May 14, 2024

James A. Steintrager, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Jim,

On May 13, 2024 the UC Riverside Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the proposed statement informed by the comments received by local committees responding to the task to review: Academic Freedom, Academic Personnel, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Courses, Educational Policy, Faculty Welfare, Graduate Council, International Education, Library and Scholarly Communication, Planning and Budget, Research, Undergraduate Admissions, University Extension, the committee Information Technology.

The Executive Council’s discussed echoed concerns and critiques in the attached comments as well as agreed that quality should be high and consistent regardless of campus or mode of delivery.

Sincerely yours,

Sang-Hee Lee
Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Monica Lin, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
    Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

April 17, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jang-Ting Guo, Chair
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

In its April 10, 2024 meeting, CAP reviewed and discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. The committee appreciated the efforts in summarizing some salient general characteristics of educational quality at the University of California. Below are our suggestions.

**Fundamental Basis for a UC Quality Education.** We suggest removing the word “advanced” from “…transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge.” The suggestion is based on the idea that advanced knowledge is subsumed by knowledge in general. Moreover, one of the missions of the University of California is to transmit basic knowledge as well as to attain advanced knowledge and practice.

**UC Quality: Educational Offerings.** In light of “…a rapidly evolving world, including technology and new social paradigms”, we suggest more emphasis be placed on creativity, originality, visual literacy, and experiential learning in the educational paradigm, and in building core competencies and critical thinking skills.

**Build Core Competencies and Critical Thinking Skills.** Since information comes in a variety of forms, we suggest the following revision to acknowledge this complexity:

- Train students to interpret and organize information (written, visual, spatial) critically, analytically, and effectively, empowering them with skills in the acquisition, assimilation and synthesis of knowledge that will allow nimble adaptation to the ever-changing intellectual, cultural, and technological environment.

Since the goal is to train our students to be independent thinkers and doers, creativity to imagine and to challenge existing knowledge and conventions should also be stressed. Hence, we suggest the following revision:
• Promote intellectual curiosity and creativity and an appreciation for knowledge and experience, including knowledge for which practical applications are not immediately apparent.

Adding the word “originality” below will stress the individuality and the value of the unique voice, potential, and expression of our students:

• Nurture intellectual independence, originality, creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship.
May 3, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Peter M. Sadler, Chair  
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions reviewed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality at their meeting on April 19, 2024.

The statement on quality seems vague in what constitutes an acceptable level of quality and how it is going to be assessed. For example, one of the criteria is to “operate at an intellectual level appropriate to the high abilities of the student body.” Who decided what that level is and monitors and assesses the class to meet that criteria? Another criteria includes “develop interpersonal skills that will contribute to success through collaboration.” Does that mean that every class requires students to work in groups, and how will their interpersonal skills be evaluated?

If this quality statement is designed to ensure the quality of online classes, then the university does not need to reinvent the wheel, as there already exists ways to ensure that asynchronous online classes achieve a level of quality and accessibility and it might serve the university best to rely on these measures or at least derive more actionable objectives based on the work being done by these agencies. One that comes to mind is Quality Matters, which certifies classes as achieving a standard of quality through a rigorous review process: Quality Matters.

The Statement is explicitly aspirational (rather than descriptive). As such, it needs to be rather generalized. To be more specific and descriptive is to run the risk of omission.

It is disappointing to read that the document has already informed a presidential task-force on instructional modalities. Why was it not distributed for Senate review prior to that? The UCEP documents seem to have their origins in the budget difficulties of 2009-10. Has the cost-saving potential of on-line programs always been the underlying motivation? That is a sad aspiration. I hesitate to edit or approve a document that might be used to defend the imposition of on-line education.

The quality of a UC education is to be measured, in part, by the professional successes of our undergraduate alumni with UC degrees. For some careers, the necessary content of the degrees are prescribed by professional accrediting organizations: engineering and geology, for example. The
California State Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists requires that a geology degree include field experience that cannot be taught on-line. Otherwise, the degree is not an entryway to state registration. There are also necessary teaching materials for required laboratory courses. Perhaps the quality statement should recognize these realities. Perhaps the accessibility of California’s coasts, mountains and deserts to its campuses deserves mention. Should we worry that the document seems to avoid those elements of quality that cannot readily be satisfied on-line?

If the document is in part meant to ensure the quality of online education, it might need specifics about how certain elements (especially environment) will be translated online.
May 1, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
   Riverside Division

From: David Oglesby, Chair
   Graduate Council

Re: [Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality at their April 18, 2024 meeting. Members of the Council felt that the document was somewhat vague, but aspirational. In the section UC Quality: Environment, the last point regarding experience is not distinctive for the UC. Members felt the focus should be on the quality of the degree, not the quality of the experience; the quality of the degree is what is distinctive for the UC. Regarding expected outcomes, members felt that UCR does not receive adequate credit. UCR is training several first-generation students, many of whom are coming from high schools that are not preparing students for college as well as would be desired. How could this issue be remedied? The Council recommended surveying students who have completed their degree and asking them what worked for them, and what their experience was like.
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

May 3, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: David Weisbart, Chair
International Education

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on International Education reviewed the Systemwide Review of the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality at their April 4, 2024, meeting, and believes it is a good draft that requires some updating and clarification. The committee would like to see the following added to the statement:

Omitted items:

We have instructional/institutions on campus to help with instructional modalities (XCITE).

We have teaching faculty whose research focuses on improving the practice of teaching.

On graduate and postgraduate education:

Training of postdoctoral scholars is a vital component of the university’s educational mission and social impact.

Graduate teaching experience is a vital component of the training of graduate scholars and enhances the quality of graduate education.

On UC Quality: Environment

What does diversity mean? Diversity is not defined and reduced to a slogan.

International students and faculty enhance the diversity of our environment at the UC, and their contributions and participation should be encouraged.

Providing students with education abroad opportunities is important for diversifying their educational experience.
May 03, 2024

TO:         Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
            Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM:      Wesley Leonard, Chair
            CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The CHASS Executive Committee reviewed and discussed the Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. The committee agrees with the proposal’s tenets about quality education, but wishes to call more attention to the resources that are essential toward this end.

The proposal correctly notes that “[t]he quality of a UC education fundamentally derives from three key components: the training and expertise of UC faculty, the ability and engagement of UC students, and the rich research-based environment central to the UC system.” To realize these components, we believe that the creation of more Senate faculty jobs is indispensable. An increase in full-time faculty lines would provide fairer compensation and more time for teaching, which would improve the University’s quality of pedagogy.
TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair  
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Date: May 13, 2024

The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy reviewed the document “[Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality.” We wish to note the following with respect to the section on “UC Quality: Environment,” which discusses the following points about its value:

a. “Offers insights and experiences based in both research and practice, including engaging students with hands-on projects closely mentored by UC faculty.”

b. “Promoting a rich learning environment beyond the classroom, providing context for social interactions with others, potentially grounding and inspiring creative research activities, and other contributions to society, and creating relationships that can continue after graduation.”

However, the report does nothing to address the budget concerns, specifically how research opportunities are now limited following the increased wages for TAs, GSRs, and Postdoctoral fellows. In other words, faculty experience greater difficulty paying for these increased costs to fund students of awarded grants/contracts, which, in turn, limits both the number and duration of research mentorship opportunities faculty can offer—opportunities that are fundamental to training students. It is difficult to be optimistic that, moving forward, faculty will be able to meet these terms in the recent contracts, and, therefore, students will experience greater competition for mentorship amidst fewer opportunities to gain this valuable training without some intervention being undertaken at the university level to help offset these costs for individual faculty members.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Carpiano, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Professor of Public Policy
COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

April 16, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division

From: Vagelis Papalexakis, Chair
      Committee on University Extension

Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on University Extension reviewed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality by email and at their April 3 meeting. The Committee recommends that the statement be updated to include Systemwide Extension Centers as the same UC Quality is applicable to Extension Centers.
March 18, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Elodie Goodman
Chair, School of Business Executive Committee

Re: Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Please let this memo serve as an official notification that the School of Business Executive Committee supports quality education at the University of California and supports the proposed statement.
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

April 3, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
   Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Matt King, Chair
      Committee on Academic Freedom

Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on Academic Freedom reviewed the proposed Academic Senate statement on UC Quality at their April 3, 2024 meeting. The Committee recommends that references to the “most current research” in the document be replaced with the “most relevant research” as faculty have the academic freedom to use the most relevant research for instruction.
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

April 8, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
   Riverside Division

From: Ward Beyermann, Chair  
       Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the proposed Academic Senate statement on UC Quality at their April 5, 2024 meeting and voted to fully support the statement.
On UC Quality: Educational Offerings

For the "Foster Breadth of Perspective and Interactive Learning Communities" section under "Educational Quality", it appears beneficial to consider adding some descriptions about UC's efforts in enriching students' experiences and perspectives through international education, such as study abroad programs and other exchange programs within the US. Quality of outcomes seems to focus on procedural skills. Developing critical learning skills and critical analysis is an important part of an education. It is important for students to critically analyze information resources and be able to identify the legitimacy of sources.

There is no mention of the need to train students to use technology ethically. There is no metric for the impact of education on ethics more generally.

Graduate education is a vital component of the UC educational offering. The importance of graduate education needs to be highlighted, as well as the importance of the UC as a pipeline to graduate education.

The impact of campus residency requirements on the educational offerings of the UC must be more closely examined.

On student evaluations:

How do we treat student evaluations? It is good that they are currently being revamped. However, their current and historical execution is detrimental to teaching practice. Evaluations discourage instructors from developing novel teaching methods. It is important to acknowledge that student evaluations involve student satisfaction, but not learning outcomes. Teaching evaluations poorly indicate the quality of outcomes and have even been shown in studies to negatively correlate with the quality of outcomes. See:

April 19, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Weixin Yao, Chair  
Committee on Research

Re: 23-24. SR. Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The committee on research reviewed the statement and had no comments.
COMMITTEE ON COURSES

April 30, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division

From: James Flegal, Chair
        Committee on Courses

Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The Committee on Courses reviewed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality at their April 24, 2024 meeting. The Committee is generally supportive of the statement and continuing the quality environment for UC education to ensure that the UC System remains a premier national institution for public higher education.
The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. CFW is generally supportive of the proposed statement and recommends the following:

- Add a section on the UC’s commitment to providing a quality physical environment and infrastructure, e.g. adequate classrooms/labs/study spaces, clean and healthy campuses, and reasonably favorable faculty-to-student ratios—as all these directly impact educational quality.
Committee on Information Technology

March 22, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division

From: Ilya Brookwell, Chair
      Committee on Information Technology

Re: 23-24. CR. Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The committee reviewed the statement and had no comments.
May 3, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division

From: Curt Burgess, Chair
       Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication

Re: 23-24. SR. Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The committee reviewed the proposal and had no comments.
PLANNING AND BUDGET

April 23, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division

From: Reza Abbaschian, Chair
      Committee on Planning and Budget

RE: [Systemwide Review] Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

At our meeting on April 23, 2024, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality and had no comments.
4/11/24

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Division Chair of the UCR Division of the Academic Senate and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

From: Katherine Meltzoff, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee

Subject: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

Our committee did not have any feedback or comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Katherine Meltzoff
Faculty Executive Committee Chair
School of Education
University of California, Riverside
May 3, 2024

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division
FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine
SUBJECT: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Sang-Hee,

The SOM Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the proposal on the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. The Committee agreed that in the current evolving landscape this statement is useful to have. The Committee discussion was in favor of the proposal and had no additional comments.

Yours sincerely,

Marcus Kaul, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine