April 13, 2021

To: Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Moreno Recommendations Implementation Committee (MRIC) Report

Dear Chair White:

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) has reviewed the Moreno Recommendations Implementation Committee (MRIC) Report and we concur with most of the findings laid out in that document. UCLA has made progress in acknowledging problems identified in the Moreno Report; however, the campus must do more to address issues of racial and gender equity than it has to date.

The conviction that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are critical to UCLA’s mission has gradually come to be shared by more and more members of our community, and it has led to a number of promising initiatives. However, one major, ongoing challenge identified in the MRIC Report involves the multiple intersecting and parallel lines of responsibility in the area of DEI across a wide range of campus entities, including the Academic Senate leadership and committees, the Faculty Equity Advisors, and the office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, not to mention individual Schools, Departments, and Programs. Staff, graduate student, and undergraduate student groups must be factored in as well. CODEI is well positioned to help foster the requisite collaborative relationships and to maintain lines of communication with all of the aforementioned entities. However, the capacity of CODEI to affect matters of policy has, to some extent, been limited by the fact that its role is primarily consultative. Accordingly, while it can produce recommendations and forward them to the appropriate body or individual, CODEI has found itself in largely a reactive posture. This situation may, in fact, be as it should be bureaucratically. However, it has become evident that the mission of CODEI will need regular clarification and reconceptualization as the DEI landscape at UCLA changes, particularly with regard to the creation of new administrative offices, committees, and faculty and staff positions related to the growing awareness of the importance of DEI issues.

Accordingly, CODEI will be undertaking an extensive evaluation of its current charge to determine what changes should be made to enhance its impact on campus. Areas of special interest include CODEI’s relationships with the Faculty Equity Advisors and with the Vice Chancellor for EDI. Greater interaction with other Academic Senate committees might also prove productive. However, we recognize that care must be taken not to encroach uninvited upon the areas of responsibilities of other Senate entities or to suggest that DEI activities are within the purview of CODEI alone. Indeed, all Senate committees must be engaged in the work of fostering DEI at UCLA. CODEI hopes to initiate reconsideration of its mission later this quarter and to continue focusing on the issue in the next academic year.
The MRIC report remarks that “there was no clear evidence of consistent coordination between what are essentially equivalent faculty Academic Senate committees at the University level—UCLA CODEI and the UC system level UCAADE” (page 36). The CODEI Chair sits on the UCAADE and participates in all of that body’s considerations of systemwide DEI policies and practices. We would point out that the UCAADE meetings in 2020-21 have been marked by an especially robust exchange of information among the campus representatives and by productive strategizing to advance DEI goals both systemwide and on individual campuses. As just one example, the current CODEI Chair has been in contact with the UCAADE representative from UC, Berkeley regarding how DEI issues are handled in academic unit reviews on each campus. Regardless of past practice, it is certain that such collaboration facilitated by UCAADE will likely only increase in the future and that it will inevitably have a positive impact on how CODEI engages systemwide DEI issues as they manifest locally at UCLA.

Another step that CODEI may take in the next academic year is to meet more frequently. The current schedule is proving inadequate to permit a full consideration of both the growing amount of business that CODEI is asked to take on and also the initiatives generated by CODEI itself, such as the recent consultations with Faculty Equity Advisors. (It is worth mentioning that UCAADE has proposed meeting more often as well and for precisely the same reasons.)

We appreciate being given the opportunity to offer these preliminary responses to the MRIC Report and we look forward to participating in further discussions regarding the recommendations presented in that document. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at yarborou@humnet.ucla.edu or the Interim Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Analyst, Taylor Lane Daymude at tlanedaymude@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Professor Richard Yarborough, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion