May 1, 2024

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

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

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its April 2, 2024, meeting, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) discussed the letter from Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Darnell Hunt dated March 28 in response to the Campus PreK-12 Affordability and Accessibility for Faculty Report.

The FWC reviewed the most recent letter from EVC/P Hunt and found that, while the tone was significantly improved from the first letter, it was still dismissive in substance. The response again sidestepped, providing the information that the FWC has repeatedly requested and did not respond substantively to the FWC’s recommendations or concerns.

The issue of accessibility/affordability in the UCLA Schools system becomes more pressing every year as Los Angeles becomes increasingly unaffordable to faculty. The rising cost of daycares/schools is unsustainable. As discussed in a recent Executive Board meeting, the daycare fees have risen to $36,000/year per infant, while UCLA claims the actual cost is even higher (~$53,000/year in 2022). Moreover, the FWC’s concerns about SEIS stewardship have only deepened since our December 2023 letter, given the new crisis of leadership that has recently engulfed the Krieger Center. Affected SEIS faculty, in particular, face a challenging conflict of interest as they navigate the consequences of the abuse scandal for their families: their Dean is also responsible for the oversight of their children’s daycare. It again speaks to the importance of having an independent, competent leadership with the necessary professional expertise in PreK-12 school management.

Given the extended timeline that EVC/P Hunt has repeatedly taken to respond to the FWC’s requests for information and that our considerable efforts have so far had minimal effect, despite the seriousness of the problem, the FWC no longer considers it effective to respond in a point-by-point manner to EVC/P Hunt. The FWC also has concerns about whether arguments are being made to us in good faith since we have been unable to find any notes suggesting that either EVC/P Carter or Waugh met with the FWC in the last six years on this issue, as suggested in the most recent response.

The FWC is thus requesting that the Executive Board form an Ad hoc School Committee to permit the Academic Senate to study further the oversight and governance of the UCLA Schools system and the cost-effectiveness of the schools and assess whether they are fulfilling our academic mission in their current form. We hope this committee will be able to make better headway in understanding the different issues facing the UCLA Schools system and draw up a set of recommendations to help faculty families that the administration takes more seriously.
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