April 26, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Final Report: University of California Systemwide Advisory Workgroup on Students with Disabilities

At its meeting on April 9, 2024, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussed the Final Report by the University of California Systemwide Advisory Workgroup on Students with Disabilities.

Members identified that the report is helpful in identifying various areas of concern but could not ignore that much of the information in this report, such as the time to degree, did not include information on graduate students. This presented a large concern for members, highlighting that the University may not include graduate students in disability considerations and decisions are made that will affect graduate students without their consideration. This is also reflected through the strong retention programs available at the undergraduate level, that do not exist at the graduate level. This is an issue with a much larger magnitude than is being recognized, and should be considered with a sense of urgency to ensure that student needs are being met at all levels.

Members also felt the report showed a need for a sense of belonging by students with disabilities. The committee agreed that an improvement in belongingness would also provide positive results when looking at outcomes, retention, and student success.

Committee members agreed that faculty could assist in this effort if they received more support, materials, and resources that help them identify what can be done to improve the UCLA experience for all students.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (thall@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Theodore Hall, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
    Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
    Lilia Valdez, Senior Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
    Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion