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REVISED

May 25, 2010

Henry Powell, Chair
Academic Council

RE: UCSC Response to Commission on the Future preliminary recommendations

Dear Harry,

The Santa Cruz Division reviewed recommendations from the Commission on the Future, with comments from the following twelve committees: Academic Personnel (CAP), Admissions and Financial Aid (CAFA), Computing and Telecommunications (CCT), Educational Policy (CEP), Faculty Welfare (CFW), International Education (CIE), Library (COL), Planning and Budget (CPB), Preparatory Education (CPE), Privilege and Tenure (P&T), Research (COR), and Teaching (COT).

We note the dedication of the working groups. Even as we find significant flaws in the work, we appreciate the efforts undertaken by so many of our colleagues across the university. In responding to these preliminary recommendations, we want to highlight the value of a deliberative and iterative process. As discussions proceed, we encourage the Commission to focus on "big issues," and to avoid examination of detailed University operations. In our comments, we are all, variously, motivated by three goals. These goals have been the foundation of the UC, and they are very much at risk in the face of ongoing public funding disinvestment. These goals are: i) maintain affordability; ii) maintain excellence in instruction and research; and iii) increase enrollments to serve California's needs for higher education. In the midst of an unparalleled state funding crisis, we cannot reach these three goals by eliminating "waste" and by increasing "efficiency."

Before summarizing our comments, I highlight a concern voiced by all committees. Shared governance must remain at the forefront of this process. We have been told that this set of recommendations is very preliminary, and yet we are concerned that the timing for the second round of recommendations is uncomfortably close to the review of those recommendations by the Regents. We hope you will make it clear to the Commission that time for Senate consultation will be needed for the final recommendations.

Size and Shape

Recommendation 1: Increase the number and proportion of undergraduate non-resident students

We have some concerns. UC might welcome more non-resident undergraduates; they add diversity and help in the education of state residents. We are glad to see the principle: “The increase in non-resident students should not displace funded resident students.” (pg. 14) At the same time, we have two concerns. We do not know the mechanism by which one can monitor to make sure non-resident students do not displace resident students. Second, we are worried about tracking costs. On page 15, an assumption is made about how much each non-resident student contributes in resources above educational costs. But in the absence of any information about true costs, such an assumption is weak at best. We also worry about the possible erosion of public (and voters’) support.

More broadly, the Size and Shape Working Group recommends that UC campuses improve the educational quality of the campuses by broadening the geographical diversity of the student body; the Working Group astutely observes that “California’s dependence on an increasingly global society and economy requires geographic diversity among the student body” and that non-resident students “enhance [the] pedagogical and educational experience for resident students.” We highlight here the role of Education Abroad. EAP’s reciprocity agreements with partner institutions bring outstanding foreign students to our campuses and increase awareness of the UC system at many of the top universities worldwide. Reciprocity agreements are essential for our extended-stay immersion programs, which are the most important aspect of EAP; the 3:1 exchange ratio allows EAP to serve as a flexible “eleventh campus,” relieving overcrowding and course impaction.

Recommendation 2: Improve transfer student pathways in high-demand majors

We very strongly endorse students transferring from a California community college to the University of California. We believe this to be of utmost importance in meeting the Master Plan for Higher Education. UC Santa Cruz’s future enrollment plans rely on a steady increase of junior-level transfer students who are prepared to begin the upper-division course work for their selected major. The role of articulation and the access to that information is at the core of the transfer function and support in this area is vital to a sustainable pipeline.

The recommendation is to better articulate community college courses with upper division major courses—effectively to move toward “greater consistency” of requirements in “key majors” at UC.

The function of articulation relies heavily on both faculty and staff to ensure that appropriate decisions are reached. Once faculty decides upon courses suitable for UCSC course-to-course articulation, professional staff is charged with publishing the information in the ASSIST web site. Decisions of transfer course applicability to UCSC’s general education requirements are delegated to professional staff as well. UC campuses must have the proper resources for these articulation decisions to be made and disseminated in a timely fashion. Our recommendation focuses on improvements to the ASSIST web site and should include:

1. Ease with inputting new course-to-course articulation decisions.
2. Ease with inputting new general education articulation decisions.
3. Ease with campus articulation changes. Students should know about pre-major requirements and see how well they are meeting the pre-major requirements on each campus.
4. Overall improvement in the end-user experience.
5. Improved reporting capabilities.

The need for resources that feed the ASSIST web site should be explored. What people power is required to make articulation decisions that are then captured in the ASSIST web site? We are unclear about the assertion on p. 23 that The Next Generation will require an investment of 2 or 3 million dollars: Is that investment to be borne entirely by the UC or to be shared with the CCC and Cal State partners?

The Size and Shape Working Group notes that “The current fiscal crisis makes it imperative that the University of California reduce redundancies and improve efficiencies across the system and within the campuses... Centralization of certain systems can be to the benefit of individual campuses.” UOEAP is an excellent example of efficient centralization: students at all ten campuses can take advantage of programs that could not be cost-effectively run by any single UC campus. Economies of scale allow the careful planning and rigorous oversight needed to maintain the high academic caliber of EAP’s programs. While there is room for further improvements in efficiency, it is important to recognize that further cuts to UOEAP’s budget will either shift tasks and costs to individual campuses, disproportionately burdening smaller campuses with high levels of EAP participation, or reduce the quality and scope of EAP’s offerings.

Education and Curriculum

Recommendation 1: Manage educational resources more effectively and efficiently to decrease time to degree by making more efficient use of faculty resources.

UCSC does not believe that encouraging students to attempt to finish in three years is in their best interest, with the exception of students who have unique personal circumstances that demand haste (and such students can already try to do this at their own impetus). Only the brightest students would be able to complete such an accelerated program without risk of failure. Since incoming students regularly have an exaggerated idea of their own abilities, many would try for this program and make a hash of their undergraduate education unless extremely high academic standards were set for entry. The students who would meet this standard, however, are also those who are best able to benefit from the extraordinary opportunities we offer as a research institution: sitting in on graduate seminars, doing research under faculty guidance, etc. It would be impossible to make time for such opportunities in a three-year program. Therefore it appears that such a program would deprive average to good students of guaranteed progress and a good GPA, and would deprive excellent students of all the best opportunities that UC could afford them, making this a good idea for no one. We are also concerned about the very brief mention of “alternatives for entry level courses (e.g., math and writing requirements”). We ask that such alternatives be spelled out and their consequences carefully analyzed. Graduation rates of four years 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.

The Education and Curriculum Working Group observes that “Improved time to degree will result in more available spaces at the University for additional students.” EAP very efficiently leverages resources by enabling students to continue rapid progress towards degree completion while studying away from their home UC campus. Effective advising before and during study abroad is essential if students are to select programs and courses that will satisfy major requirements. Without sufficient staff at UOEAP and campus International Education Offices to provide the required guidance, many students might find it difficult to graduate in four years, reducing the value of EAP in relieving impaction and deterring students for whom a fifth year would be a significant financial burden.

While the cost of a UC education has continued to climb over the last decade, there have been no significant changes to the University's part-time degree program requirements in decades. Increasingly, students are working more to offset the increased cost of a UC education, but they do not necessarily qualify for any reduction in their fees. We may be losing excellent students to other colleges and universities – including for-profit providers – that appear to be more inviting to working students. Counselors in the California community colleges have commented that UC's part-time degree program seems out-dated and may actually serve as a deterrent to potential transfer students. As the recommendation states, if UC wishes to “expand opportunities for a UC education” to “working professionals”, a revamped part-time degree program is an excellent first step.

Recommendation 2: Online Education

We wondered who among the faculty would be responsible for new online initiatives. The prospect of a new cadre of non-ladder lecturers teaching online troubles us, for it would seem to reinforce the kind of two-tiered professoriate that we already see in much of higher education. (We are thinking here about the nationwide growth in the number of non-ladder “adjuncts,” teaching without full benefits or meaningful job security.) On the other hand, we also worry about the possibility that new expectations for *ladder faculty* to teach online will negatively affect our research productivity, graduate instruction, recruitment, and retention.

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. The rationale suggests that such courses will “generate revenues and create workload efficiencies that support the University's educational mission.” One promise is that online courses will make up for a smaller number of faculty hires. This recommendation suggests, under “fiscal implications,” that online courses may be particularly useful in large-enrollment foundation or gateway courses, “some developmental courses,” and some with limited faculty.

Access and Affordability

We agree completely with the first two recommendations. Specifically, we agree that “The University should prioritize access for students for whom enrollment at UC represents the most significant benefit.” (pg.55). UC's commitment to providing a visible path to a better life remains a fundamental component of the University's identity and purpose, and we are glad to see the commitment reaffirmed.

We also support Recommendation 3, which emphasizes the need for commitment to graduate education, particularly in the context of UC's research mission. However, this recommendation fails to emphasize strongly enough how UC research fuels California's economy. We also note that there are strong links between graduate and undergraduate education, particularly through the involvement of undergraduates in research.

We strongly support Recommendation 4, the reinstatement of financial aid for undocumented students. With the rising cost of attendance, the University has become less and less accessible and affordable for undocumented students, and the reinstatement of aid would reaffirm the University's commitment to

maintaining access and affordability for all admitted students. Moreover, the implementation of the recommendation would act to correct the situation where undocumented students have essentially been subsidizing other students' education via the return-to-aid dollars they have been paying but are not able to receive.

Regarding Recommendation 6, changing the name of "education fee" to "tuition," will have implications for non-residents. Currently, non-resident students pay all the fees, plus non-resident tuition. Should education fees be renamed in-state tuition, the equivalent of the education fee would need to be built into the non-resident tuition rate. In addition, state statute will need to be modified to ensure that tuition is paid by the Cal Grant program for eligible students.

Research Strategies

We endorse Recommendation 1 (increasing transparency) and Recommendation 4 (streamlining risk management practices), though we feel that Recommendation 4 is somewhat unrealistic in the current budget climate, as staff are being cut back virtually everywhere to deal with the budget crisis.

We are concerned about increasing the ICR rate across the board, which in effect makes it more expensive to do research. Increasing ICR will likely hurt smaller campuses, such as UCSC, because they lack robust research infrastructure; furthermore, it may end up penalizing divisions (e.g., the Humanities) where the "cost" of doing research is considerably lower. Perhaps ICR rates should be differentiated across campuses, with larger campuses receiving a higher ICR rate, and smaller campuses retaining rates that are consistent with the infrastructure available.

It should also be noted that the case for increasing the ICR rate lacks thorough documentation and justification. Specifically, there is a general statement to the effect that other leading universities have increased ICRs, but no examples are given. A comparison to public universities of similar rank would be good to have; a number of faculty have noted that they have reviewed proposals from places of similar rank to UCSC that have lower ICR. Also, it is stated that UC's ICR should be "equal to or greater than" similar universities. Why greater than?

We question the sentiment that "Nevertheless, it is important that the actual costs of conducting research be explicitly stated and recovered," which is repeated throughout the document. This is simply not true, unless we are a business. The State should not abrogate its commitment to fund research in the UC campuses, and UC should not give up on expecting the State to honor this commitment.

UC should place more emphasis on graduate education. Research relies on strong graduate programs, so anything that erodes the quality of graduate students we are able to attract is troubling. We would like to see concrete recommendations aimed at strengthening graduate education and recruitment (such as eliminating nonresident tuition for graduate students), and are very concerned about the proposal to increase graduate fees. We note that, at present, it costs about the same to hire a postdoctoral scholar as it does to hire a GSR, which is not a best practice for sustaining excellence in graduate education.

Another issue of concern is with research. UCOP may try to negotiate larger overhead rates, thus skimming off higher percentages of the grant money faculty receive. UC would in that case 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.

Funding Strategies

Recommendation 8: Examine alternate faculty compensation plans.

Replacing hard money from core funds with soft money from grants increases the funding risk for faculty. Therefore, any change in funding model that can be remotely acceptable to faculty has to involve some sort of trade-off, in which a fall in the amount of "hard- money" support is compensated with the possibility of faculty receiving more than 12 months of salary. As mentioned in the report, this type of compensation plan is already common in some disciplines. However, it must be noted that these compensation plans are usually accompanied by reduced teaching and administrative loads, as grant funds are meant to provide protected time for research. Therefore, two scenarios are possible. The first is if such reductions are not implemented along with the compensation plan, then they could mean a dramatic increase in workload. Beyond the obvious faculty welfare implications of this type of measure, it could be argued that funding agencies would be reluctant to fund faculty subject to such plans, which would likely put the UC on a competitive disadvantage with peer institutions, not only for faculty, but also for research grants. The second is if the reductions are implemented, we fail to see how the change in compensation plan would bring any savings to the campus. In particular, if the goal is filling the teaching spots with "cheaper" lecturers, it would seem like encouraging buyouts would be a more straightforward and less controversial mechanism to generate savings that would not put faculty salaries at risk.

Recommendation 9: Allow for the possibility of charging differential tuition by campus, as a means of mitigating potential future enrollment impacts on some campuses.

We strongly oppose this recommendation. We believe differential tuition will inevitably lead to a full-fledged tiered system of campuses within the UC system. Recruitment and retention would be rendered more difficult at the "second tier" campuses and collaborative work across the ten campuses (which is strongly endorsed by the Research Strategies group) would also be less tenable. The Furlough Exchange Program, and specific campus responses to the salary reduction plan, revealed some of these tensions during the 2009-10 year. We recognize the simple attraction of elasticity of demand. A differential tuition could protect enrollments at campuses facing elastic demand, while allowing tuition to increase at campuses where demand remains relatively inelastic. But the questions are far larger. We do note the analysis contained in the UCPB Choices report (<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/ucpb.choices.pdf>). This report frames the discussion of differential fees in the larger context of funding sources. Any discussion of differential fees must follow, not lead, a new approach to the allocation of funds and revenues across the campuses. More importantly, most changes in funding policy, when they have occurred, have tended to benefit bigger, older campuses to the detriment of newer, smaller campuses. Any discussion of differential fees might be conducted with much more sophistication than seen to date.

I close by noting that it is disconcerting to find that, in a 155-page report, there are only a handful of references to the Libraries at UC, and that the Libraries are only mentioned as part of a laundry list of items requiring resources. Faculty on our campus are concerned that this lack of attention to library issues in the Working Group Report does not capture the real issues facing the future of the UC Libraries (and our own campus library). For example, the Size and Shape sub-group speaks to consolidation of redundant resources at UC and the use of technology to aid in this reduction. We note that there is often a belief that transitioning to digital technologies will produce future cost-savings for Libraries and may even reduce the

need for Libraries to exist as a physical space. However, we note that the investment required by the Libraries to transition to and maintain this virtual Library is substantial and ongoing. Indeed, there may be an increase in costs associated with digitization, including media and maintenance costs, digital preservation, migrating to new formats, the expense of the hardware itself and the need for more IT support.

Of all recommendations, there are two that have the greatest potential for damaging UC in coming years. First, the financial, academic, social, and political implications of increasing enrollment of non-resident students is not well elucidated, and it would be premature to move in this direction without a better quantitative understanding of the potential impacts. Second, if OP were to decide (contrary to what the Funding Workgroup admonishes in the text) to push for differential campus tuition, much harm may be done to the UC system overall. Zeal for short-term financial gain could result in long-term harm, including a loss of credibility throughout the state and, particularly, within the California legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Kletzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" being more prominent than the last name "Kletzer".

Lori Kletzer, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division