

November 5, 2008

CP/EVC Kliger
Chancellor's Office

RE: Senate Response to Implementation of the Strategic Action Plan

Dear Dave,

The Senate was interested to receive the revised Action Plan relevant to our campus Strategic Academic Plan. While we await the descriptions of the set of proposed indicators contained in the forthcoming document "Measuring Our Progress," I requested that Senate Committee Chairs forward me informal comments on the Action Plan. These provide a framework through which the Senate will likely view the metrics document during its review process within the Senate. Here is a synopsis of our comments.

Overarching Comments:

- 1) There are no action steps that clearly focus on the quality of teaching: although one section is entitled Educational effectiveness/academic engagement, there is little or no discussion of the importance or evaluation of the quality of teaching. Obviously, our teaching quality does have a direct impact on retention, one of the measurable quantities on which the current document focuses. Indeed, metrics such as class-size (obviously broken down by upper- and lower-division, and so on) are unmentioned in the document—and there is no measure apparent that cashes out the promise of "high levels of undergraduate academic engagement." This lack of quality teaching metrics seemed to multiple Senate committees like a rather stark and disturbing omission.
- 2) In a similar vein, it appears that the Colleges, the locus where student and academic affairs most commonly intersect, are largely (and conspicuously) absent from the plan. Indeed, the possible role of the Colleges in cross-disciplinary initiatives (as per the themes of our Academic Plan) is hardly hinted at.
- 3) The plan includes no goals or strategies for enhancing our current trend of increased selectivity. Increased selectivity obviously feeds back into our retention and graduate rates, student success and overall reputation. Indeed, admissions is not mentioned as a component of our "Undergraduate Educational Experience" In this context, the contrast between the quite generic student goals related to Student Affairs and the highly specific responsibilities of the VPDUE is notable—it is not at all clear that the year-long visioning and goal-setting process conducted by Student Affairs is reflected in this document, and if these goals are campus priorities, they should likely be included in a campus-wide document such as the Action Plan.

- 4) There continue to be concerns that some “action” items are, in effect, largely rather generic job descriptions of administrators—and some more well-defined, specific action items would have greatly enhanced the document. Indeed, the key question arises of “what new tasks are defined by this document?” If such new tasks were called-out, then the prospect of assessing our success in those new tasks would be more straightforward than simply assessing the progress on pieces of venerable job descriptions on which we have made, and will presumably continue to make, sporadic incremental progress.
- 5) There are areas where the inter-relationship between this document and the Academic Plan are unclear. For example, on p. 5, biomedical areas and environmental science and policy are highlighted as areas that will be focused on—yet these comprise only 2 of the 6 campus academic themes, and certainly are comparable in their funding availability to (for example) our Technology-related theme.
- 6) The terms “immediate,” “future,” “long-range,” “long-term,” “near-term” and “intermediate range (or term)” appear throughout the document, but are undefined. This type of non-specific language on timing raises a critical issue: what will metrics mean without meaningful and well-understood timeframes and chronologies?
- 7) The precise audience for this Plan still seemed somewhat enigmatic: the presumption is that it is a public document, but largely for internal campus consumption—and is oriented, as per the final sentence of the third paragraph, as a task description for our administration.

Local comments:

p. 2: There are points where the document seems to lapse into bureaucrat-ese—one example of this is the fourth bullet under “An Action Agenda.” Absent context, it is really difficult to figure out what this sentence might mean.

p. 4 and 8: The action items related to nomination of faculty for awards and for facilitating pursuit of extramural and training grants to support graduate students are laudable, but in many instances these activities are likely most appropriately handled at the Departmental level. There was puzzlement as to what the respective roles of the VCR and the Dean of Graduate Education might be in these activities, and greater specificity on their respective roles in these tasks would have been most useful.

p. 12: It is of concern that in the discussion of the Comprehensive Campaign, there is little sense given that this is an institution-wide initiative that requires buy-in from essentially every constituency on campus—the description of the Campaign here is both limited and technical, and does not reflect the level of campus engagement needed (and, indeed, the profound sea-change that must take place) to make this effort a success.

Those are our informal comments on the "Action Plan." We look forward to commenting on the upcoming "Measuring our Progress" document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Quentin Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "Q" and "W".

Quentin Williams
Chair, Academic Senate

cc: Senate Executive Committee
VPAA Galloway
Chancellor Blumenthal

21 October 2008

TO: Senate Chair Quentin Williams

FROM: CAFA Chair Richard Hughey

RE: Informal Chair Comments on Strategic Action Plan

Dear Quentin:

CAFA's prior comments, as a result of its special June 9 meeting, included four overarching issues:

1. That the document be reconstructed as a public document.
2. That the plan showed independent units working toward individual goals, rather than a campus working toward a communal vision.
3. That the plan was astonishing in its lack of inclusion of student affairs or of the Chancellor's inaugural call to reinvigorate the colleges.
4. That the plan mixed strategic goals and metrics with laundry lists.

The current draft has addressed or partially addressed three of these issues. The structure and readability of the document recognizes its place as a public document. The sections and subtasks are somewhat less structured around units or domains. Mention of student affairs has been made regarding co-curricular activities, student-administration communication, childcare, and housing.

The strategic action plan has several deficiencies in areas under CAFA's purview, though it will not be possible to judge the extent of the omissions until the complete action plan, with metrics, is available.

The Colleges, the key point of connection between the student affairs and academic affairs missions of the campus (in the broad sense, not our arbitrary divisional sense), are largely absent from the plan. As such an important component of undergraduate education at UCSC, their absence is conspicuous. Goals related to the Colleges (and in other domains) should be cross-cutting where possible, explicitly encouraging multi-divisional collaboration.

The single most important factor to achieving campus undergraduate goals with respect to retention, graduation rates, student success, and reputation is our increasing selectivity. Yet, the plan includes no goals or strategies for enhancing our current trend, and indeed based on the absence of admissions as a component of undergraduate education, there would be no need for such items to be used as a campus metric. (To be an effective plan, every proposed metric must strongly relate to the goals expressed in the implementation plan).

Finally, the student goals related to Student Affairs are generic, and are not fleshed out in the document to the level they are in practice (in contrast, consider the responsibilities of the VPDUE). Student Affairs has recently completed a year-long visioning and goal-setting process, and the resulting goals should be reviewed and

discussed among the central administration, with the college provosts, and with the Senate, to ensure that, as with academic programs sponsored by the academic divisions, they are fully vetted and considered by the campus as a whole.

Finally, in an area that overlaps my personal interests with those of CAFA, consider interdisciplinary programs. The action plan includes an exploration of protocols and structures for graduate interdisciplinary programs, but in spite of the verbiage, we have much distance to go in terms of facilitating and encouraging interdisciplinary undergraduate programs, interdisciplinary faculty appointments, interdisciplinary research programs, and interdisciplinary teach. If this espoused goal of the campus is to be achieved, it will need concerted discussion and changes throughout administrative and faculty structures.

October 20, 2008

RE: Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Dear Quentin,

I am writing in response to the request to senate committee chairs to review the Action Plan from the administration.

Regarding the areas most relevant to CAP, I was happy to see the action item relevant to faculty salaries on p. 4. In addition to comparisons to other UC campuses, I wonder if the document should also mention comparisons beyond UC.

I have a few other comments:

--Given that the plan's stated goals did not include allocation of FTE to different divisions, I was surprised that bio-medical research and environmental science and policy were called out on p. 5. I looked back at the Academic Plan and these seem to be 2 of 6 themes so it's not clear why only these two are mentioned here.

--I think it's important that the Senate be consulted regarding setting priorities for the Comprehensive Campaign, and wondered if that could be mentioned in the action items on p. 12.

I look forward to seeing the indicators and having the time to consult with my whole committee on the Action Plan and the accompanying indicators.

Thanks very much for the opportunity to comment!

Maureen
Chair CAP

October 20, 2008

Quentin Williams, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division

Dear Quentin,

This is a response to your request for feedback from committee chairs on the latest Strategic Action Plan.

As CP/EVC Dave Kliger notes himself (maybe in response to the Senate's previous input), the current document, and the metrics to be released this fall, represent a somewhat generic approach to measuring achievement, one that will make comparison with other universities easy. This is appropriate, but I find it reassuring that the EVC talks of developing more nuanced, UCSC-mission-oriented metrics of accomplishment in the longer term. I think we should pay attention to whether this happens and how soon it happens. Here I repeat a portion of CEP's last response re: the Strategic Plan:

We urge that more work be done establishing ways to measure progress on goals that are more ambitious and more specific to the Santa Cruz mission. For example:

- *Let's find a way to measure and report on the number of undergraduates who are involved in original research. Likewise, what proportion of students go on to graduate or professional schools?*
- *Let's explore ways to measure the effectiveness of colleges in creating learning and social communities and contributing to retention (related to "assessment of first-year experience" but more targeted).*
- *Let's establish objectives regarding faculty engagement in teaching and find ways to measure this too. For example, could the campus track the number of faculty who consult with the Center for Teaching Excellence in certain ways?*

Turning more specifically to the current document, the goals articulated under "educational effectiveness/academic engagement" developed as a consequence of continual discussions between CEP and VPDUE Bill Ladusaw, who (as you know) is a guest on CEP. I strongly support all of these goals. CEP is less directly involved in the other categories of goals discussed for undergraduate education, but they are good goals and we should support them.

I continue to find one element missing that CEP has responded about more than once. Again, from our previous response:

CEP has advocated more than once that class size (broken down appropriately by lower-division, upper-division, and so on) also be tracked by this process. We heartily endorse the attention in this document to first-year seminar experiences, but where is the measure that more generally cashes out the promise of "high levels of undergraduate academic engagement"? This is a matter of serious concern to our UCSC faculty (we note that UCEP has recently taken the

issue up too at the systemwide level). We ask that this concern be reflected in the Action Plan. We believe that the VPDUE should work with CEP and others to establish measures of undergraduate class size and set targets.

I support the notion of differential investment. I think competition is good.

It is not easy to develop a succinct but meaningful statement of a university's goals. I actually think the administration has done well in the end, though there's definitely room for improvement. I hope that the various Senate committees will respond in a way that is critical but constructive.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jaye Padgett, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

October 23, 2008
Senate Chair Williams

Re: Comments on Strategic Academic Plan

Dear Quentin,

I hope it is not too late to offer the following comments on the sections of the Strategic Academic Plan document relevant to COR (I was out of the country for the past several days).

(1) Some of the action items for the VCR listed on the second half of page 7 are quite meaningful and appropriate. In particular,
-- Evaluate the effectiveness of and develop a plan to support patenting and licensing of intellectual property; and
-- Streamline processes for industry agreements
are actions that, if implemented correctly, may alleviate some of the problems and frustrations that faculty have had in the past in dealing with these issues.

(2) One would have hoped for a longer list of ***specific*** action items related to research. Instead, the document contains a number of items that are quite generic and often amount to just listing parts of the job description of the VCR.

(3) The document also lists the following action items for the VCR:

Under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor for Research, the campus will:

? Work to nominate faculty for national awards; and

? Work to nominate faculty for participation on national and international organizations and committees.

and

Under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor for Research, in collaboration with the Vice Provost/Dean of Graduate Education, the campus will:

? Facilitate faculty pursuit of extramural grants to support graduate students; and

? Facilitate faculty pursuit of training grants.

Clearly, these action items are important and worth pursuing. However, I am doubtful that they are handled at the right level. For instance, nominations of faculty for national awards entail working closely with colleagues of the faculty in the field who will put together nomination packages and/or endorse the nomination. In my view, this is best handled at the departmental level. The same holds true for the extramural grants and the training grants. We should ask for more specificity as to what

exactly the role of the VCR and the Dean of Graduate Education will be.

(4) As far as I can tell, the document makes no mention of providing multi-year support to graduate students at the time they are admitted to our graduate programs. This has been a long-standing issue that needs to be addressed, as our offers to potential graduate students are simply not competitive if they do not have a multi-year span.

Best,

Phokion

October 24, 2008

Hi Quentin,

My sincere apologies for getting this response to you so late. I will completely understand if my concerns are not included in your initial report.

My response to the Implementation Plan is quite simple: there are no action steps that focus on quality of teaching. In the Section on Undergraduate Educational Experience, there is no discussion that focuses on the importance or evaluation of the quality of teaching, something that has a direct impact on the academic engagement and the retention of students.

If you would like further feedback, let me know. I do again apologize for not responding by the deadline.

Elisabeth Cameron
Chair, COT

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October 22, 2008

Dear Quentin: You have asked for non-formal and quick feedback on the Implementation of Academic Plan document. I still do not know the exact audience for this plan. Is it internal to our campus, internal to UC, or external to anyone who is interested, such as possible Silicon Valley Partners? I question this because it seems like the plan's address is vague and not consistent. Is it meant to go to those who are "accountable" or is it turly meant to represent a real plan for the future?

As mentioned in the meeting, the fourth paragraph in the cover letter is incredibly vague given that it seems central because it discusses how we will quantify our successes and failures (I assume there must be a few!). Why the vagueness concerning means of measuring quantifiable issues? The means must be there. If they are not then there will not be a possibility of tracking as stated. So I say be up front about what the means are, or aren't.

To track more nuanced metrics for interdisciplinary work is excellent; but to still insist that these will be identified by division when in fact the activities tracked often cross divisions and disciplines makes me think that something will get lost that is important.

To the Action Plan itself:

First paragraph: how are we poised now and were we not before? This makes it seem like we are not already excellent in many areas. We are and so now we do not need to be poised in those; we are moving forward.

"equivalent progress in the next paragraph seems incredibly vague and problematic. What is meant here? What is the measure of progress?

Page 2 Action Agenda: I do not understand what is meant in the fourth point at all. Please explain to me.

Under Academic Resources: I have consistently heard for the past two years or so that faculty are our greatest strength. Yet, where are faculty in the hierarchy of academic resources mentioned here? This is troublesome. There is a committment to offer competitive faculty salaries--does this mean to all faculty or to just new faculty. If there is a committment to the faculty who have made this campus what it is now today, where is the committment to salaries in this area of the document?

The terms: immediate, future, long-range, intermediate range are used throughout but they remain vague and unspecific. If my undergraduate wrote without defining such key terms they would be in trouble! Of what timeframe do we speak? Of what exact time-frames? What will metrics mean without an exact numeration of timeframe and chronology?

Is there anything new here and if so what? We should delineate what is new and what we have all already agreed upon. It strikes me this would be really useful for measuring future success. The future cannot count as the past. And this is important in any plan.

These are my thoughts: rough, incomplete, and without consultation with my committee which has only met once to carry on new business and without time to discuss this matter. Please do answer me if I have missed something obvious in my queries.

As ever, Cathy
Chair P & T

Catherine M. Soussloff, Ph.D.
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