

# UCLA Academic Senate

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March 17, 2025

Darnell Hunt  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP)

Re: One UCLA and Shared Governance

Dear EVCP Hunt,

Chancellor Frenk's messages to campus remind us that "we are One UCLA" -- one community centered on the creation of knowledge. We are a community held together by shared governance institutions that maintain our commitment to the academic mission. Shared governance connects administrators to the faculty who experience first-hand how campus decisions affect teaching and research. It connects faculty to the trade-offs and challenges the administration faces. Shared governance builds trust and helps us work together for the good of the university and to advance our academic mission. As former UC President Atkinson observed, "*Our system of shared authority and responsibility among Regents, administration, and faculty is the single most important reason for the University of California's greatness.*"

Shared governance at the UC is established under Regents' [Bylaw 40.1](#) which specifies the Academic Senate's role in advising the administration about budget and resource allocation. Senate consultation is critical for ensuring that policies do not create unintended consequences that damage both our reputation and the academic mission. Instances in which the administration has ignored shared governance have resulted in questionable decisions such as the hasty purchase of the South Bay campus, and the decision to leave the Pac-12 athletic conference in a way that alienated the [governor](#) and [created significant financial penalties](#).

Effective shared governance depends on meaningful Senate [consultation](#) at all stages of decision-making. For this reason, we are particularly concerned about the recent practice under your leadership in which workgroups related to budgetary issues (in one case, on the funding of graduate education) are convened without Senate representation. Our repeated requests for Senate inclusion in campus planning have been rebuffed with promises that Senate leadership would be regularly briefed separately: to date, no such briefings have been scheduled. More importantly, *briefing of Senate leadership post hoc does not constitute meaningful Senate consultation*.

You have invoked "confidentiality" as a reason to exclude the Senate from budgetary planning. The Senate has an excellent record of respecting confidentiality. We note that the concept of confidentiality can be misused. In a November 2022 [letter](#) on behalf of the Executive Board, then Senate Chair Jessica Cattelino addressed this issue:

Our preference is to follow our university motto: “let there be light.” Confidentiality may at times be part of our communications, as one value among many including openness and trust: we are prepared to work with you to maintain confidentiality when it is required, as we are experienced in keeping matters confidential. The Executive Board will question use of privilege if it appears that the reason is to avoid transparency. Transparency with the Academic Senate is necessary to allow for consultation. If UCLA’s major decisions are being made under conditions that preclude substantive Academic Senate consultation and collaboration, we should ask whether some initiatives are befitting of a University of California campus, a public, and land- grant institution.

Senate exclusion from budgetary planning groups is but the latest in a series of steps away from meaningful shared governance. We are troubled by current trends: fewer written responses to Senate communication, less heeding of Senate advice, and less acceptance of accountability for administrative decisions (including, but not limited to, decisions made in response to campus unrest and violence in Spring 2024.) Most recently, the Senate was neither consulted nor notified about the hiring review protocol announced last week. Challenging times like these should be met with more, not less, Senate engagement. Met with more, not less, commitment to the academic mission.

Weak shared governance leads to an all-too-familiar pathology: scarce resources invested in projects that don’t contribute to the academic mission. More important, it leads to mistrust. Faculty are keenly aware of the magnitude of the threats we currently face. There is growing concern that the administration is unwilling to defend our core mission of research and teaching. Good faith adherence to systemwide expectations of meaningful Senate consultation would be a powerful move toward alleviating this concern, and to rebuilding trust.

Following Senate norms of transparency, we will post this letter on the Senate [website](#), as we have done with other recent letters. We hope that you will respond to us in writing with concrete steps you will take to restore meaningful Senate consultation, particularly in budgetary planning. We would be pleased to post any response you provide to us on our website as well.

In the face of daunting challenges, we truly must respond as “One UCLA.” This a time to lean in to shared governance and bring campus together.

Sincerely,

Kathy Bawn  
UCLA Senate Chair

Cc: Julio Frenk, UCLA Chancellor  
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate  
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate