



## PLANNING & BUDGET

January 16, 2019

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Katherine Kinney, Chair *Katherine Kinney*  
Committee on Planning and Budget

RE: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

The members of the Committee on Planning and Budget discussed the final report from the Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education in detail over two meetings. We are unanimous in feeling that this is not an adequate blueprint for guiding an expansion into online course and curriculum development. The committee believes that the Senate should be setting the standards for online education, which would guide future planning in this area.

Our first concern is the in-principle enthusiasm for on line courses that guides the report. Basic questions are never asked or considered:

Why should the campus move to offer a given percentage of courses online?

What defines a high-quality online course within the UCR curriculum?

How can specific courses or parts of the curriculum be identified in which online instruction would enable student access or more successfully deliver instruction over current practice?

There is no analysis of the scholarship evaluating online instruction. Student interest in online instruction, while relevant, is not sufficient justification for a major push to change how 25% of UCR courses are delivered. Information derived from other universities is primarily about how many classes were created in what time period, without an investigation of the impact on metrics

such as persistence, graduation rate, student engagement, etc. Comparing GPA in select courses offered traditionally and on line does not sufficiently speak to this. So too, there is surprising little information about on line course development within the UC system; the universities offered as exemplary in this area are not comparable to UCR.

How and why was the goal of 25% of courses set? Is it wise to work such a change based solely on incentives to individual faculty members, without consulting departments or colleges on where the need and potential impact of such classes would be potentially highest? The report refers to “bottleneck courses” without identifying any such and without a plan that would ensure the development of a quality online option where student access is identified to be blocked. We do not see the 25% of courses goal as reasonable or convincing. This seems one more case of moving quickly and on a scale that our current infrastructure cannot support.

We do not oppose the development of online courses per se, but we are alarmed by the lack of careful consideration of how to produce high-quality courses in high-impact areas with the best potential for supporting excellence in undergraduate education. A targeted development of needed courses of the highest possible quality would seem a more sound investment. More thoughtful, data-driven information than this report provides is essential before moving forward.