



Academic Senate

October 23, 2020

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Alejandra Dubcovsky, Chair
Committee on Library and Information Technology

RE: Systemwide Review of the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force

The Committee on Library and Information Technology reviewed the Report of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force at their October 15, 2020 meeting and cited several concerns relating to the Committee's charge of Library and Information Technology.

The Committee had many concerns about the access and costs of online education. The report made clear, and our experiences during COVID online teaching has shown that students for whom access is an issue are also those students who would have the most difficulty with successful remote learning. In short, online education would exacerbate existing inequalities among students. Second, the move to online education requires varying levels of infrastructural reorganization, training, and course redesign; all this change would cost significant amounts of money. It was not at all clear if this proposed online instruction model would actually save the University any money.

Moreover, the report was not clear how the recommended percentages (1/3 physical classes and 2/3 online instruction) was established.

As for the Library and its ability to provide resources, the main concerns were about books and materials that instructors would need for online learning. Because of COVID both HathiTrust and the Internet Archive have provided UCR with access to online materials. But after COVID, UCR would not have access to these online materials, meaning that the library would be responsible for purchasing a great deal of books and other resources for online teaching. With impending budget cuts, it was unclear how the Library could shoulder those costs.

As for Technology, the report issued no minimum standard that was deemed appropriate for video production or course design. The potential cost, both from the production and technological training and support for course redesign were not properly addressed. The report also did not address how the disparate technological needs and problems of students would be met or funded.