



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION

September 4, 2026

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Agnieszka Jaworska, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education

Re: **[Systemwide Review] Proposed Accreditation Regulations**

While the Committee on Preparatory Education did not reach a quorum to issue a formal committee response on the Proposed Accreditation Regulations, input was gathered from two members. Their comments on the proposal are as follows:

For an institution where a large percentage of students require preparatory education, the proposal raises a fundamental question about how educational success will be defined.

Two models are at issue:

Model 1: A successful university admits students who are already prepared to succeed and moves them through a degree quickly and cheaply.

Model 2: A successful university admits students with substantially different levels of preparation and effectively educates them to the level required for the degree, even when doing so requires additional coursework, time, and institutional investment.

The proposal does not explicitly choose between these models. Its recognition of institutional mission and differentiated standards leaves room for the second. However, its emphasis on completion, economic return, cost, program length, and innovation creates pressure toward the first model unless an institution can make a strong evidence-based case for the second. The Department itself recognizes that new student-outcome standards could lead institutions to change or close programs that do not meet them (p. 53980).

For an institution with a large population requiring preparation, this would multiply the already existing pressure to reduce preparatory requirements, accelerate students into regular coursework, maximize transfer credit, or otherwise shorten the path to the degree—even where additional preparation is academically warranted. Considerable effort would be necessary to ensure that the accreditation framework recognizes the educational work required to bring students who enter at different levels of preparation to the same academic standard. UCR—or any institution with a very large population needing preparation—would need to establish, with evidence, that preparatory

education is an essential part of its educational mission, that it produces measurable gains in student achievement, and that the amount and form of preparation it provides are academically justified.