




December 18, 2018

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Paul Lyons, Chair   
Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Provost's Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education Report

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the Provost's Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education at their December 7, 2018 meeting and noted several significant concerns with the report, including both the methodology and the recommendations reflected in the document. The Committee noted concern that the report's conclusion appeared to reflect a presupposed outcome rather than a thorough, multifaceted review of online education nationally and at UCR.

In particular, the Committee was concerned that data and research were used loosely and, in some cases, inaccurately to support the report's conclusions. Data presented appeared at times open to interpretations other than that given, including instances where it appeared to support an opposite conclusion from the one presented. Additionally, the selection of comparable universities was a concern. The comparator campuses were not those against which UCR would routinely be compared, and the rationale for selection was not transparent. This would seem important as the report did not appear to include institutions that compared to UCR and the campus' student body, either statistically or aspirationally.

The Committee did not feel that the report's conclusions and recommendations were drawn in clear and logical progression from the analysis. For example, the rationale for adding 50 online courses a year or seeking to place 25% of courses entirely online was not adequately justified in the report. The Committee expressed a specific concern over any recommendation to prioritize "large and/or general education courses," in light of research suggesting that incoming students from disadvantaged backgrounds – a key demographic for such courses – are typically *least* well prepared to benefit from substantial online elements in their courses.

Lastly, the Committee noted concern that the report identified strengths and opportunities associated with online learning; however, it left unaddressed many of the challenges associated with online education, both nationally and specifically to UCR. Examples include intellectual property of the courses, student access to technology and potential barriers to success for students reflective of UCR's undergraduate population.

The Committee recommends that the Taskforce address these concerns in matter that ensures the process forward with online education at UCR is fair. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the

Senate be involved in this process at every stage because of the Senate's oversight over and responsibility for courses and curriculum.