

November 30, 2023

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair  
Academic Senate

Re: **Campus PreK-12 Affordability and Accessibility for Faculty**

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its meeting on November 7, 2023, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) discussed the letter dated October 24, 2023, from the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Hunt in response to the Campus PreK-12 Affordability and Accessibility for Faculty Report and Recommendation.

In response to longstanding concerns from faculty, the FWC worked for over a year to compile the “Campus PreK-12 Affordability and Accessibility Report”. We assessed data provided by the UCLA PreK-12 schools to determine whether faculty are able to access the schools and/or afford them adequately. In brief, our analyses found that UCLA-affiliated families are significantly underrepresented at the elementary and middle/high school levels. In addition, the proportion of faculty families at the schools is notably overrepresented by those affiliated with the Professional Schools, where salaries are generally higher. **Together, these findings raise concerns that most UCLA faculty either cannot access the schools or afford them.**

This report was forwarded to EVCP Hunt on June 23, 2023. A response was received on October 24, 2023, and reviewed by the FWC at its November 7, 2023 meeting. While the FWC appreciates the time taken to prepare this letter, it was disappointing to find that none of our recommendations were specifically addressed despite ample documentation of the issues. Moreover, the response raised additional pressing questions about mission drift and the fundamental principle of shared governance of campus resources.

The FWC is now requesting that the Executive Board seek further clarification on the following issues raised in the letter:

1. *The response sidestepped addressing any original concerns/recommendations, suggesting that the FWC has neither the authority nor expertise to opine on matters about UCLA PreK-12 education.*

Authority: The FWC has the authority to opine on issues that affect the welfare of the faculty. Concerns about the inability of many UCLA faculty to access or afford the UCLA PreK-12 schools have been repeatedly brought to the attention of the FWC. First, this is a work-life balance concern, especially for junior faculty who can no longer afford to live close to campus yet need to be close to their children’s schools. Second, this is a retention/recruitment concern, as many departments struggle to recruit faculty in the face of rising costs in Los Angeles. Access to affordable, high-quality PreK-12 education at UCLA would mitigate both concerns.

Expertise: Members of the FWC performed the data analysis in the “Campus PreK-12 Affordability and Accessibility Report,” taking time and considerable care to remain in our area of jurisdiction, i.e., the welfare concerns of the faculty. We did not weigh in on curricula matters, etc., which would require an early education specialist. Nonetheless, we urge SEIS to support Academic Senate service and send faculty members to the FWC. We would appreciate their service.

**The FWC requests a point-by-point response from EVCP Hunt to our original recommendations, which are reattached as an appendix to this memo.**

2. *How do the UCLA PreK-12 schools **currently** serve the academic mission of UCLA?*

The FWC was surprised by the argument presented in EVCP Hunt’s letter that UCLA PreK-12 schools do not exist as a service to the university but rather for “*the promotion of learning.*” This is surely not the case. First, PreK-12 education is not - and has never been - part of the teaching mission of UCLA, this is the mission of LAUSD and other local school districts. Second, even if it was, the FWC does not think that running expensive private schools that are unaffordable to most faculty and the majority of LA residents would be an appropriate representation of our values as a public institution. Rather, the schools must exist to fulfill the research, teaching, or service missions at UCLA; to state otherwise raises serious concerns about mission drift.

**Thus, the FWC requests an independent assessment, i.e., not from SEIS leadership, of how the two UCLA PreK-12 schools are fulfilling UCLA’s academic mission.** This assessment may require the formation of a committee to study the issues. Our concerns are as follows:

UCLA Lab School: While the UCLA Lab School was indeed established as a place for research into education methods, minimal research is **currently** conducted there. The research director’s office has long been closed, and the FWC has been unable to find evidence that the school is used in a substantive way to teach educational methods to UCLA undergraduates. While the EVC provided links to “current research,” these projects are not dated, there is no published work listed since 2017, and a number of the faculty/Pis who listed for the projects are, in fact, no longer at UCLA. The FWC understands that the teaching/research mission of SEIS is now fulfilled by the “UCLA Community School” in Koreatown.

**Thus, the FWC requests an explanation of the purpose currently served by the Lab School for UCLA.** The FWC feels the justification that “teaching elementary school age children is important” is not sufficient, especially given the very high socioeconomic status of the many non-UCLA affiliated families at the school. The FWC notes the long-standing concern that the school is mainly used for **fundraising for SEIS**. The argument presented in the EVC response that “*The dean has not received philanthropic support from any UCLA University Schools Consortium family...*” is undercut by the fact that the Dean themselves sits in the Wasserman Chair, which was endowed by a UCLA Lab School family.

In light of all these concerns, the FWC recommends that the Lab School should be repurposed as an elementary school that serves the needs of the UCLA community.

Geffen Academy: The Geffen Academy was expressly founded as a college preparatory middle/high school to aid in **the retention and recruitment of faculty**, with an intake of ~50% UCLA affiliated families. It was never intended for teacher training or educational research, and indeed is not used as such. It is thus very concerning to the FWC that 1) the retention/recruitment objective was removed from Geffen's mission statement in 2019, 2) the school has never reached 50% UCLA families, and 3) the school is now under the aegis of SEIS, which apparently has no interest in running the school as a necessary service to UCLA.

The FWC requests **an explanation of why the recruitment/retention mission was removed and what purpose is currently served by the Geffen Academy for UCLA's mission.** The FWC further requests to see **the Geffen gift agreement** to assess whether the current situation negates the agreement with David Geffen.

It is of central importance to the FWC that the Geffen Academy return to its intended mission of serving the needs of the faculty and the UCLA community.

3. *The response suggested that the Academic Senate does not have the authority to ask questions about the governance structure of the UCLA PreK-12 schools.*

The FWC was additionally surprised to read that the EVC considers *"the transfer of authority and governance structure of the University Schools Consortium is not within the scope or purview of the Academic Senate."* This statement is manifestly incorrect and represents a potentially concerning erosion of our fundamental principles of shared governance. The Academic Senate, and by extension, the FWC, was established in 1898 to have an advisory role over many University concerns, including 1) budgetary matters, 2) the appointment and responsibilities of Deans, and 3) academic personnel actions.

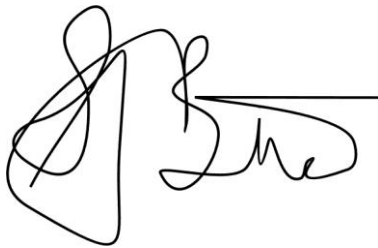
The operation of the UCLA PreK-12 schools represents a significant investment of financial resources critical to the success/happiness of many Academic Senate members, and UCLA PreK-12 school teachers now go through the same academic evaluation process that university faculty do. Requesting information about the changing governance of the schools and the rationale for their oversight by the SEIS Dean is thus within the purview of the Academic Senate. Given the deep concern in the FWC that instability in the leadership of the schools is affecting both access and the cost of the schools for faculty, we request transparency about why certain decisions have been made and that, moving forward, the Academic Senate is consulted about further proposed changes in the governance of the schools.

Specifically, the FWC would like clarification about **why oversight of the operations of the Geffen Academy has been moved from the jurisdiction of the AVC's office to now report directly to SEIS**, as detailed in the addendum questions below. If the Geffen Academy exists to serve the university as was initially conceived, and was never intended to be a teaching resource, it is unclear why SEIS is considered to be an acceptable steward. The analogy that the Law School does not handle the legal affairs of the university remains an apt one. Further, **why has the Superintendent of Schools position been allowed to lapse, and further expense been incurred by bringing in an educational consultancy company (West Ed) to reorganize the schools?** The FWC requests a copy of the West Ed report.

Finally, the FWC requests **an in-person meeting with the EVCP Hunt**, members of the Executive Board, and senior faculty who have a long-standing insight into the UCLA PreK-12 school system to address these serious concerns directly. Since many of the concerns are about the suitability of SEIS as a steward for the school, concerns that are further illustrated by the tone and content of the EVC's response, members of SEIS should not be present for this first meeting to ensure a candid and collegial discussion.

FWC would like to thank the Executive Board for reviewing our concerns and is seeking further clarification on the issues raised. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [butlersj@ucla.edu](mailto:butlersj@ucla.edu) or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at [rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu](mailto:rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Butler', with a stylized, looped initial 'S' and a horizontal line extending from the end.

Samantha Butler, Chair  
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect, Academic Senate  
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Faculty Welfare Committee  
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee

Encl:

## Appendix

### Original recommendations:

UCLA is urged to dedicate the resources needed for the UCLA PreK - 12 Programs & Schools system to reduce the costs of tuition for UCLA faculty children. In turn, the UCLA PreK - 12 Programs & Schools system must fulfill its commitment to enrolling faculty children at the stated/promised levels.

We propose that:

1. UCLA must re-assess its funding support to the UCLA Schools system. A first step towards this goal would be for the EVC **to form a committee to assess first whether the UCLA PreK - 12 Programs & Schools system is currently meeting UCLA's needs and second, how to make PreK – 12 education more affordable for faculty families and the UCLA community.**
2. The support provided by the Deans to the schools should offset the tuition for the specific faculty member in their unit.
3. The UCLA Lab School and Geffen Academy should recruit UCLA-affiliated families at their stated parameters (33%, 50%). Further data is needed to assess how the numbers of faculty families have fluctuated over time at the UCLA Lab School, as well as the number of faculty children a) rejected from either school, b) rejected offers from either school, and c) the reasons for their rejection. Faculty representation should be included on the admissions committees of both these schools.
4. To further study how the schools can be reconfigured to better serve the university, the Academic Senate should ask to see the gift agreement for the Geffen Academy.

Identifying the means to support the education of faculty children will be central to all of the ongoing efforts to recruit and retain faculty, such as the recently announced “Faculty Forward Initiative”, which seeks to prioritize faculty who have traditionally been underrepresented in academia.

### Addendum recommendations:

1. *The executive committee asks the EVC/VC to return to the original reporting structure for the Superintendent of Schools, i.e., that they report to the AVC, and the school principals return to reporting to the Superintendent.*

For [the Superintendent] to be effective in [their] oversight role, [they] **must** have a central position in the university, only possible from the AVC office. Thus, the FWC requests that [the position is] restored to [the] previous reporting structure to AVC Beck to preserve the independence of [their] role. Additionally, the reporting structure whereby the principals of the different schools report directly to the Superintendent **must** also be restored to preserve some measure of university oversight of these valuable community resources.

2. *The executive committee report to the EVC/VC, the FWC's concerned that SEIS should not be given oversight of the entire PreK-12 Schools System.*

The FWC is concerned that the SEIS has a) been an unreliable steward of the UCLA Lab School, and b) an educational mission which is in conflict with the Geffen Academy, a private college preparatory school intended to support the UCLA mission of retaining and recruiting faculty. The FWC thus requests that SEIS should not be given the administration of the Geffen Academy, as was originally intended.

3. *The executive committee seeks clarification from the EVC/VC on the role of SEIS with respect to the Schools System.*

We further request more information about a) why the reporting structure of the Geffen Academy and the Superintendent of Schools was changed, without consultation with the UCLA community, and b) what guardrails are in place to preserve the Geffen Academy's specific mission of educating faculty children.