

Faculty Welfare Committee

Concerns Regarding the Closure of the Fernald Childcare
Center

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April 14, 2025

Julio Frenk, Chancellor, UCLA

Darnell Hunt, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP), UCLA

Re: Concerns and Questions on the Planned Closure of Fernald Childcare Center

Dear Chancellor Frenk and EVCP Hunt,

At the April 10, 2025, meeting of the Executive Board (EB), members reviewed the attached letter from the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) which expressed concerns and raised questions about the planned closure of the Fernald Childcare Center.

EB members voted unanimously in favor of a motion to share the letter and request a response to the questions. As some questions were answered by the recent FAQ, they requested answers to the remaining questions by May 29, 2025.

Moreover, EB members confirmed the importance of consulting with the Academic Senate on matters that directly impact faculty. They noted that the joint task force on PreK-12 Education that the Senate proposed in August 2024 to then-Interim Chancellor Hunt would have taken a holistic and strategic approach to assess the future of all associated PreK-12 education programs.

Lastly, EB members advised that better communication and transparency with the Senate and the affected faculty families would result in more understanding and less distress and distrust.

Sincerely,



Kathy Bawn
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Yolanda Gorman, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Chief of Staff, UCLA
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the EVCP, UCLA

April 3, 2025

Kathleen Bawn
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Concerns Regarding the Closure of the Fernald Childcare Center

Dear Chair Bawn,

At its April 1, 2025, meeting, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) reviewed concerns raised by many faculty members who are parents of children currently enrolled in the Fernald Childcare Center (Fernald) regarding the impending closure of Fernald and its planned merger with the Krieger Childcare Center, effective September 1, 2025. FWC members expressed deep concern about the ramifications of this decision and the ongoing degradation of Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a vital service to the UCLA community.

As you are aware, the FWC is responsible for advising the Academic Senate and consulting with the administration on matters related to faculty welfare. Many faculty members were recruited to the University with a promise of access to high-quality childcare. Members expressed concerns about the retention of current faculty and recruitment of future faculty as a consequence of the closure of Fernald. Members requested an explanation of how this closure decision was made, how potential fallout will be managed, and the future of ECE at UCLA. The committee believes that the proposed change and how it has been communicated represent a threat to faculty welfare and the future of early childhood education at UCLA.

The FWC asks the Executive Board to endorse the following requests.

- 1) Nearly 300 faculty members signed a petition sent on Friday, March 21st, protesting the abrupt decision to close the Fernald Childcare Center. They requested a meeting with Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP) Hunt to address their concerns. Thus far, neither Dean Christie nor EVCP Hunt have agreed to a meeting. We ask the Executive Board to ask the EVCP to do so.
- 2) We highly recommend that the Executive Board recommend an open town hall meeting with ECE parents, EVC/P Hunt, Dean Christie, and Associate Dean Lazo to address parental concerns prior to making any permanent decisions about the closure of a critical faculty amenity.
- 3) FWC requests the Executive Board forward the following questions to Dean Christie.
 - A) What precipitated the closing of Fernald and the merger of the centers?
 - B) Who were the stakeholders consulted during the decision-making process?
 - C) Is there any plan to make up for the loss of space for faculty children?
 - D) How will this merger create a more financially sustainable ECE system?
 - E) What is the projected future enrollment at ECE?

- F) Does Krieger have the capacity to absorb all the childcare slots from Fernald and also meet the needs of future faculty parents? (We note that Engineering is in the process of hiring ~30 new assistant professors.)
- G) Will Krieger or University Village gain the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation?

We appreciate EB's review of this time-sensitive matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jcaram@chem.ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,



Justin Caram, Chair
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee