

# **Academic Senate Leadership Response to Undergraduate Students**

Updated February 25, 2022

Immediate Past Chair Shane White, Vice Chair / Chair-Elect Jessica Cattelino, and Executive Director April de Stefano found our February 16, 2022, meeting with undergraduate students in Murphy Hall to be productive and instructive. We were dismayed to learn that DSU student leaders were disrespected. We are sorry, and we commit to Academic Senate dialogue, rigorous examination, and deliberation on a range of issues concerning accessibility and instruction, moving forward. We also commit to more consistent and respectful engagement with student representatives to Academic Senate committees and councils. Whether or not we all reach precisely the same conclusions about the best path forward, we are eager to deeply examine and consider possible actions in light of lessons learned from the pandemic and our shared commitment to inclusive education as integral to academic excellence at UCLA.

## **(1) Flexibility in Instruction.**

The Academic Senate will undertake the following steps to address student concerns:

1. To discuss issues regarding flexibility in instruction, and to address Senate commitments and next steps, Academic Senate leadership and Academic Senate Executive Director agree to meet by the end of winter quarter, upon invitation by the USAC President, with the chairs of Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council, the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and the DSU leadership. (Winter 2022)
2. The Academic Senate chair will join the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in signing a BruinPost that, consistent with Academic Senate policy, endorses faculty use and sharing of recordings and/or livestreams for students who are absent for COVID-related reasons, affirms that posting videos or offering livestream can be a valuable addition to many courses, and supports faculty flexibility in reasonably addressing students' instructional needs. (Winter 2022)
3. Effectively immediately, the Academic Senate will amplify our advocacy for, and advisement to, Administration on classroom technology assessment and campus commitment to providing resources to meet those needs as well as resources to address digital divides. We will do the same with regard to resource commitments that aim to support students in attending in-person classes. (Winter 2022 and thereafter).
4. The Academic Senate commits, by the end of the Spring Quarter, to establish and issue a set of principles that will guide Academic Senate deliberation on the future of instruction beyond the pandemic. (Winter and Spring 2022)
5. The Academic Senate also commits by the end of the spring quarter to establish a process, based on both evidence and principles, that will result in a fuller understanding of the lessons learned from pandemic instruction and of how those could lead to policy

changes that will not only maintain but improve UCLA's academic excellence. We anticipate a process that will include informational, consultative, and deliberative components. (Winter and Spring 2022, to be followed by implementation in AY22-23 and possibly beyond)

6. During our monthly meetings with USAC Leadership, we will invite USAC to join the Academic Senate in calling for increased hiring of tenure-track faculty and reversal of the decline in faculty-to-student ratio, as a necessary condition for augmented instructional options that require more faculty labor. (Winter and Spring 2022)

## **(2) Student Representation on Academic Senate Committees**

1. The Academic Senate will update its materials and resources for the orientation of committee and council chairs as well as members, in order to improve their interactions with student representatives and increase the accountability of members to adhere to the Faculty Code of Conduct regarding appropriate behavior. We aim to create a more consistently respectful and collaborative relationship with student representatives and acknowledge the need to do so.
2. During our monthly meetings with the USAC President and the USAC Vice President for Academic Affairs, we have begun an on-going dialogue to understand student concerns about serving as representatives to Senate committees and councils, as well as ideas about ways to increase the attendance and engagement of USAC-appointed student representatives to Academic Senate committees and councils. (Winter and Spring 2022)
3. If requested by USAC, the Academic Senate will join in advocating for the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to provide additional support via SOLE for the selection, skills-building, onboarding, and engagement of USAC-appointed student representatives to UCLA Academic Senate committees and councils. (Winter and Spring 2022)
4. We will ask the USAC President and USAC Academic Affairs Commissioner to provide feedback on <https://www.senate.ucla.edu/about/senate-service#student-representatives> in order to improve our resources and onboarding materials for student representatives. Executive Director April de Stefano will work with USAC Leadership and Academic Senate staff to make these improvements. (Spring and Summer 2022)
5. We will offer dedicated onboarding meetings between the USAC-appointed student representative to each Academic Senate committee and council and that committee's/council's Chair and Analyst. We will also offer an orientation meeting for all new student representatives. (Summer and Fall 2022)
6. Executive Director de Stefano will join USAC Leadership and the USAC advisors to discuss ways to increase the capacity of USAC-appointed student representatives to

Academic Senate committees and councils to participate and engage most effectively.  
(Summer and Fall 2022)

### **(3) Advocacy Regarding Attendance Requirements and Faculty Development**

1. Academic Senate leadership and the Senate Executive Director agree to meet to discuss attendance requirements by the end of winter quarter, upon invitation by the USAC President, with the chairs of Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council, the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and the DSU leadership. This meeting would be in conjunction with the one mentioned in item 1.1 above.
2. Beginning in spring quarter, the Academic Senate will amplify our advocacy for, and advisement to, Administration efforts and resource commitments to facilitate students' attendance in in-person classes.
3. The Academic Senate will advocate with Administration for a working group to address faculty development in the area of pedagogy and accessibility, in order to provide additional resources and support to instructors. Academic Senate leadership recognize the need for more dissemination to faculty of information about accessibility and instruction, as well as the need for, to varying degrees across the campus, a cultural shift when it comes to accessibility and instruction.

### **(4) The Role of Academic Freedom in Teaching and Learning**

1. To discuss the role of academic freedom in teaching and learning, the Academic Senate leadership and Executive Director agree to meet by Week 3 of spring quarter with the chairs of Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council, the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the USAC President and Academic Affairs Commissioner, and DSU leadership.
2. The Academic Senate leadership will provide a response to the demand by DSU leadership for citations to policy concerning academic freedom and instruction and for the policy rationale for not mandating universal dual modality. (By February 28, 2022)
3. The UCLA divisional Academic Senate leadership has informed the systemwide Academic Council about student demands, in light of the systemwide nature of academic freedom policies and discussions, and commits to informing USAC and DSU leaders of systemwide developments in this area.

### **Addendum:**

As discussed in our meeting, the Academic Senate offers defining terms for instructional modalities.

Different teaching modalities are defined in the Graduate Council document on UCLA Graduate Distance Education Course Approval Policy <https://ucla.app.box.com/v/Graduate-Distance-Education> and listed below for easy reference:

1. **In-person (Classroom based courses)** are those in which 100% of the primary offering time occurs in-person, meaning all students and instructors are physically in the same location. In-person courses require a physical classroom.
2. **Distance education courses** are those in which (i) less than 100% of the primary offering time occurs in person; (ii) meet UCLA's high standards mentioned above; and (iii) employ (primarily or exclusively) technologically mediated formats. Four types of distance education courses may be offered provided the respective conditions are satisfied.
  - a) **Fully Online Courses.** Consist only of online contact hours (e.g., online primary offerings or discussion sections, without the option for classroom attendance) and offer at least 1 hour of weekly synchronous interaction with the instructor of record. Most or all the course content is designed intentionally for digital delivery and encompasses the thoughtful design of instruction, assignments, engagements, and interactions that promote successful learning in a fully online environment.
  - b) **Remote Courses.** Course content is delivered remotely without being intentionally designed for a fully online course. All primary offerings shall be synchronous (e.g., a 4-unit course must have at least 3 hours of synchronous instructor-student interaction per week) and have the technology to enable instructor-student interaction. The required amount of remote synchronous contact does not include office hours, TA-led secondary sections, or time spent in exams.
  - c) **Hybrid Courses** are a non-trivial combination of (i) in-person, (ii) online, and/or (iii) remote primary offerings. Hybrid instructors consciously tailor learning activities to the appropriate content. At least 50% of the primary offerings must have synchronous instructor-student interaction.
  - d) **Hy-Flex Courses [now more commonly described at UCLA as "dual modality"]** meet simultaneously in both online and non-remote environments.

Remote students watch a live-stream of the physical class, participating through facilitators, chat, video, and audio. Before considering such courses, instructors must develop a detailed plan specifying the existence of, or investment in, significant technological resources to ensure communication between students attending remotely and the instructor is as rich as that of physical participants. All primary offerings shall be synchronous (e.g., a 4-unit course must have at least 3 hours of synchronous instructor-student interaction per week). Such courses require a plan to monitor that online learners do not have trouble hearing, and participating fully in class.
3. **Synchronous.** Synchronous (learning) means synchronous in time so that students and instructors interact simultaneously. Explicitly, faculty and students participate

simultaneously in learning activities in face-to-face classrooms or via a video conferencing platform such as Zoom. In-person classes are by their nature synchronous.

4. **Asynchronous.** Asynchronous (learning) means asynchronous in time so that students' learning can occur at different times and is particular to each student. Students engage in course content at times that best fit their schedules.
5. **Physical.** Physical means that instructor and students are in the physical presence of each other.
6. **Remote.** Remote means that the instructor and student are not in the physical presence of each other.