April 3, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its March 5, 2024, meeting, The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) reviewed the Accessibility and Instruction Working Group Report. Member offered the following comments and recommendations.

While the FWC is highly supportive of the goal of improving accessibility for disabled students, the FWC was puzzled by the vague and generic nature of this report. Specifically, the FWC found the memo to be lacking key details about the educational experience for disabled students at UCLA, such as the number of students who need additional accommodations/accessibility, their current challenges with navigating campus life, and the major existing issues with accessibility that need to be resolved for all students at UCLA to thrive. It was unclear whether any students were consulted in preparing this report.

The FWC further notes:

1. **Our strong support for CAE.** FWC members noted that CAE is an excellent resource, performing an essential service by mediating/deciding disabled students’ needs rather than leaving it to individual faculty to decide. By making these decisions, CAE protects both students and faculty from being discriminated against. The FWC strongly supports additional funds being made available to more fully resource CAE, such as hiring additional case managers.

2. **Faculty need further clarification about in-person instruction.** The report makes vague suggestions that courses should “enhance accessibility” and “invest in multimodalities” without reflecting the reality that not all instruction is lecture-based. For example, lab classes are not mentioned, which often must be done in person, and have substantial “hands on” components. More thought and specifics are required to guide faculty about improving accessibility across the full range of in person instruction at UCLA.

We thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at butlersj@ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,
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