April 10, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, Academic Senate
From: Catherine Sugar, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Re: Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units

The Undergraduate Council independently reviewed the Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units.

Among those that responded, some members appreciated that the new policy clarifies what types of statements are covered and that it carefully excludes individual faculty, while others remain concerned about many of the issues raised in the prior version of the policy. With specific regard to the mission of the Undergraduate Council, some also commented that the policy could still run afoul of research and educational content, including courses or syllabi, with topics that may be considered controversial. More broadly, members note that without further justification, the need for a policy prohibiting political statements on departmental websites remains unclear, and that limiting speech tends to be a slippery slope.

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

cc: Kathy 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