

January 15, 2026

Julio Frenk  
UCLA Chancellor

Darnell Hunt  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP)

Re: Academic Senate's Role in Evaluating Academic Programs

Dear Chancellor Frenk and EVCP Hunt,

On multiple occasions recently, you have asked the Academic Senate Leadership to provide guidance on the evaluation of academic programs, including EVCP Hunt's [letter](#) dated October 7, 2025. Often you use the term "selective preeminence" as shorthand to describe your goal of strategically prioritizing programs based on metrics aimed to assess their value. We write this letter to reiterate that we do not need to start from zero in establishing a framework for meaningful academic planning; we should leverage the work that has already been done here and elsewhere.

The Executive Board discussed your request at its January 15, 2026, meeting and endorsed this letter.

First, we affirm unequivocally that the Academic Senate has authority over the creation, modification, and discontinuation of all academic degree programs. All changes to academic programs require the review and approval of the divisional, and sometimes, systemwide Senate. As part of this duty, the Los Angeles Division of the Academic Senate conducts repeated, consistent and thorough academic program reviews that involve extensive data collection and analysis, self-reviews, site visits and reports by internal and external reviewers, sets of recommendations, and one-year check-ins on the report recommendations. The EVCP as well as respective Deans and other senior administrative leaders participate in exit interviews at the site visits; the EVCP receives a copy of each final report. When change is needed, these reports describe milestones and the Senate monitors progress to ensure compliance.

Second, we affirm the principle that decisions to address the current campus budget deficit must first and foremost aim to reduce net budgets in all central administrative units (including your offices) and increase revenue in all auxiliary units. This principle and position have been consistently conveyed to you in writing and verbally on many occasions (see [here](#) and [here](#)) over the past year. The current campus budget deficit is largely due to poor management of campus fiscal resources, and less due to crisis or disruption. The Senate reviews have confirmed the quality of all academic programs. In addition, the reputation of UCLA's academic programs is outstanding, as one might expect from an institution that has been repeatedly ranked as America's #1 public university. As a result, we strongly believe that an attempt to solve our budget deficit by targeting "poorly performing" academic programs will fail on two counts: first, because it will not address the major underlying causes of our present

deficit, and second, because it will not find suitably deserving targets for reduction among our existing programs.

Third, we acknowledge that you and the school/division deans already make value judgements about academic degree programs when you make funding decisions about faculty hiring and retention, graduate student support, and other resource allocations. Due to a lack of campuswide academic planning, it appears that most decisions about funding academic programs occur within a school/division rather than holistically across the entire campus. Developing a long-term comprehensive academic plan at UCLA should be a high priority.

Finally, we believe the current crisis represents an opportunity to address inequities across units and use a data-driven approach to guide future allocation decisions. Models that consider numbers of students, educational costs, and or other metrics, such as that used by UC Irvine ([link](#)) or a modification of the Bruin Budget Model, are to be lauded for transparent fairness. While the systemwide “re-benching” process was painful for UCLA in particular, it was generally considered to be a successful mechanism for systematically addressing longstanding inequities in funding per student across UC campuses. Because the process was [transparent, principled, and developed after deep and ongoing consultation with stakeholders](#), even campuses like UCLA that did not benefit from increased funding generally supported the overall goals and implementation.

In summary, the Executive Board affirms the quality and value of our academic degree programs, recommends that the budget deficit be addressed through cuts to non-academic programs and adding new revenue sources in auxiliaries, and that funding decisions about academic degree programs are transparent, fair, and maintain the academic excellence of UCLA.

Sincerely,  
Megan McEvoy  
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate  
Kathy Bawn, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate  
Tim Groeling, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate  
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the EVCP, UCLA  
Julie Sina, Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, UCLA