May 7, 2010

Chair Lori Kletzer
Santa Cruz Division Senate

RE: Response to Report from Commission of the Future Recommendations

Dear Lori:

At the April 7 meeting of the Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT), we discussed the recommendations from the report from Commission of the Future Recommendations. CCT felt there is not much to comment on based on our purview but instead I will reference on-line course offerings based on our earlier response in December on the Special Committee Report on *Remote and Online Instruction and Residency*. As committee chair I also brought up the absence of any reference to the Master Plan's promise of excellence in education.

There are UC professional school and graduate degrees on-line in place already. This type of instruction appears to be successful for certain graduate programs and for self-paced courses. Also, it can be useful for students currently enrolled at UC campuses who can't get the general education or other required courses they need on their own campus due to large class size or limited numbers of course offerings, but who could enroll remotely at another UC campus. Having undergraduate on-line courses for high school and community college students is also good and makes sense given the current economic climate.

CCT questions whether it is realistic to think students could graduate in three years with the same quality of education as under or current curriculum, or whether all majors will be able to mount an effective online curriculum. Summer session does not offer advanced courses, so for many majors it is not realistic to graduate in three years. Graduation and retention rates have been climbing steadily over the past several years, as indicated by the table in Appendix B, although the report does not call attention to this.

CCT also discussed other aspects of the report. Members are concerned with the differential fee model – a dangerous model that may be implemented in the near future. In order to balance the funding shortage in the absence of state support, more money for tuition must come from the students. Tuition could reach $30,000 per year and would disproportionately affect the middle class. The report suggests that popular UC campuses like UCLA and UCB could get away with charging such an elevated tuition, but not the other campuses. Perhaps systemwide should recognize that the smaller campuses have become leaders in specific fields, such as Astronomy and Engineering specialties at UCSC.

Research is another issue of concern. UCOP may try to negotiate larger overhead rates, thus skimming off higher percentages of the grant money faculty receive. In that case, UC would be less competitive, with less money for researchers to spend on data collection and analysis. This could make UC a less desirable institution for researchers.

Sincerely,

Joel Primack, Chair
Committee on Computing and Telecommunications