

May 20, 2004

Alison Galloway, Chair
Academic Senate

Dear Alison,

COR discussed the draft report from the Strategic Futures Committee at its last meeting (May 12) and we have a few comments to pass on.

* We were glad to see that the report emphasized the need to plan in a way that is flexible enough to accommodate research directions that cannot be foreseen at this time.

* Two "planning and budget" questions were raised in connection with the SFC argument for faculty growth. One concerns the argument that additional enrollment are needed to justify new faculty. We understand that the number of FTE being held open either centrally or in the divisions is a much larger percentage of our total budgeted FTE than UC policy mandates. If so, then in principle, we could add significant numbers of faculty (perhaps 100) without additional enrollment ("in principle" because this doesn't take into account the uses to which the open provisions are presently put).

A more fundamental issue is the conflict between increasing undergraduate enrollment in order to add new faculty, but then hiring those faculty in areas which are not impacted by increasing enrollments (e.g. in professional schools and in less impacted areas). Increases in undergraduate enrollment need to be carefully coordinated with faculty growth. Otherwise, existing imbalances in faculty-student ratios will be further exacerbated, and the level of satisfaction that both faculty and students derive from the educational experience further reduced.

* Members felt that UCOP expectations regarding student enrollment at UCSC in future years should be discussed much earlier in the report, even possibly at the very start. The argument for the 21,000 target could then push off against UCOP expectations. At present, this is not taken up in detail until p. 21.

* We recognize the very crucial role that sponsored research plays in the support of non-sponsored research and graduate study on campus, but we think it would be appropriate for the SFC document to more explicitly acknowledge the importance of strong research programs in all areas, including those which are not externally funded. A continued commitment to strong research in all areas should figure in plans for the future.

* We hope that the final draft will be streamlined and well edited. The length of the present document does not appear to us to be well justified.

Sincerely,

Judith Aissen
Chair, COR