Executive Board

UCLAAD Report

Table of Contents

Exec Divisional Response - 2026 11 EB to Comms re UCLAAD Final Report 1
Exec Divisional Response - 2026-10-22 EB to Admin re UCLAAD Final Report 2
Exec 2026-10 UCLAAD Final Report 3
---A. Principles for Adaptation to Disruption 4
---B. Preparing for Resilience 5
---C. Campus Needs during Acute Disruption 7
---D. Adapting to Long-term Disruption 9
---E. Responding to Current Crises: Financial and Other 10
---F. Responsibility for Protecting the Academic Mission 12
---G. Conclusion 13

Generated 11/7/2026 11:12 AM

UCLA Academic Senate
Executive Board

November 2, 2026

To: Senate Committees and Councils

From: Tim Groeling, UCLA Academic Senate Chair

Re: Final Report of the UCLA Academic Senate's Task Force on UCLA Adaptation to Disruption (UCLAAD)

At the October 22, 2026, meeting of the Executive Board (EB), members reviewed the attached report from the UCLA Academic Senate's Task Force on UCLA Adaptation to Disruption (UCLAAD). EB members voted unanimously in favor of a motion to endorse this report.

The Executive Board encourages all Senate committees and councils to review the report and consider whether any of the recommendations fall under their purview.

Encl.

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Catherine Sugar, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate

UCLA Academic Senate
Executive Board

October 27, 2026

Julio Frenk, Chancellor, UCLA

Darnell Hunt, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP)

Re: Final Report of the UCLA Academic Senate's Task Force on UCLA Adaptation to Disruption (UCLAAD)

Dear Chancellor Frenk and EVCP Hunt,

At the October 22, 2026, meeting of the Executive Board (EB), members reviewed the attached report from the UCLA Academic Senate's Task Force on UCLA Adaptation to Disruption (UCLAAD).

EB members voted unanimously in favor of a motion to endorse this report.

EB welcomes a response within 60 calendar days that includes your next steps to consider and implement the recommendations in this report.

Sincerely,

Tim Groeling
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Samantha Luu, Executive Assistant to the EVCP
Megan McEvoy, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the EVCP, UCLA
Julie Sina, Chief of Staff to the Chancellor
Catherine Sugar, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate

Final Report of the UCLA Academic Senate's Task Force on UCLA Adaptation to Disruption (UCLAAD)

October 2026

Introduction

UCLA's distinction has long resided in the intersection of its nature as a public university, the centrality of its research mission, and its long-standing and well-developed system of shared governance. Unfortunately, external and internal forces have placed these fundamental characteristics under attack for some time now. At the present moment, transformations in federal policy and practice threaten the very existence of the research enterprise, as funding for disfavored topics shrinks while federal granting agencies are placed under new controls and threatened with austerity. The impact of this daunting external threat has been magnified by internal challenges including a structural budget deficit and deficit abatement strategies that have de-prioritized the academic mission and undermined our foundation of shared governance.

These challenges remind us that the possibility of disruption is ever present. This fact should not be seen as a reason to panic, but rather a reason to actively prepare by drawing upon a range of intellectual, scholarly, institutional, and professional knowledge in a structured setting of open and shared governance. The universe of possible disruptions is large – too large for this report to feasibly address all particular threat scenarios. Rather, we propose a set of principles and practices to guide preparation for and adaptation to whatever disruptions may arise.

Recent disruptions have also reminded us of the importance of clearly articulated principles of shared governance to guide decision making in times of disruption. We have seen how quickly shared governance and concern for the academic mission can be sidelined, leaving academic units to fend for themselves without adequate communication and support from university administration. The result is a university damaged in many ways.[1] This document's principles offer a path toward restoring trust and re-centering the academic mission.

Disruption brings tremendous uncertainty. How long will the disruption last? How big and/or widespread will it be? How seriously will it challenge the University's ability to fulfill its academic mission? Effectively responding to disruption requires tradeoffs among different campus constituents, both in terms of roles (faculty, administrators, staff, students, others) and units (schools, departments, administrative units). Disruption may require difficult decisions about the use of resources (money, people), a challenge that draws attention to the importance of responding based on clear principles.

[1] For documentation of recent issues, see Senate correspondence from Fall 2025, Spring 2025, as well as the Legislative Assembly's Resolution on Shared Governance, Senate Consultation, and Administrative Accountability.

DMS 3

We begin in the section below with a set of such principles that derive from the University's core mission. These principles should guide decisions in times of normalcy as well as disruption. In recognition that principles only matter if they are practiced, we turn in subsequent sections to more concrete recommendations for how campus should prepare for and respond to future disruptions. In the final substantive section, we draw on these principles to recommend strategies for responding to disruptions we currently face.

A. Principles for Adaptation to Disruption

1. *Mission.* UCLA exists to create, disseminate, preserve, and apply knowledge for the betterment of society. Maintaining UCLA's ability to pursue this academic mission is our highest priority.
    a. The academic mission is carried out by instructors interacting with students, by scholars conducting and disseminating research and creative activity, and by clinicians serving patients. These activities define the academic mission.

    b. Allocation of campus resources must assess the value of any university activity in terms of its contribution to the academic mission. Non-academic units must be evaluated based on how well they support the academic mission.

    c. Protecting the academic mission entails both (i) working proactively to mitigate risk/exposure to disruptions and (ii) ensuring the resilience of the academic mission when disruptions occur.

2. *Governance*. Ongoing and effective shared governance minimizes risks from disruptions and protects the campus when they occur.
    a. This principle follows from the faculty's direct responsibility for oversight of the curriculum and the recognition that "faculty participation in the shared governance of the University of California through the agency of the Academic Senate ensures the quality of instruction, research and public service at the University and protects academic freedom" (Regents Bylaw 40).

    b. Due to the unpredictability of disruptions, it is essential that the practice and principles of shared governance are understood and respected in times of stability as well as in times of disruption.

    c. Equally essential are structures to facilitate communication and consultation. First, there must be communication and meaningful consultation between the administration and the Academic Senate as an institution. Second, there must be two-way communication between administrative and Senate leadership and the faculty as a whole.

3. *Unity and Trust*. UCLA is strongest when the faculty and the administration are unified in support of the academic mission and trust each other's commitment thereto. It is the duty of campus leadership to build trust and to develop structures to enable individual units to thrive and work collectively for the greater good.

4. *Documentation and Transparency.* Campus administration must document and analyze how disruptions and campus responses affect the academic mission and do so in a transparent manner. The Academic Senate and the administration should jointly evaluate granular data about disruptions for lessons to increase future capacity to respond more effectively.

5. *Proportionate Response.* Every disruption presents unique challenges and consequences. Adaptations must be proportionate, appropriate, and dynamic as situations change and evolve. The campus should not use disruptions to covertly institute changes unrelated to the specific disruption, or that might weaken or diminish the academic mission, or that might circumvent shared governance.

B. Preparing for Resilience

The academic mission is best protected from disruption if we are prepared in the following ways.

1. *Risk Assessment*: The administration should regularly conduct risk assessments to determine campus-level vulnerability to various threats (physical, cyber, financial, health, etc.) Yearly reports should be formally shared through the Senate consultation process.

2. *Campus-wide procedures*: The campus needs clear procedures for responding to disruptions. While the "UC Ready" planning tool exists to help individual campus units establish minimal logistical continuity plans, more is needed. In consultation with the Senate, campus administration must develop campus-wide procedures for responding to disruption. At a minimum, these should include the following components: emergency decision-making process, crisis communications, and safety/security.

3. *Finances:* UCLA is most resilient to disruptions when the campus is in good financial health.

    a. Fiscal transparency—accessible and detailed data on expenses and revenues, (including capital spending and projected needs and debt financing), trends, and appropriate accountability for decisions (especially the rationale and relationship to the academic mission)—is essential to maintain trust and ensure that decision-makers have the information that they need to protect the financial health *and* the core mission of the university. The Budget Transparency Protocol, signed by Senate Chair Megan McEvoy and EVCP Darnell Hunt in April 2026 represents an important step in this direction. Care must be taken that this protocol is implemented faithfully.

b. The campus should adopt financial practices to better protect affected campus units and individual researchers from disruptions when they occur. Departments and research centers must receive clear and consistent guidance on best financial management practices, including when resources may be held in reserve to pay for anticipated or unexpected operating expenses. Units should then be able to count on the future use of any funds held in reserve for emergencies. The "common fund" approach, long used in the College, is a step toward practices that promote rational planning by units.

c. The campus should establish a campus-wide fund to offer bridge funding to individual investigators whose research programs are significantly impaired by disruption and develop consistent, transparent and sustainable processes for accessing this funding. Campus should explore other forms of "self-insurance" as well.[2] Doing so would enable units to plan for reasonably likely scenarios and allow the flexibility to avoid fiscal overreaction to worst-case situations that may not come to pass.

4. *Ongoing Assessment:* In times of normalcy as well as times of disruption, effective allocation of campus resources requires assessment of how effectively non-academic units support the academic mission. This assessment cannot rely on the judgement of the units themselves; significant input from the Academic Senate is essential. Administration should establish a campus system of periodic, data-driven, mission-focused review of non-academic units, modelled on Academic Program Review, to conduct these assessments. As many non-academic units function similarly systemwide, such reviews could be facilitated through comparisons across other UC campuses and/or pooling efforts across the UCs to perform these reviews.

5. *Infrastructure*: Campus should maintain accurate and centralized information about usage and availability of in-person instruction space, including department-controlled spaces to facilitate continuity of in-person instruction in the presence of disruptions that limit access to parts of campus. The quality and availability of physical space on the main campus, especially classrooms and research space, must be prioritized over the acquisition of new properties or upgrades that do not directly support the academic mission.

6. *Technology*: Efficient transfer and storage of information is essential in crisis, particularly if faculty must pause a line of investigation or divert data or other intellectual resources between projects. Access to reliable, efficient, and secure data storage and other computational resources, including information technology user support, are critical to protecting the academic mission in times of disruption. Administration needs to prioritize availability and access of such support, ensuring that it meets the emerging needs of faculty.

[2] The Negotiated Salary Program is an example where self-insurance has been implemented.

7. *Shared governance*: Functioning shared governance is essential to identify and plan for potential threats as well as to minimize campus risk. Effective shared governance requires the administration to engage faithfully and consistently in institutionalized Senate consultation, per Regents Bylaw 40, by submitting written proposals for comments at early stages. Senate consultation is needed regarding any decisions that commit or reallocate campus resources or that impact the academic mission. The administration should respond to Senate inquiries and requests promptly, in writing and in substantive detail. Even in the presence of acute disruption, Senate consultation must remain intact. Shared governance cannot be suspended. Processes to speed up consultation when necessary should, however, continue to be refined.

   The inclusion of one or several Senate members on administrative work groups, steering committees, governance committees, task forces, etc., does not constitute Senate consultation and should not be construed as such. The institutionalized Senate committee system provides broadly representative feedback from faculty members who cultivate expertise in each committee's area of jurisdiction. Decisions made without Senate consultation risk overlooking important consequences for the academic mission.

C. Campus Needs during Acute Disruption

The academic mission must take priority when responding to emergencies.

1. Decisions to mandate emergency remote instruction or cancel classes can be made only by the Academic Senate. Existing protocols which allow for rapid response in situations of imminent safety concerns (e.g. fire, violence, or natural disaster) must be respected and supported. Information about instruction modality shifts, durations and exception processes determined by the Senate should be communicated directly to faculty as quickly as possible. Disruptions that occur during examination periods are particularly challenging and require additional guidance and support.

   a. The administration must provide the resources faculty need to maintain instruction, research, and creative activities during acute emergencies, and provide faculty with clear and timely information about the options they have for preserving instruction and research projects. Decisions about campus support for the academic mission and related communication strategies must be made in consultation with the Academic Senate.

   b. The administration must develop procedures to document the impact of emergencies on the academic mission, including the number of class meetings subject to emergency remote decrees in courses not approved for online instruction. While emergency remote decrees must be approved by the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils, it is the duty of the administration to provide data the accurately document the impact on classes by type (lecture, lab, studio, seminar, etc.) and number of students affected.

2. Communication is critical.

    a. Whenever there is a possibility that regular instruction may be disrupted due to a change in campus operating status, the administration must immediately notify the Senate chair, who will consult the appropriate Senate bodies (Executive Board, Graduate and Undergraduate Councils) as events unfold. The Senate must determine any changes to instructional modality in a timely manner.

    b. It is essential that information, ideas, and analysis flow upward from the faculty to campus leadership during disruptions. Department chairs, School and College Faculty Executive Committees, and Deans must ensure that the impact of the disruption on their faculty is conveyed with nuance and detail to campuswide leaders. Procedures should be developed to ensure that this communication happens consistently across all units.

    c. "Top-down" information is equally essential. Campus leadership should engage in proactive and detailed communication with all campus stakeholders.

        i. The communication needs of faculty are distinct from those of the broader campus community (students, parents, alumni). The academic mission is led by the Senate and carried out by Senate faculty, along with lecturers, researchers, clinicians, and PhD students. UCLA's status as a world-class research university rests on the ability of each faculty member to deploy their disciplinary knowledge, scholarly standards, and expert judgement to maintain excellence in each of the many fields of research and instruction.

        ii. In order for the day-to-day work of the academic mission to withstand disruption, faculty need timely and detailed information about the nature of the disruption, what campus is doing in response, what responsibilities and burdens are left to individual faculty and units, and what options they have to protect their teaching and research. For this reason, communication to faculty during disruptions needs to be more frequent, more detailed, and more candid than messages to the campus community as a whole. It is a mistake to think that broad community-wide messaging provides faculty with the information they need to maintain teaching and research.

3. Frequent, ongoing status assessments during disruptions are essential.

    a. Responses to acute disruptions need to be assessed by campus administration in collaboration and communication with Academic Senate leadership in order to determine the impact on teaching (e.g., need to shift to remote learning or cancel courses) and research (e.g., shutdown of ongoing projects).

b. Faculty needs in the face of disruption must also be surveyed to ensure successful communication and effective response. Responsibility for surveying faculty needs resides with both administrative leaders and the Senate.

c. Transparent communication and actions are essential to maintain accountability of both the Senate and the administration to the faculty and the university.

D. Adapting to Long-term Disruption

The academic mission is the heart of the university and must be prioritized above all else. If a disruption targets the core mission of research and teaching, campus will need to re-direct resources from activities peripheral to this mission in order to maintain academic excellence.

1. The formulations of proposed adaptations to disruption must involve the Senate as an equal partner at all stages. Senate partnership has two components, both of which are essential.

    a. Senate leadership (or their designees) should be included in high-level planning and brainstorming sessions. If the administration refuses a Senate leadership request to participate in any planning sessions relevant to the academic mission, the Senate Chair will inform the faculty about the refused request.

    b. The administration must submit proposed changes to policies and practices for consultation using the Senate's formal process. When needed, the administration may request expedited review: the Senate has established processes for providing timely feedback, including during the summer. If the administration implements a policy affecting the academic mission before receiving Senate feedback, the Senate Chair will notify the faculty that this action has occurred. This process applies to any major decision involving budgets and resource allocation, as well any other policies that affect the academic mission.

2. Any reallocation of university resources must be based on systematic, objective, and granular analyses of how affected units contribute to the academic mission.

    a. Academic units are the front line of the research and teaching mission, which must be protected above all else. The Senate's Academic Program Review process has produced a long series of objective and systematic analyses of how academic units contribute to the mission. The information in these reports must be explicitly utilized in any strategic reallocation of resources that may affect academic units.

    b. Academic Program Review assessments are not intended to be used to rank programs or to place programs in competition with each other, and they should not be used in this way. Rather, their value is to document each program's contributions to the academic mission – critical data necessary for any resource allocation decisions.

c. While the performance of administrative leaders as individuals is assessed through the five-year review process, there is currently no systematic assessment of the performance of non-academic units. The administration, working with the Senate, should develop processes to assess the contribution of non-academic units to the academic mission, aiming for a level of rigor and objectivity similar to Academic Program Review. While the administration is responsible for implementing these assessments, significant Senate input is essential for its success.

   i. Although the internal efficiency of a unit has relevance, the most important assessment criterion is how well the unit supports the academic mission.

   ii. A unit's effectiveness in supporting the academic mission cannot be assessed by the unit itself. Input from the Academic Senate is essential, both to assess the unit's effectiveness and to identify attempts to reduce a unit's workload or costs by offloading work onto faculty. This form of faux efficiency constitutes a significant unacknowledged drain on the academic mission.

   iii. Administrative units with poor records of serving the academic mission should be held accountable. Resources should not be diverted to projects for which there is little campus demand (e.g., many edtech products) or that are poorly suited to campus needs (e.g., ASCEND).

   iv. Systematic and recurring assessments of how effectively non-academic units contribute to the academic mission is necessary for academic planning at all times, regardless of the presence of disruptions.

3. Long-term adaptations to disruptions should be based on a reasonable analysis of actual and likely potential impacts and should not be driven by worst-case scenarios. Whenever possible, plans should be made to quickly resume normal activities and scale back responses if the actual impact of a disruption does not match predictions. Attempts to use disruptions as opportunities to implement special projects or to make policy changes without Senate consultation are highly corrosive to trust and must not occur.

E. Responding to Current Crises: Financial and Other

While our report is intended to propose strategies extending beyond any immediate crisis, it is worth considering what the above principles and recommendations imply for current salient challenges, which include a reduced ability to rely on federal funding for research, the greater role of collectively bargained contracts, and a structural deficit that imperils the academic mission. Low levels of Senate faculty trust in campus leadership, resulting from how the administration has handled recent disruptions constitutes an additional challenge. We note here some specific examples of how this document's principles and processes can be implemented in the current environment.

1. The administration should raise and designate research funding reserves for use to support Senate faculty who lose or can no longer access funding in their disciplines. This may require reallocation of funding sources away from uses that do not directly support the academic mission. (*Mission* principle)

    a. There must be a transparent and equitable process for allocating bridge funds to faculty whose grants are suspended or terminated, taking account of the nature of the impact (e.g., whether irrecoverable losses have occurred to ongoing research).

    b. While such resources will be available to all Senate faculty, priority should be given to early- and mid-career researchers who may be most vulnerable and whose work represents the future of the academic mission.

    c. In establishing and managing such a dedicated fund, the administration must communicate directly with faculty (rather than with deans alone) about the availability of such funds and reallocation of appropriate funding sources from their current uses (i.e., non-mission) as needed.

2. The administration should regularly provide faculty with granular information about trends in grant activity. More detailed information about grant applications and their success rates will aid faculty in efforts to better understand and respond to funding trends. This communication should include broader sharing of statistics (including time trends) from the Vice Chancellor of Research and Creative Activities Office with the Academic Senate and Senate faculty. This analysis should be accompanied by additional resources to support new grant applications (both federal and non-federal) as well as tools and resources to ensure compliance with regulatory and training mandates. *(Mission, Documentation and Transparency* principles)

3. Implementation of externally mandated changes to campus policies regarding the administration of research funding or indirect cost recovery must be made with strong Senate input from the earliest stage. Intensive Senate involvement is needed to ensure that implementation of policy changes is based on an accurate and granular understanding of how they affect the research mission. *(Governance, Mission* principles)

4. Seek bolder cost containment in areas that are not central to the academic mission. The Intercollegiate Athletics unit is a key area to target for improved transparency regarding budget, spending, and planning for a timely transition to sustainability without campus subsidies. *(Mission* principle*)*

5. Build trust through transparency, consistency and accountability in decisions affecting Senate faculty and academic units. Avoid repetition of toxic episodes like the unexpected

sweep of unit account balances along with surprise initiatives involving technology infrastructure in Summer 2025, which worsened the already traumatic impact of frozen federal funds. Proactive data sharing and consultation with the Senate could have prevented these disruptive internal decisions. *(Unity and Trust, Transparency* principles*)*

6. Return to meaningful shared governance, especially regarding the budget. Bring UCLA in line with system norms by committing to follow UCPB best practices and substantively address the requests made by the UCLA Academic Senate in the Resolution on Financial Transparency and the Restoration of Shared Governance in Budget Planning. Continue the recently revived practice of publishing budgets, including all unit level budgets. Provide faculty with a transparent explanation of how the structural deficit arose and details of the plans to resolve it. *(Governance, Unity and Trust, Transparency* principles*)*

7. Respect the Academic Senate's institutional role as the steward of the academic mission and the foundation of UCLA's academic excellence, as called for in the Resolution on Shared Governance, Senate Consultation and Administrative Accountability which was passed unanimously by the Legislative Assembly on February 5, 2026. Do not conflate administration interaction with Senate members with adherence to the formal shared governance requirements, or briefings about decisions already made with meaningful consultation. *(Governance, Unity and Trust* principles*)*

F. Responsibility for Protecting the Academic Mission

Responsibility for implementing this report's recommendations lies primarily with campus administrative leadership, i.e., the Chancellor and the EVCP, and secondarily with the leadership of the Academic Senate.

Specifically, we call on the Chancellor and EVCP to

1. Protect and prioritize the academic mission through resource allocation decisions and the strengthening of shared governance, and ensure that the campus leaders who report to them understand and proactively support this priority.
2. Rebuild trust and unity through greater transparency, particularly regarding the campus budget.

We call on Senate leadership to

1. Defend the academic mission and the essential role that institutionalized shared governance plays in protecting it. Ensure that the faculty are informed about threats and breaches of shared governance.
2. Continue to work with campus administrative leadership to develop procedures to better assess how campus resources are allocated to prioritize the academic mission and engage them in strategic planning for UCLA's future.

G. Conclusion

Disruptions on various scales are now part of everyday life for universities; this is especially true at UCLA, given its high profile as an eminent public research university. UCLA's long history of academic excellence positions us to weather such disruptions well if we stay true to our mission. The above principles—all derived from the university's mission—offer a path to leverage our key assets: the strength of our Senate faculty, of our shared governance system, and of our history of collaboration across campus, and across the UC system.

None of the disruptions we face will resolve quickly, and, perhaps not before adaptation is necessary. The likelihood that federal support for research returns to its previous level, scope and reliability is uncertain at best. Funding of PhD students and the definition of their roles continue to change dramatically. We must adapt, but we must do so in ways that prioritize the academic mission, follow UC expectations for shared governance, and include Senate consultation.

Even as the campus manages to overcome its structural deficit, it matters how that is accomplished. Moving forward, we must stop unchecked growth in administrative units at the expense of the academic mission. We must foresee preventable deficits, especially those that fall outside the academic mission. As noted above, administrative resource allocation decisions made without meaningful Senate consultation, and without objective assessment of non-academic units, threaten to continue to drain resources from the academic mission. The campus needs a restoration of trust, unity, and meaningful shared governance. Persistent breaches of shared governance have led to notably low levels of confidence, as shown in the Academic Senate's Fall 2025 survey, thereby making us more vulnerable. Strengthening shared governance will strengthen our resilience and ensure the future continued excellence of our campus.

Much of what we propose here involves commitment to first principles: we must prioritize the academic mission, practice shared governance, and adopt habits of maximum transparency and accountability. Given the likelihood of more frequent acute disruptions in the future, we welcome thoughtful, bold ideas to strengthen the academic mission, and emphasize that without dedicated implementation of the first principles outlined here, successful adaptation to disruption will be impossible.

UCLAAD Members
Kathy Bawn, Professor of Political Science, UCLAAD Chair
Evelyn Blumenberg, Professor of Urban Planning
Brent Fogel, Professor of Neurology and Human Genetics
Yogita Goyal, Professor of English and African American Studies
Jeff Maloy, Associate Professor of Teaching of Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology
Michael Meranze, Professor Emeritus of History
Dimitri Shlyakhtenko, Professor of Mathematics