January 26, 2021

Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: UCLA IT Assessment GOIT Executive Summary

Dear Chair White,

At its meeting on January 11, 2021, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) had an opportunity to review and discuss the IT Assessment GOIT Executive Summary. Members offered the following comments.

It would be beneficial to view the high-level budget before making an assessment. This would enable CPB to provide more meaningful feedback. Some members pointed out that given the many pressing issues that the university is facing due to COVID, this may not be the best time to work on this new and ambitious initiative. At the moment, there are too many adjustments happening to also add IT restructuring, especially without a full understanding of its cost. Perhaps reimagining the proposal to focus on ‘smaller,’ more attainable goals would be better, especially as a means for bolstering confidence in the plan.

Many noted that UCLA works so well because it is diverse and felt the report would benefit from some acknowledgement of this perspective. Members argued that there are benefits to having decentralized IT services in terms of the support offered to the consumers of those services, including greater responsiveness and local expertise.

A few members proposed carrying out a pilot trial within a smaller units or group of units, or within a particular vertical or service area. They argued some services are more likely to benefit from centralization or being cloud-based, while others that should remain local.

Other members questioned whether the proposal was targeted at certain units. Members noted that the Health Sciences (including Public Health and Dentistry) are not part of the proposed IT Strategic Partner function (slide 14). Why were these areas excluded? What is the purpose of restructuring if it would continue the fragmentation? What triggered this assessment?
Overall, members agreed that a one-size-fits-all approach would not be good for UCLA; many things, including IT, need to meet (or be customized to) the needs of each discipline. Similarly, carrying out this plan would be disruptive and expensive in a time of many changes and other pressing needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to review. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at groeling@comm.ucla.edu or via the Council’s analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Tim Groeling, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc:    Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
       Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
       April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
       Elizabeth Feller, Principal Policy Analyst, Council on Planning and Budget
       Members of the Council on Planning and Budget