May 2, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
    UCLA Academic Senate

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

Dear Chair Kasko,

Members of the Committee on Academic Freedom independently reviewed the Final Report of the University of California Systemwide Advisory Workgroup on Students with Disabilities.

Of the members who responded, one member acknowledged that while the report has many useful ideas, the major conclusion that the University develop a culture in which the goal is to have disabled students feel comfortable on campus, navigate each campus without limitation, and have in each classroom whatever is necessary to accommodate every type of disability would be difficult to accomplish. Another member shared that though theoretically a good idea to change the UC campuses so that everyone feels included, this action should be well planned as it would be a permanent change at a large cost.

A member also identified that there did not appear to be a section devoted to determining what constitutes a disability requiring university assistance. The member stated that the best part of the report involves identifying and accounting for all the disability provisions currently available, the quality of their application, and the effectiveness of current funding to improve access and provision of information on a regular basis.

Another member highlighted that there should be guard rails when addressing the issue of recorded classes as an accommodation, as this could become an issue for both professors and students if these course recordings were released.

Members also highlighted that the University should utilize the resources that are available to empower and assist the current resources in place for students. There is a benefit in strengthening existing services versus creating additional costs that would be a distraction from the work that is currently taking place.

We appreciate the Executive Board’s continued effort on this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at barry.oneill@polisci.ucla.edu or committee analyst Lilia Valdez at lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Barry O’Neill, Chair
Committee on Academic Freedom

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 Academic Freedom