March 21, 2024

To:        Andrea Kasko, Chair, Academic Senate

From:      Catherine Sugar, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Re:        Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

At its meeting on March 15, 2024, the Undergraduate Council (UgC) reviewed the report by the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group.

Overall, the Council commends the Working Group’s efforts to promote accessible, inclusive instruction at UCLA. While supportive of the report, UgC also encourages the Working Group to further consider how the recommended strategies for enhancing accessibility (e.g., investment in multiple classroom modalities) may impact faculty in significant ways. Members are pleased that the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) plans to incentivize faculty engagement with existing training opportunities, but the benefits of expanded involvement must be weighed against ever-increasing demands on faculty labor and time. Positive incentives for faculty must be adequately resourced and recognized in the academic personnel review process. The Council also notes that instructors themselves may require accommodations for various reasons, raising complex questions about how to reconcile such needs with the necessity to accommodate students and create accessible learning environments.

The Council echoes comments from the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy about the importance of including student perspectives in further planning and assessment. In this spirit, UgC’s undergraduate student representatives appreciate the recommendation to increase opportunities for new and continuing faculty to engage with accessibility training. Members and student representatives also emphasize the need for long-term investment in technology and staffing, particularly in collaboration with CAE, in order to support instructors in providing an accessible education for all UCLA students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share comments. If you have any questions, please contact me via the Undergraduate Council analyst, Julia Nelsen, at jnelsen@senate.ucla.edu.

cc:        Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
           Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
           April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
           Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate