAF) also raised concerns about the use of the phrase “applied research” in the definition of the goals and outcomes for **Design Principle 1** as the term is more applicable to some fields than others; these committees recommend broadening the definition to simply “research.” For example, CAF writes: “To single out ‘applied’ research and not the full range of research our university is or should be conducting cedes a large part of our mission right at the outset.” CAAD echoes this concern, noting that “the addition of ‘applied’ creates a significant shift in meaning by inserting a filter that recognizes only certain forms of research and creative work.”

While the Senate in broad terms supports **Design Principle 2**, “*Create enriching experiential learning and research opportunities for students,*” CEP stresses that adequate resources need to be provided to accomplish this goal. In this context, CEP also points out that 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.” CAP also points out that faculty need incentives in terms of support to create and supervise these independent research activities. The committee also encourages including Colleges as a sponsoring unit for undergraduate research fellowships. CAP notes the scant emphasis on “graduate student experiential learning and research experience,” in **Design Principle 2** and recommends that supervision of graduate independent study be included in teaching load calculations. This recommendation was echoed by CFW. P&T noted that none of the experiential learning initiatives are slated to be pursued in year 1.

Regarding **Design Principle 3**, “*Engage and support diverse faculty, staff and student body,*” the goal in the current SAP/IP focuses on recruitment and hiring while outcomes are focused on retention. CAP suggests that the goal be expanded “toward hiring and retaining a greater number of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups and to improve retention rates for URM by addressing quality of life issues.” CEP also emphasizes the importance of evaluating the success in qualitative ways and not just quantitatively. Furthermore, CEP recommends that the following issues be addressed: “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.” COLASC also suggests including questions about satisfaction and climate. CFW found none of the initiatives under this principle to be “very specific,

actionable, or measurable,” and recommended that more resources be put into existing programs to assist URM students rather than creating new programs.

On **Design Principle 4**, “*Support generative interdisciplinary connections*,” CEP notes that while there is value in interdisciplinary research, it should not be considered of more value than disciplinary research. As pointed out by CEP, presumably the aim of this principle is to encourage collaborative research and teaching activities when such activities benefit the institution. As noted above, CFW emphasizes the importance of collaborations between UCSC and other institutions nationally and internationally.

With respect to **Design Principle 5**, “*Expand excellence and innovation in areas distinctive to UC Santa Cruz, such as social justice, diversity and sustainability*,” CEP notes that the “key outcomes listed here appear to have no content specifically related to social justice, diversity, or sustainability.” The committee notes that it would make more sense “truncating this design principle at ‘...distinctive to UC Santa Cruz’ and then tie the principle to the APAs. This sentiment is echoed by P&T, which notes the selective mention of social justice, diversity and sustainability at the expense of other fields such as “Astronomy and Astrophysics” and “bioinformatics.” While recognizing the importance of this design principle, CFW “deemed the key outcomes and menu of potential initiatives as completely unrelated to social justice, diversity, and/or sustainability.” While COLASC felt that this was “perhaps the most important principle,” the committee noted that “the outcomes and initiatives (which focus on indicators of reputation rather than substantive progress) don’t clearly advance [this principle]. Current listed outcomes don’t obviously relate to [the] goal.”

In summary, the Senate committees that responded found the SAP/IP inadequate in formulating academic goals that would guide future resource allocations on campus; regretfully, the committees found that the draft did not build on the excitement generated during the TAWG process. The Senate recommends a revised plan that explains in detail the three APAs and why they were selected, and addresses the misalignment among the design principles, goals, initiatives, and outcomes. The Senate also highly recommends that faculty leaders from the relevant TAWGs be recruited to help articulate the APAs as well as the initiatives to accomplish the campus priorities. The Academic Senate looks forward to reviewing a revised SAP/IP that addresses the Senate’s concerns and incorporates its recommendations.

Sincerely,



Ólóf Einarsson

Academic Senate Chair

enclosures: CAAD to ASC Einarsson - Review of SAP and Implementation Playbook - 8-31-2018  
CAF to ASC Einarsson re SAP review 8-31-18  
CAP\_ReSAP\_ImplementationPlaybook\_082118  
CEP to ASC Einarsson re SAP review\_ 8-15-18  
CFW\_ReSAP\_ImplementationPlaybook\_082418  
COLASC-SAP-Design-Principles-Comments  
CPB\_re\_SAPImplementationPlaybook  
GC\_re\_SAPImplementationPlaybook\_BUNDLED  
P&T to ASCEinarsson - Re - SAP Summer Review - 8-31-2018

cc: CAAD Chair Greenberg  
CAF Chair Hershatter  
CAP Chair Freccero  
CEP Chair Narayan  
CFW Chair Profumo  
COLASC Chair Ottemann  
CPB Chair Walsh  
GC Chair Dent  
P&T Chair Hankamer  
Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Herbert Lee