

January 29, 2021

TO: Jason Stajich, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Philip Brisk, Chair 
BCOE Executive Committee

RE: Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) Review

Dear Jason,

The BCOE Executive Committee reviewed the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI) Review. The Committee is supportive of the portions of the Recommendations for a Future State that seek to streamline the ILTI program; given low enrollment, eliminating the portion presently branded as UOnline which serves non-matriculated students, makes sense.

While the Committee supports the general sentiment of the ILTI program, the Review fails to provide convincing evidence that the ILTI Program has been successful as currently incarnated, and it is unclear if the proposed reorganization and rebranding will yield a substantive improvement.

A common theme for both the review of the ILTI program's performance to date and the Recommendations for a Future State aspects of the Review is a lack of clearly defined success criteria, mechanisms to assess success, and feedback processes to refine the program in the event that success is not achieved. The data that is presented focuses on courses offered, students enrolled, and student completion rates; the data is necessary but insufficient, and paints an incomplete picture of the ILTI program and its impact on the core teaching mission of the University:

- The proposal explicitly states that state funding was allocated to both the University of California and California State University Systems "as a means of increasing access and decreasing the time-to-graduate." Neither access nor impact on time-to-graduate were assessed in this Review, and the Recommendations for a Future State do not indicate any plan to assess them.
- The Review does not assess either the satisfaction of students enrolled in ILTI courses or the instructors who teach the courses; likewise, there is no plan to assess them in the future.
- The Review provides no mechanism or discussion about how quality control is maintained across multiple offerings of the same course by multiple instructors across multiple institutions.

In summary, the Committee feels that ILTI must develop a culture of assessment and accountability to positively impact the core teaching mission of the University, with outcomes shared with Senate leadership.

The Committee suggests that ILTI perform a comparison with comparable statewide systems that provide cross-campus enrollment and online instruction. The Arche program in the State of Georgia was suggested as a well-run system (<https://www.atlantahighered.org/>).

The Review did not address the funding structure, which makes it difficult to understand the impact on costs and revenue streams. Without loss of generality, if a UCR student enrolls in an ILTI course offered at UCD, presumably UCD bears the cost of course delivery; it is unclear if some fees associated with course enrollment are transferred out of UCR (presuming that the student would otherwise enroll in an equivalent course at UCR) to UCD and/or UCOP. If this is the case, ILTI could pit campuses against one another: each campus is incentivized to enroll as many students as possible from other UCs in the ILTI courses that they

teach, and to minimize the number of its own students that enroll in ILTI courses taught by other campuses. In short, it is not possible to assess the ability for ILTI to develop partnerships with UC campuses without a clear and detailed explanation of revenue streams.

The Committee also noted that there is a general lack of awareness of ILTI among students, faculty, advising staff, and other campus stakeholders. Just as an example, ILTI is not mentioned in the UCR General Catalog, and the section on cross-campus enrollment is brief. UCR is already understaffed, and faculty have a high service load, as they perform functions that are carried out by staff at other UCs that have more equitable funding. This puts the onus on already-stressed faculty and staff to raise awareness of the ILTI possibility, on advisors to guide students through the process of enrolling in ILTI courses, and on the faculty who must approve syllabi. This simply is not sustainable, especially in a time of deep budget cuts.

Lastly, the Committee would like to note that UCR has set up several Committees to review online education in the past. It would be useful to provide the Executive Committees with access to these reports to see how UCR's internal reviews compare to the ILTI Review. It would also be useful for the Systemwide Senate to review ILTI directly, similar to how UCR internally reviews its own Graduate Programs; a self-review of what is essentially a UCOP program by UCOP is not particularly convincing.

