Executive Board
(Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

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May 14, 2024

James Steintrager
Chair, UC Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Chair Steintrager,

The divisional Executive Board (EB) appreciated the opportunity to review the proposed Academic Senate statement on UC Quality. EB reviewed the proposal and divisional committee and council responses at its meeting on May 9, 2024.

Members voted in favor of a motion (12 in favor, 1 abstain, 0 opposed) to express appreciation for the enunciation of these principles as a first step towards a longer discussion, at both the systemwide and campus level, about the meaning of a UC quality education and the required resources. (One student representative voted in favor of the motion.)

Members suggested a close review of the attached council and committee letters.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kasko
Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
    Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
May 3, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Chair Kasko,

Members of the Committee on Academic Freedom independently reviewed the (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality.

The members recognized that the statement is revisiting the very difficult task of defining Educational Quality for hundreds of thousands of students across ten campuses, to help judge what the impacts will be of: online learning, downsizing to meet budget reductions, limits on space, greater use of non-ladder faculty, and “an unfamiliar labor environment”. All of those trends could impact educational quality, but this Statement provides little or no insight into those questions. Furthermore, it does not even come up with a clear definition to tell if “Educational Quality” is high or not, or if it is rising or falling.

A member stated that they agreed with Undergraduate Council that no Statement on Educational Quality which fails to even mention grading and grade inflation can be considered a serious effort.

A member also raised that in discussing “UC Quality” (the “Educational” modifier was inexplicably dropped), the Statement mentions many nice outcomes for UC students, that might happen in or out of the classroom, such as developing integrity, entrepreneurship and principled leadership. It sounds nice for UC to take credit for these benefits, give ourselves a pat on the back. The problem is that most of the education that goes on at UC cannot be said to directly produce those outcomes. In fact whole areas of study, including most of STEM, and probably most of humanities, do not necessarily do that. At best those results might be an occasional, incidental spin-off.

The questions were also presented whether the Statement is implying that a limited set of specific courses, for example pre-Business classes on entrepreneurship, add more to UC Educational Quality than, say, my courses in physics or astronomy? Would I be doing a higher Quality job if a faculty member altered courses to include integrity, entrepreneurship and principled leadership? A member stated that the judgement of such should be left with the faculty who is responsible for the instruction.

A member also mentioned that in the fifth Quality bullet, “Takes advantage of the important social, cultural and intellectual contributions…”, the final phrase “particularly those from underrepresented populations”, should be removed. It unfortunately implies that contributions from other students are not particularly valued, and should not be a basis for UC Quality. On the contrary, all contributions must be valued, and to say anything less than that would put us in tension with the California Constitution, and, depending on how the Supreme Court interprets it, federal law as well.
Another member stated that adding language that discusses how engaging with various members of the UC community could be beneficial and an accurate reflection of the UC experience.

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
April 26, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

At its meeting on April 17, 2024, the Committee on International Education (CIE) discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. Looking at the report through the lens of international education, it is clear that this statement positively highlights the system’s international impact though international education is not directly mentioned.

Members agreed that the first half is very CA State-focused and have proposed additional language to reflect the University’s priority on international competency within the student body. Committee members suggested the addition of a bullet point under the “Build Core Competencies and Critical Thinking Skills” section that focuses on the global competency of UC students. The bullet point could read:

“Allow for students to develop global competency through opportunities for cultural immersion, language development, and global experiences.”

As UCLA continues to develop as a “global university”, the University should prioritize providing students with the opportunities to become globally minded.

The committee appreciates the opportunity to review this report, and look forward to more data being made available in the near future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (MGiovannini@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Marco Giovannini, Chair
Committee on International Education

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 International Education
May 2, 2024

To The Executive Board:

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) of the School of Theater, Film & Television (TFT). At our meeting on April 22, 2024, members of the TFT FEC expressed their appreciation for the work of the University Committee on Educational Policy to create the Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality dated January 30, 2024.

Our discussion also included some expressions of concern regarding the repeated use of terms such as “quality,” “rigor” and “excellence” that were not explicitly defined in the document. Although we understand that the context of the present statement comes in response to budgetary reductions and agree about the importance of maximizing the value of the educational experience for our students, faculty in the School of Theater, Film & Television respectfully note the historical role that these and similar evaluative terms – especially when not clearly defined or explicitly operationalized – have been known to play in attempts to preserve canonical or traditional curricula and educational structures of the past. Stated more simply, we appreciate what you are trying to do and we recognize the difficulty of this charge, but as it’s currently written, the whole thing makes us a little uncomfortable.

Thank you for the invitation to opine on this document,

Steve F. Anderson
Chair of the Faculty
School of Theater, Film & Television
sfanders@tft.ucla.edu
424-259-1067

Cc:
Brian Kite, Dean, School of Theater, Film & Television
April 26, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
    UCLA Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

At its meeting on April 9, 2024, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality.

Members identified that the statement is useful, but appears a bit outdated. Suggestions were raised for the drafters to consider how the effects of the pandemic have changed the UC Quality. Similarly, members identified that since the graduate student strike, the opportunities of students have changed and this should be reflected in a statement on UC Quality.

Members shared that the current statement read as something which only had a certain type of students in mind, which does not reflect the student body at UCLA. The committee found that the statement would benefit from highlighting the student experience of various groups, such as international students.

Committee members also identified that there has been an economic shift, which should be mentioned in this statement, as it has greatly affected the quality of education. Members agreed that as a statement, this is very aspirational but it tends to be the inverse of the actual experience of faculty when looking at research and teaching qualities. Further, the barriers to achieve these goals have become worse and faculty are finding it almost impossible to match what is being advertised here.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (thall@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Theodore Hall, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
April 24, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Brooke Scelza, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

At its meeting on April 12, 2024, the Graduate Council discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. Members offered the following comments for consideration.

Members appreciate the efforts to develop a statement on UC quality. To be inclusive, one member suggests that the statement should not use the term “citizen,” which may be considered limited to US nationality and instead include language that acknowledges everyone regardless of immigration status.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact us via Graduate Council Analyst, Emily Le, at ele@senate.ucla.edu.
April 19, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair, Academic Senate  
From: Catherine Sugar, Chair, Undergraduate Council  
Re: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

At its meeting on April 12, 2024, the Undergraduate Council reviewed and discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality.

Members broadly endorsed the proposed statement. Some also suggested that the statement could be revised to more explicitly address the issue of grade inflation, noting that rigorous, meaningful assessment should be a key element of the University’s goals and descriptors around educational excellence. Members also emphasized the need for sustained institutional investment in infrastructure across all domains, physical and virtual, to support continued academic quality as well as the health and safety of students and faculty.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have any questions, please contact me via the Undergraduate Council analyst, Julia Nelsen, at jnelsen@senate.ucla.edu.

cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate  
    Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate  
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate  
    Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Re: Systemwide Review: Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its meeting on April 1, 2024, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed and discussed the proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality. After an initial discussion, members suggested the following revisions to the statement.

1. **UC Quality: Environment.**
   Add the following text to the second and third bullet points:
   
   “Provides a civil and inclusive multicultural environment that conveys and helps to develop, through interactions with and the negotiation of different ways of knowing, being, and understanding, the most current knowledge, theories, ideas, and perspectives.”
   “Takes advantage of the important social, cultural, and intellectual contributions enabled by having a diverse population of faculty and students from California, the nation, and the world, particularly those from underrepresented populations.”

2. **UC Quality: Educational Offerings.**
   Foster Breath of Perspective and Interactive Learning Communities
   Add the following text to the first and fourth bullet points:
   
   “Develop interpersonal and communication skills that will contribute to success through collaboration by engaging with a diverse population of faculty, students, and other members of the UC community.”
   “Develop sensitivity to the diversity of domestic and international cultures through direct engagement with faculty and students from around the country and the world, enhancing students’ capacity to operate within the university, and advance U.S. and global society.”
If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at emmerich@humnet.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Best regards,

Michael Emmerich, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Academic Senate
    Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
    Elizabeth Feller, Associate Director, Academic Senate
    Members of the Council on Planning and Budget
March 6, 2024

CHAIRS OF SENATE DIVISIONS AND SYSTEMWIDE COMMITTEES

Re: Systemwide Senate Review of Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality

Dear Colleagues,

I am forwarding for systemwide Senate review a proposed Academic Senate statement on UC quality – “Characteristics of Educational Quality at the University of California” – presented by the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

The Academic Council endorsed circulating the statement for review to gather input from the Senate divisions. Both UCEP and Council consider that a Senate statement on quality that articulates the collective components of academic excellence can serve as guidance for shaping the University’s academic programs, priorities, and actions, ultimately contributing to its continuing success and enduring impact. The statement in its current form has already informed the work of the newly convened Presidential Task Force on Instructional Modalities and UC Quality Undergraduate Degree Programs as it considers criteria for baccalaureate degree programs that may be delivered remotely.

We invite your feedback. Please submit comments to the systemwide Academic Senate office at SenateReview@ucop.edu by May 14, 2024, to allow us to compile and summarize them for the Academic Council’s May 22 meeting. As always, any committee that considers these matters outside its jurisdiction or charge may decline to comment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

James Steintrager, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Senate Division Executive Directors
    Executive Director Lin

Encl.
January 30, 2024

JAMES STEINTRAGER, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: UC QUALITY STATEMENT

Dear Jim,

The University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) is pleased to submit the attached updated UC Quality statement. Collectively, the UC is known for both its rigorous majors and exceptional degree completion rates (up to 94%). The quality of our undergraduate training manifests in an exceptionally high placement in graduate schools. 40% of all UC undergraduates complete a graduate degree within ten years. UCEP appreciates the opportunity to describe the educational aspects within the UC system that lead to these successes.

As you know, a UC Quality statement was originally developed in 2009-2010 by the UC Commission on the Future’s Education and Curriculum working group to be used as a basis for evaluating change due to the ongoing budget difficulties at that time and the possible inclusion of more online instruction. UCEP closely monitored the Commission’s work, and, at the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, Academic Council asked the committee to study how educational quality would be impacted by the University’s need to downsize in response to the budget situation.

The committee considered the Commission’s attempted definition of “UC quality education” toward their effort to provide guidelines and best practices for preserving quality. These deliberations were intrinsically connected to UCEP’s discussions about what was then known as the UC Online Education pilot project and the need to thoughtfully assess the quality of online courses. In addition, the committee considered both the implications for quality related to the increased student to faculty ratio and concerns about a greater use of non-ladder rank faculty resulting from the budget crisis. UCEP opined that quality based on the totality of the experience at UC should be the focus, not just any single course. After making minor revisions, the statement was submitted to Academic Council in March 2011 and endorsed. It was also submitted to the Academic Council’s task force charged with implementing the Academic Council Special Committee on a Plan for the University of California (the “Powell Committee” Report).

Following UCEP’s work in 2022-2023 on the White Paper on Online Undergraduate Degree Programs, the Principles for Online Undergraduate Programs and Majors, and the Standard Terminology Guide for Distance Education, in October 2023 you asked the committee to revisit the statement on UC quality. While the phrase is often used by Regents, administrators at the Office of the President and the campuses, and others, there is no shared
agreement or official policy statement about how “quality” is defined. UCEP members found the 2010 document to be comprehensive, touching on student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction as well as undergraduate research, but the committee agreed to revise the statement in the context of a rapidly evolving world, including technology and new social paradigms. We also contemplated the importance of maintaining quality amidst demands to increase access, a lack of student housing and classroom space, an unfamiliar labor environment, and yet another period of financial uncertainty. The committee acknowledges that the statement on quality is aspirational in nature but believes that it is grounded in the mission of the University of California and the world-renowned excellence and rigor of UC’s undergraduate academic programs.

UCEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melanie Cocco, Chair
UCEP
Characteristics of Educational Quality At the University of California

**Fundamental Basis for a UC Quality Education.** Collectively, the University of California, California State Universities, and California Community Colleges provide higher educational opportunities for all citizens of the state. The distinctive mission of the UC 'is to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge.' To support achievement of that teaching, research and public service mission, the delivery of the highest caliber educational programs is paramount. The quality of a UC education fundamentally derives from three key components: the training and expertise of UC faculty, the ability and engagement of UC students, and the rich research-based environment central to the UC system.

- The vision of what constitutes desired and acceptable quality will appropriately come from the faculty responsible for the curriculum and teaching in each degree or program.
- The measures of success ultimately will be derived from the experiences and achievements of students.

**UC Quality: Environment.** UC quality derives not just from individual courses or activities but from the comprehensive educational experience at the system’s 10 top-tier public research universities which:

- Leverages synergies across campuses while simultaneously giving students access to the unique characteristics of each institution.
- Provides a civil and inclusive multicultural environment that conveys and helps to develop the most current knowledge, theories, ideas, and perspectives.
- Takes advantage of the important social, cultural, and intellectual contributions enabled by having a diverse population of students, particularly those from underrepresented populations.
- Offers insights and experiences based in both research and practice, including engaging students with hands-on projects closely mentored by UC faculty.
- Promotes a rich learning environment beyond the classroom, providing context for social interactions with others, potentially grounding and inspiring creative research activities, and other contributions to society, and creating relationships that can continue after graduation.
- Fosters a safe and healthy living environment for each student, with the academic resources, libraries, campus facilities, health and wellness support, cultural events, social opportunities for informal interactions with peers and mentors, and other enrichment activities that will allow them to maximize their success.

**UC Quality: Educational Offerings.** The following features enable UC to deliver high-quality educational content and maximize student outcomes, leveraging UC’s status as California’s primary public academic research institution. Courses, programs, and extracurricular activities that define UC quality:

**Are Structured to Maximize Student Success.**

- Are developed and taught by UC Senate faculty, often delivered in collaboration with lecturers, graduate students and external specialists with relevant expertise, and address content reflecting the most current research.
- Employ effective pedagogical practices for each area and serve the needs of different types of student learners, regardless of instructional modality.
- Include appropriate and substantive student-instructor and student-student interaction.

**Build Core Competencies and Critical Thinking Skills.**

- Provide a framework by which students achieve objective standards of knowledge and competence appropriate to the field of study.
- Train students to interpret and organize information critically, analytically, and effectively, empowering them with skills in the acquisition, assimilation and synthesis of knowledge that will allow nimble adaptation to the ever-changing intellectual, cultural, and technological environment.
- Promote intellectual curiosity and an appreciation for knowledge, including knowledge for which practical applications are not immediately apparent.
- Nurture intellectual independence, creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship.
Ensure Rigor and Depth

- Operate at a high level of intellectual rigor suited to the extraordinary level of academic potential of the student body.
- Maintain high ethical standards and intellectual integrity.
- Scaffold courses on a core set of knowledge, concepts, and skills, enabling students to reflect and build in a temporally extended way on what they are learning.

Foster Breadth of Perspective and Interactive Learning Communities

- Develop interpersonal and communication skills that will contribute to success through collaboration.
- Provide ample opportunities for closely-mentored relationships with faculty and other University-affiliated personnel that allow students to pursue independent research, creative activity or service to society.
- Facilitate informal and less-structured interactions that enable learning and development of perspectives beyond those that can be captured by typical tests and other structured assessments.
- Develop sensitivity to the diversity of domestic and international cultures that will enhance students’ capacity to operate within the university, and advance U.S. and global society.
- Contribute to a sense of the course, program, and campus as a learning community that facilitates productive peer-to-peer interaction, support, and feedback.

UC Quality: Oversight. To ensure their effectiveness, UC courses and educational programs are subjected to rigorous and ongoing review. Key elements of this process include:

- Initial course and program development led by faculty with expertise in the latest pedagogy, research, and practice in the field, followed by reviews for content, rigor, innovation, modality-specific issues, and quality assurance at multiple levels (department, school, UC Academic Senate)
- Systematic monitoring of existing educational offerings, exercising the UC Academic Senate course and program review process.
- Regular review of content and delivery of instruction by individual faculty at multiple levels, including self-assessments, student evaluations, and internal and external peer faculty and administrative appraisals, which are considered in the faculty member’s record as they are considered for advancement within the University.
- A course and program assessment process in which faculty develop learning goals, mapping them to the curriculum, and evaluating students’ mastery of those goals. Learning targets include skills related to critical thinking, analytical reasoning, written and oral communication, and other discipline-based skills.
- Investment in ongoing training, course development support, and resources for faculty, with reference to pedagogical developments and the emergence of new teaching modalities.

UC Quality: Expected Outcomes. Graduates of UC will have the ability to:

- Think critically and independently.
- Demonstrate integrity and principled leadership.
- Communicate effectively.
- Make intellectual and creative contributions to issues important to California, the nation, and the world.
- Perform excellently in subsequent graduate study and other research.
- Make professional contributions in their chosen field, informed by their experience in a research-oriented academic environment.
- Apply the scope and depth of their liberal-arts education, readily adapting to and taking advantage of rapid changes and evolutions in knowledge, technology, and social paradigms.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement with others in diverse vocational, living, and social environments.