

April 15, 2021

TO: Jason Stajich, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Philip Brisk, Chair 
BCOE Executive Committee

RE: Formalization of Division Status for Undergraduate Education

Dear Jason,

The BCOE Executive Committee reviewed the 2nd round proposal on Formalization of Division Status for Undergraduate Education (UE) at UCR. The Committee's opinion on the proposal was mixed.

Those who supported the proposal cast it as an equity issue, given that many other UCs have UE Divisions.

Those who opposed the proposal pointed out that it exclusively talks about the past, and fails to convey a forward-looking vision for improved academic support services. Their opinion was that doing a good job for the past 15 years does not justify the formalization of Division status. They felt that the proposal lacked a vision under which Division would enable tangible improvement in the student experience at UCR. The proposal lacks clear and measurable success metrics and a continuous improvement process to facilitate appropriate intervention in the unfortunate event that the Division fails to achieve them.

Several Committee members expressed concern that a likely outcome would be needless growth and bureaucracy and unknown budgetary consequences, even if they are not the intent of the proposal, and even though the proposal states otherwise. Several Committee members noted that the proposed UE Division Executive Committee would create additional service work for Senate Faculty in other Colleges, whose time might be better allocated elsewhere.

The Committee recognizes that housing a small number of Senate Faculty within an administrative and service-oriented unit is awkward, and those Senate Faculty would likely benefit from being in a Division. At the same time, the Committee expressed concern that the proposed Department of University Writing would engage exclusively in teaching without contributing to scholarship or creative activity.