November 2, 2020

To: Shane White, Chair
        Academic Senate

From: Andrea Kasko, Chair
        Graduate Council

Re: Systemwide Senate Review - Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report

At its meeting on October 30, 2020, the Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the Online Undergraduate Degree Taskforce Report and offer the following for consideration:

Generally, members were not supportive of option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) which would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities. The Graduate Council would like to echo some of the concerns raised by other UCLA Academic Senate councils and committees regarding the potential erosion of the UC brand in moving forward with this option. Members would like to highlight that any erosion of the UC brand affects graduate students, even if it stems from undergraduate education initiatives, as graduate students serve as teaching assistants and may enroll in mixed-enrollment courses.

Members were generally supportive of option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) as it would open the door for innovation as members see a potential for online undergraduate education at the University of California in some form. Members agreed that the UC could learn and benefit from existing online graduate programs, their successes and failures, and what they have produced in their time. Members agreed that the UC system should continue to innovate with a focus on UC quality education. Members stated that it takes time to innovate, measure, and learn from the experience. With this in mind, the Graduate Council would recommend that time be dedicated to plan and create an infrastructure whereby this option could prove to be successful in the long-term.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the Graduate Council analyst, Estrella Arciba, at earciba@senate.ucla.edu.