February 22, 2022

Lucy Rojas
Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief Of Staff, Division Of Student Affairs And Success

RE: Disability Resource Center (DRC) Access to Canvas Proposal Request

Dear Lucy,

The Academic Senate has reviewed your request for the Disability Resource Center's (DRC) proposal to have access to Canvas. The following committees have responded: Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Educational Policy (CEP), Information Technology (CIT), and Teaching (COT). The responding committees appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback for this important proposal for our campus.

All committees noted the immense responsibility of providing students with accommodations with the course materials they need in a critical and timely manner. Committees were sympathetic to the DRC's laborious efforts in producing alternative materials for students. However, it is uncertain that automatic access will mitigate the issue of timeliness. CIT states "faculty update their course materials at various times throughout the quarter. Members raised concerns that without prior communication with the instructor, DRC staff could potentially obtain and begin to work on incorrect or outdated materials, which would create additional burden for the DRC, instead of lessening the work." Similarly, COT warns "faculty often don't have materials posted and finalized for course work until the start of the quarter, and often make adjustments as the term progresses." Due to the time constraints on instructors and faculty who are creating the course content, it is not clear that automatic access would help provide materials quicker for students. Further, it should be noted there are still about 30% of faculty and instructors on campus that do not use Canvas. What would be the alternatives for these courses?
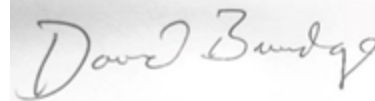
Committees also expressed caution regarding automatic access given to the DRC. CEP asked if the DRC is requesting access "to all courses in Canvas, to all courses in Canvas where any student has accommodations, or only requesting access when there are accommodations related to alternative media." While CIT did not have concerns about DRC being granted access to their courses automatically, they did question, "whether the DRC would have access to all of Canvas, including grades." Meanwhile, CAAD expressed apprehension about granting automatic access "given the history of institutional surveillance via Canvas during the COLA strikes" and "creating inroads for administrative interventions into classroom spaces, including Canvas."

Finally, we agree that there needs to be better information and communication to faculty and instructors requests regarding roles, responsibilities and compliance for students with accommodations. CAAD "would like to see more robust practices aimed at eliminating non-compliance among faculty" and "encourages increased education for faculty regarding their obligations to provide accessible and equitable education, regardless of whether they use Canvas heavily or not." CIT echoed, "Although automatic enrollment of DRC Support Specialist Staff may be a helpful tool, it should not at all replace effective communication with faculty and

instructors. As such, additional considerations should be made to improve communication and instructor response times." More importantly, the Senate observed that automatic access would *not* eliminate the need for communication between the DRC and instructors and remains essential for "promoting strong and sustained collaboration" (COT).

The Senate welcomes further clarification regarding the outlined questions as posed by our responding committees. Background and contextual information between committees was shared, but it would have been more equitable and comprehensive if the additional information from Online Education (OE) and Information and Technology Services (ITS) had been included in the proposal materials. We recommend that any future proposal should include consultation with the Center of Innovation for Teaching and Learning (CITL) and Online Education (OE) to determine what these units on campus are already doing to mitigate making materials more accessible and creating best practices for our entire campus. We have enclosed all committee responses for you to see their specific recommendations. Thank you again for sharing this important proposal with the Academic Senate.

Sincerely,

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate

Enc: Senate Committee Responses (Bundled)

cc: Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
        Tracy Larrabee, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
        Peter Alvaro, Chair, Committee on Information Technology
        Catherine Jones, Chair, Committee on Teaching
        Isabel Dees, Associate Vice Chancellor Equity and Equal Protection
        Rosa Garcia, Interim ADA Officer, Equity and Equal Protection
        Vanessa Molina, Auxiliary Services Manager, Disability Resource Center
        Stephanie Nielsen, Product Manager, Information and Technology Services
        Jim Phillips, Digital Accessibility and Equity Lead, Information and Technology Services
        Tom Thompson, interim Director, Disability Resource Center
        Jody Greene, Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning
        Michael Tassio, Director, Online Education
        Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate Office