

April 8, 2022

Michael Levine
Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Re: Resources for Teaching and Learning

Dear IEVCP Levine,

At its March 3 and 24, 2022, meetings, the Executive Board discussed the role of resources in the pressing instructional demands and questions of our time. Those include teaching and learning during the pandemic and, also, planning for the future of instruction at UCLA. Members voted to send this letter conveying concerns about resources for instruction, both as a matter of urgent needs as the Spring 2022 Quarter begins and as a more general matter of how the campus addresses demands for dual modality instruction and instructional flexibility.

Executive Board members testified to the teaching challenges of the spring quarter, emphasizing classroom technology and its support. Faculty feel stymied in their efforts to increase accessibility as they are caught between student demands and material constraints.

Beyond this immediate classroom need, Executive Board members are concerned that when it comes to demands about instruction (including those focused on accessibility) Administration is paying insufficient attention to the role of resources. By resources, we include not only instructional technology and the support to operate and maintain it, but also, importantly, *faculty labor*. We know and appreciate that you recognize these issues and have mentioned them in our conversations with you. We would like to see that recognition distributed more widely and figuring more prominently in campus conversation and action.

Please know that we are pleased to see plans moving forward for a faculty survey, a classroom technology assessment, continuation of Zoom assistants, faculty development resources from CAT, and other efforts. Staff have worked tirelessly to support teaching and learning. We recognize and cheer the very hard and good work devoted to these issues. Thank you.

Still, concerns remain, and the context in which they arise is important. At various times over the last two months the Academic Senate has inserted issues about resources, especially faculty labor, into communications about student demands for dual modality instruction, only to be urged or forced by administrators to remove that language. This has been true when responding in writing to student sit-in demands and when crafting StratComm communications

with the media. We understand that the campus wishes to avoid seeming to say that resources are the only barrier to dual modality instruction, which is not the case. However, discouraging or prohibiting mention of resources can appear to shift responsibility in ways that are neither accurate nor appropriate. It is misleading to focus on academic freedom and mandates without acknowledging the ways the campus can devote resources to addressing some student concerns, within our current policy framework.

The Executive Board wishes to underline a major concern that deserves more attention: faculty labor and time. The labor demands of multiple modality instruction go far beyond questions of technology to how a professor conveys substantive content, designs and evaluates assessments (a major issue), measures participation, connects to students, promotes equity and accessibility, and more. All of these are serious (and intellectually interesting) issues that demand our collective attention.

It is challenging to convey the exhaustion and demoralization of many faculty as the teaching and mentoring demands of the pandemic draw out beyond two years. Of course, not all faculty dropped everything to pour themselves into their teaching during the pandemic, and there is significant unevenness (unfortunately, with some indication that the burdens were distributed in predictable patterns across faculty rank, gender, ethnicity, and race). But, for many faculty switching courses to remote instruction involved major course design efforts, not only technological ones.

Similarly, when the campus returned to in-person instruction but continued to support students learning remotely during the pandemic, dual modality instruction was a heavy lift: again, the issue is not simply about technology or posting a Zoom link but is about course design, equitable student opportunity, and a host of related issues. All of this requires labor, much more labor than is commonly understood by non-instructors.

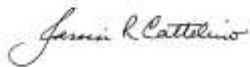
To teach *well* and *equitably* in dual modality is a major endeavor. It is unsustainable to expect faculty at an R1 university to maintain existing course loads while teaching in multiple modalities and undertaking related instructional tasks. We have been gratified when you and others in Administrative have made this point. Moving forward, any conversation about instructional technology and teaching modality must come with serious discussion of faculty labor and the student to faculty ratio. Hiring lecturers or adjunct faculty to teach online is not the answer for UCLA. *If it is impossible under current budgetary constraints to contemplate a significant expansion of the tenure-track faculty, it is also impossible to contemplate multiple modality instruction and related teaching and learning adjustments.*

One of the pandemic's strains is that instructors have been trying to meet technology demands with their own individual creativity, advocacy, and pocketbooks. Stories abound about faculty who purchased with personal funds an additional laptop in order to bring two to class to manage the needs, those who drained their research funds and/or pocketbooks to set up home

technology or supplement other classroom technology, etc. We are concerned that teaching assistants have been shouldering additional responsibilities for instructional technology support, diverting efforts away from their core teaching role. Only some highly resourced departments have well-equipped departmental classrooms. Faculty require training on use of classroom technology. All of this takes a toll on faculty and teaching assistants.

This has been a difficult time for everyone. Even as the Executive Board identifies the need for more attention to resource demands as an urgent matter for Spring Quarter instruction and in ongoing campus conversations and communications, we greatly appreciate the Administration's partnership with the Academic Senate in the CRRTF, its Education Working Group, responses to student demands, and other efforts to address the teaching and learning demands of our time. We look forward to partnering as the campus takes a hard look at the pandemic's lessons and undertakes planning for the future of teaching and learning at UCLA.

Sincerely,



Jessica Cattelino
Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: Gene Block, Chancellor
Amy Blum, Managing Campus Counsel
Erika Chau, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Personnel
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Monroe Gorden, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Yolanda Gorman, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Chief of Staff
Kathleen Komar, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Personnel
Michael Levine, Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel
Mary Osako, Vice Chancellor, Strategic Communication
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the EVCP
Shane White, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate