UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

February 10, 2010

INTERIM PROVOST PITTS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Re: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Larry:

As you requested, I distributed the report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force for systemwide review, and received responses from nine divisions (UCB, UCD, UCI, UCLA, UCR, UCSB, UCSC, UCSD, and UCSF) and two committees (UCAF and UCEP). The Academic Council reviewed the responses. Consistent with responses in general, the Council supports the report's underlying principles—that faculty should retain responsibility for assessing student learning outcomes, that assessment be discipline-specific and campus-based with Senate oversight, and that the development of assessment programs at the departmental level be supported centrally on campus with infrastructure, resources and training. They also agreed that assessment should be reviewed and used to improve instructional programs and refine learning goals. The Council recognizes the central role of the faculty in developing assessment programs and the principle that any new campus-wide forms of assessment must remain under the control of the faculty. We note, however, that implementing assessment programs will be a burden on faculty time, and may be less feasible at a time of widespread budget reductions. In effect, the report's recommendations could redirect scarce resources away from the University's core mission.

Several Senate agencies advised that assessment programs should be integrated into existing processes for evaluating student learning and required coursework, and identified measures of educational effectiveness such as grades, pass rates and grade distributions, exit and alumni satisfaction surveys, and the percentage of graduates admitted to graduate or professional schools or find work in their field (UCD, UCI, UCSC, UCAF, UCEP). Some noted that individual campuses already have implemented measures of educational effectiveness developed during WASC accreditation reviews (UCB, UCD, UCI, UCSD). Respondents recommended sharing information and models of existing assessment programs across campuses (UCD, UCSC, UCEP). UCEP explicitly endorsed the suggestion that assessment programs be reviewed when programs are reviewed. We also note that, while there is a high level agreement that effective assessment is a valuable goal, the report does not explicitly detail methodologies for developing effective measures and implementing assessment. As stated in the review by UCD:

> While the Task Force clearly spent considerable time thinking about and making *general* recommendations for improving the assessment of the effectiveness of undergraduate education, incorporating more specific examples of how to do so successfully would have been helpful. The relative dearth of examples, in fact, seemed to reinforce a concern that such assessment, while admirable in theory, is exceedingly difficult to carry out in practice on the scale required at a major public research university.

There was some disagreement among Senate agencies regarding whether campus-wide assessment measures would be useful. Some argued that aggregating large data sets diminishes the ability to assess whether the learning outcomes align with course goals. UCEP notes that such overall measures are "at odds with the philosophy that learning assessment should be discipline-based and developed at the program level." Moreover, UCEP and UCSB argue that the standardized tests currently available are antithetical to a liberal arts education and are inadequate to assess learning outcomes in higher education, which focus on analytical and creative thinking. UCLA concluded that the recommendations are too prescriptive, and withheld endorsement of the report.

Reviewers identified a tension between the types of assessment needed for internal, educational purposes and to demonstrate accountability to external constituencies. (UCI, UCSB, UCEP). Testing may skew program objectives toward quantifiable criteria rather than more appropriate measures. Therefore, "the public accountability aspect of assessment could actively work against the desire to use assessment as a means of improving the curriculum." (UCI)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this response.

Sincerely,

Henry C. Powell, Chair
Academic Council

Copy: Clair Brown, Chair, UEETF
Dan Greenstein, Vice Provost, Academic Programs, Planning and Coordination
Hilary Baxter, Academic Planning Analyst
Academic Council
Martha Winnacker, Academic Senate Executive Director

ACADEMIC SENATE
BERKELEY
320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

January 20, 2010

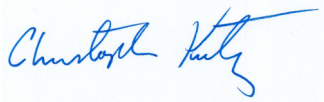
HENRY POWELL
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Harry,

On December 7, 2009, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division discussed the report cited above, informed by a report from our divisional Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). DIVCO agreed with CEP that the campuswide Undergraduate Student Learning Initiative largely supersedes the recommendations of the Task Force here at Berkeley. DIVCO also echoed CEP's cautionary note: "… there will be limitations on the implementation and execution of departmental self-assessment programs, due to the budget cuts that are adversely affecting departmental resources, particularly staff reductions but also the increased demands on faculty time."

Sincerely,



Christopher Kutz
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program

Cc: Ignacio Navarrete, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Elizabeth Wiley, Senate Analyst, Committee on Educational Policy

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January 4, 2010

HENRY POWELL, CHAIR
University of California
Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: UC Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force Report Review

The referenced report was forwarded to all standing committees and the Faculty Executive Committee in each college/professional school. The Davis Division Undergraduate Council and Faculty Executive Committee from the College of Letters and Sciences submitted comment. The Davis Division submits the following:

- While the Task Force clearly spent considerable time thinking about and making *general* recommendations for improving the assessment of the effectiveness of undergraduate education, incorporating more specific examples of how to do so successfully would have been helpful. The relative dearth of examples, in fact, seemed to reinforce a concern that such assessment, while admirable in theory, is exceedingly difficult to carry out in practice on the scale required at a major public research university. Moreover, it was observed that the present budget situation makes it even more challenging to implement new assessment processes.

- The report should explain more fully why grades — either alone or in combination with other measures — are an inadequate means of assessing learning outcomes. If grades are not serving the function of reflecting student mastery of the course material, it raises the question of why the faculty is investing time in assigning them.

- It was noted that two widely recognized measures of educational effectiveness — the percentage of graduates subsequently enrolling in graduate degree programs and the percentage working in their field — were not adequately discussed.

- There is support for localized evaluation that is at the department level. However, it is at that level the fewest resources tend to be available to undertake such an important *campus* responsibility. The report should address more fully how to resolve this issue in practical ways before any revised assessment program is implemented.

- UC Davis previously received feedback from WASC about learning outcome assessment procedures and records, and supports the move to clarify these. However, the subject report fails to provide further details on how the relevant data will be systematically obtained and analyzed, what the time frame will be used for each measurement, and whether samples, rather than entire series will be used for reports that cover multiple years.

- The process for reporting and evaluating educational objectives and student learning outcomes and what steps would satisfy WASC were discussed. The UC Davis Undergraduate Council has agreed that one of the most important steps would be making sure faculty are involved in the process and making sure the campus isn't using a top down approach to student learning. The Council also agreed that following through with the process, making sure the results are reviewed, and resolving the problems are all important steps in implementing a procedure for evaluating educational effectiveness.

- The UC Davis Undergraduate Council (UGC) agrees that the undergraduate program review process seems to be the best place for departments and programs to report on education objectives and student learning. Student learning outcomes have to be measurable and they must match up with course outcomes. The campus needs to make sure that costs are kept low. These types of assessments are a lot of work for departments. UGC suggests having workshops with the Teaching Resources Center (TRC) for departments regarding this initiative because most faculty and departments are not aware. UGC also recommends breaking the assessments up into groups such as department based outcomes vs. campus based outcomes.

Allocating new resources to assessing educational effectiveness during a period of increased class size and decreased access to classes offered should not occur under any circumstances. Many excellent ideas, like those in this report, can emerge from a focused discussion on important academic issues. However, the Davis Division does not see new initiatives, such as those discussed in this report, as being feasible in the current budget climate.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science

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December 15, 2009

Harry Powell, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: Senate Review of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force Report

At its meeting of December 11, 2009, the Irvine Division Academic Senate reviewed the request for review of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force Report. The divisional Council on Educational Policy supported recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10 regarding the desirability of developing undergraduate learning goals that are discipline-specific, embedded in the curriculum, included in departmental reviews. CEP noted that UCI has already begun this process of establishing and embedding learning goals, as well as setting up the institutional structures for using the assessment process to improve the curriculum. The Council also supported in principle the use of existing reports and alumni and exit surveys to gather data though CEP recommends that these initiatives might be delayed until the resource requirements are more readily available.

However, CEP had serious reservations about recommendations 5, 6, and 7 regarding the accountability aspect of assessment. CEP is strongly opposed to the use of standardized tests in assessing learning as such tests have not been shown to provide meaningful information at the discipline- and program-specific level, so the Report and CEP recommend that assessment should be performed. Discipline- and program-specific criteria for assessment would be difficult to quantify in a way that would provide meaningful comparisons across disciplines and institutions. Such tests would be particularly counter-productive in areas where measures of learning cannot be readily quantified in an objective way. In addition, since the results of assessment would depend to a large degree on the way that a unit defines the assessment criteria, if the criteria are defined in terms of quantitative measures geared toward public accountability and comparison across institutions, there would be a danger that the assessment would skew the program objectives toward these quantifiable criteria and to the detriment of more qualitative measures that may in fact be the more appropriate focus of student advancement in a field. This danger leads to the final point that the public accountability aspect of assessment could actively work against the desire to use assessment as a means of improving the curriculum. Program assessment should be performed in such a way that it provides meaningful information for a unit that wishes to improve its programs.

Measures of accountability, by contrast, should be focused on practical outcomes such as admission to graduate and professional schools, job placement, and alumni satisfaction. Mixing program assessment with public accountability would endanger the integrity of both enterprises.

The Council on Student Experience (CSE) supported the ideas for systemwide sharing of approaches and public sharing of data. Some CSE members were concerned that the development of these learning outcomes and assessment strategies in the current budget climate would bring about an increase in faculty workload.

The Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) had serious problems with supporting many of the recommendations of the document as it was entirely unclear what it would cost to implement the proposed departmental specific teaching assessment infrastructure; nor was there a clear "sunset clause" that would allow for any infrastructure created to be dismantled if said assessments were not working or became redundant. It was noted that the Academic Council had previously recommended that an estimation of the fiscal impact should accompany all policies or proposals that are submitted for review. In light of the current fiscal crisis, a fiscal impact statement should be a requirement for all policies and proposals.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Judith Stepan-Norris, Senate Chair

C: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director, Academic Senate

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December 18, 2009

Henry Powell
Chair, Academic Council

In Re: Report of the Undergraduate Effectiveness Taskforce

Dear Henry,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Report of the Undergraduate Effectiveness Taskforce. Upon receipt, I requested review by the Undergraduate Council (UgC), the WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee, and all Faculty Executive Committees with undergraduate programs. I received responses from the UgC and the College FEC, which are attached. The Executive Board, which speaks for the division, also reviewed the report. All three reviewing bodies identified significant deficiencies with the report, which I've outlined below. More details can be found in the attachments. The UCLA Academic Senate cannot endorse the report in its current form. We look forward to reviewing the report once more, after it has been revised. We recommend the following redactions:

- The first recommendation should be revised to read as follows: "Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, and assess majors' mastery of the learning goals." The current language, in our view, is too prescriptive.
- Because the current language in the second recommendation, specifically list of examples, is, likewise, too prescriptive, and because "resources" is redundant and refers to the economic recession without explanation, the second recommendation should be revised to read as follows: "The process and methods for properly assessing majors' achievement of the department's specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum. The assessment process should build on existing departmental structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department's instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and assessment process."
- The third recommendation is, likewise, too prescriptive regarding the Senate review process. Moreover, it is unclear what is referenced by "strategic planning process." We recommend that it be revised to read as follows: "Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment

processes. Campus administrative leaders should be informed of the results of departmental student learning assessment."

- The fourth recommendation should be revised as follows: "Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, material, and lessons learned." This language is sufficient to encapsulate the importance of communication among the various UC campuses.
- The fifth, seventh, and eighth recommendations should be stricken. In their place, recommendation number six should be revised as a statement about public accountability, without reference to aggregation and tracking of alumni. The sixth recommendation should read "Campuses should consider developing methods for communicating assessment of educational effectiveness, and achievements of students, with the public."
- Although we have no qualms with the ninth recommendation, we recommend that the tenth recommendation be revised and re-positioned as the first recommendation. We prefer the following language: "Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide." This should be the first recommendation because of the central role of the faculty in this process, which is delegated to the faculty directly from the Regents.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this important report. With the inclusion of the above revisions, the UCLA Academic Senate would welcome an opportunity to review the report again, before it is endorsed.

Sincerely,

Robin L. Garrell
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Cc: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Jaime R. Balboa, CAO, UCLA Academic Senate

UCLA *Undergraduate Council, Academic Senate*

December 9, 2009

To: Robin Garrell, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Joseph B. Watson, Chair
Undergraduate Council

Re: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce

I am writing to report that at its November 20, 2009 meeting, Professor Adrienne Lavine presented the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce to the Undergraduate Council (UgC). Members thoughtfully discussed and endorsed the Report contingent upon the revisions detailed below with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention. The student vote was 1 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions also contingent upon the emendations:

Executive Summary: Recommendations**:**

Recommendation 3**:** Revise the first sentence as follows [see *italics*]: **"**Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should *consider* includ*ing* a review of the department's learning assessment process…"

The Council agreed that the final sentence should be stricken from the recommendation, "Campus administrative leaders should incorporate the results of departmental student learning assessment into their strategic planning process."

Recommendation 6**:** Revise the first sentence as follows [see *italics*]: "Campuses should *consider* publicly communicat*ing* through relevant sources evidence of student and campus educational achievements…"

Recommendation 7**:** This recommendation should be stricken in its entirety.

Recommendation 8: Replace "families, communities, and workplaces" with "*society*". References made to "families, communities, and workplaces" throughout the Report should be replaced with "*society*".

In closing, although it is acknowledged in the Report that there will be costs associated with implementing the recommendations, it is not articulated clearly from where or whether adequate funding will be provided to campuses. The Council stressed that funding commitments and sources should be articulated in the Report.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me (x 57587; jwatson@mednet.ucla.edu) or Judith Lacertosa, UgC Principal Policy Analyst (x51194; jlacertosa@senate.ucla.edu).

cc: Jaime Balboa, CAO, Academic Senate
Judith Lacertosa, Principal Policy Analyst, Undergraduate Council
Dorothy Ayer, Assistant to Senate Leadership & CAO

UCLA MEMORANDUM

College Faculty Executive Committee
UCLA College of Letters and Science
A265 Murphy Hall

December 11, 2009

Robin Garrell
Chair of the Academic Senate
UCLA

Dear Robin,

At your request, the College Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) reviewed the report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce. We invited Professor Adrienne Lavine, member of the taskforce, to present an overview of the report and respond to questions at our November 20, 2009 meeting. After a thorough and engaging discussion, the committee determined it cannot endorse the proposal until and unless specific revisions are made. The outcome of the vote was 6 members in favor of this decision, 0 abstentions, and 1 member voting in opposition (this member favored opposing the proposal outright).

On behalf of the College FEC, I offer the following changes to the report's executive summary and recommendations that would be required for our committee to support the report.

Current Recommendation	Proposed Recommendation
1) Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, ~~map goals to the curriculum~~, and assess majors' mastery of the learning goals. ~~Learning goals should include skills related to critical thinking, analytical reasoning, written communication, and other discipline-based skills. Departmental assessment processes should be integrated with evaluation processes required by accrediting agencies so that each department has only one assessment program.~~	2) Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, and assess majors' mastery of the learning goals. Explanation: The recommendation as written is too prescriptive.
2) The process and methods for properly assessing majors' achievement of the department's specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum ~~(ie., assessment is done periodically on a sample of assignments such as papers, labs, projects, and exam questions that represent specific learning goals).~~ The assessment process should build on existing departmental ~~resources and~~ structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department's instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and the assessment process.	3) The process and methods for properly assessing majors' achievement of the department's specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum. The assessment process should build on existing departmental structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department's instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and the assessment process. Explanation: The examples are too prescriptive. Further, "resources" is both redundant and seems to

	refer without adequate explanation to the current budget crisis.
3) Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should ~~include a review of the department's learning assessment process, including an evaluation of how he results of the assessment of student learning are used to improve the undergraduate program.~~ **Include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment process.** Campus administrative leaders should ~~incorporate~~ **report** the results of departmental student learning assessment ~~into their strategic planning process.~~	4) Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment processes. Campus administrative leaders should be informed of the results of departmental student learning assessment. Explanation: This recommendation is too prescriptive regarding the Senate review process. Also, it is not clear what "Strategic planning process" refers to. This was unfamiliar to the faculty. Unclear the length of time it will take to meet the charge of the taskforce, it was advised to rephrase the wording to "summary of learning outcomes and assessment" and reporting the results of the learning assessment.
4) Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, materials, and lessons learned. ~~The Academic Senate, UC Office of the President, and other, system-wide groups should endorse and support both formal and informal information exchange about learning assessment programs~~.	5) Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, materials, and lessons learned. Explanation: The underlined portion seemed an adequate encapsulation of the importance of communication among the UC campuses.
~~5) Standardized tests to measure undergraduate learning, if used, must allow measurement of faculty-developed, curriculum-based learning goals, and the results should provide valid information that can be used to improve the department's instructional program. The learning goals, and the results should provide valid information that can be used to improve the department's instructional program. The learning goals evaluated by these tests should be appropriate to the major.~~	Explanation: The College FEC firmly believes the report should not endorse standardized testing even provisionally, since such testing is fundamentally in opposition to the model of program-based assessment being proposed.
~~6) Campuses should publicly communicate through relevant sources evidence of student and campus educational achievements, including information on every department's learning assessment program. The information should be user-friendly and available on the UC Undergraduate Campus Profiles websites which should have links to the departmental assessment programs. Information on the learning goals, the evaluation process, and measurement of majors' achievement of these goals should be included in the public information about the departmental assessment program.~~	6) Campuses should consider developing methods for communicating assessments of educational effectiveness, and achievements of students, with the public. Explanation: Recommendation 6, 7, and 8 should be replaced with a general statement about public accountability, without reference to aggregation and tracking alumni.
~~7) Campuses should consider developing methods of aggregating measures of students' achievement of departmental learning goals into meaningful,~~	

~~comprehensive public statements about overall undergraduates' learning achievement. Development and reporting of such aggregated measures is sufficiently complex that campuses should be supported in this effort by UCOP, the system-wide Academic Senate, and campus administrators (e.g., Undergraduate Deans).~~	
~~8) Because the value of a university education is made manifest in contributions over the graduates' lifetimes, full assessment of the effectiveness of a UC undergraduate education must include information about what those graduates contribute to their families, communities, and workplaces. UEETF supports the development of a UC exit and alumni survey across campuses.~~	
9) Campus assessment and accountability activities should include the broad array of information on student and campus achievement provided by existing reports, such as the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), the Campus Profiles, and the University's Accountability Framework. UC should continue to collect information about the overall undergraduate experience to augment information derived from departmentally-based assessments.	No Change
~~10)~~ **1)** Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide.	1) Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide. Explanation: This should be the first recommendation because of the central role faculty will play in this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this Senate Action Item for Review. You are welcome to contact me at (310) 206-2278 or knapp@humnet.ucla.edu with questions. Dayna Baker Weintraub, Executive Coordinator, is also available to assist you and she can be reached at (310) 794-5579 or dbweintraub@college.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Ray Knapp
Chair, College Faculty Executive Committee

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December 10, 2009

Harry C. Powell
Professor of Pathology
Chair, UC Systemwide Academic Senate
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Harry:

REPORT OF THE SYSTEMWIDE UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS TASKFORCE

The above report was sent for review to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and Preparatory Education. CEP found the report thorough and instructive. In addition, the Committee considers this as a very timely document for UCR as we are currently in the process of implementing methods for measuring learning outcomes and implementing assessment procedures, as required by our accreditation agency. CEP agreed with the Report that the development of learning outcomes should be done at the departmental level; the campus role should be to provide the infrastructure for departments and programs to use the information gathered to improve their teaching effectiveness.

The Committee also agreed that campus-wide learning achievement measures would provide a useful addition to the ones to be obtained by departments and programs. In contrast with the Task Force's conclusion, the CEP considered the Collegiate Learning Assessment as a useful though incomplete tool in this respect. Several complementary measures were discussed, including the possibility of asking (and subsidizing) undergraduates to take the GRE examinations early and late in their careers. The Committee did not attempt to construct a concrete plan for implementing such processes as this would lie beyond the scope of the discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Anthony W. Norman
Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry and
Biomedical Sciences; and
Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
Sellyna Ehlers, Director of UCR Academic Senate office

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Joel Michaelsen, Chair
Deborah Karoff, Executive Director

January 4, 2010

Henry Powell, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Henry,

The Santa Barbara Division consulted with the following councils and committees in regards to the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Report: Undergraduate Council (UgC), Council on Research and Instructional Resources (CRIR), and the Faculty Executive Committees from Letters and Science and the College of Creative Studies.

There is recognition among all the reviewers as to the importance of both of the issues addressed within the report, including the dual needs to assist each UC academic program and campus to assess its effectiveness in meeting overall academic goals, and the interest in generating measures of accountability for the various constituencies to which UC education contributes, including the public at large, the state legislature, etc.. Council and Committee members value the analysis done by the Task Force in regards to the review of assessment programs and their overall effectiveness. Most groups agree with the finding that standardized assessments are not effective, citing support for Point 5, on page 19: "Standardized tests to measure undergraduate learning, if used, must allow measurement of faculty-developed, curriculum-based learning goals, and the results should provide valid information that can be used to improve the department's instructional program." Undergraduate Council affirms this statement when it says "the most useful indicators will come from assessments generated within individual disciplines and/or programs by the faculty working in them." All groups want to re-affirm that any assessment programs are the responsibility of the faculty.

At the same time, Undergraduate Council notes that there each discipline approaches assessment measures in different ways. They state that, "while an oversimplification, there was a general trust in assessment measures by faculty members in the sciences and engineering disciplines and a near equivalent distrust of them by faculty members in the Humanities and Fine Arts. The former recognized that in many ways, these forms of assessment are already in place within their disciplines, provided either by ABET accreditation or through standardized certifications important within the discipline. Within the Humanities and Fine Arts, however, concerns were expressed on two levels. The first had to do with the philosophical consideration of whether it was possible to reduce assessments to quantifiable measures; the second with whether the measures that could be articulated might *not* reflect the priorities of the disciplinary education, yet find traction simply in their ease of application."

Of primary concern is that as data from assessment programs is aggregated into larger and larger data sets, the less useful it becomes to evaluate the true learning of undergraduate students. This might be related to the stated goals of assessment programs and whether it is possible to have programs that satisfy an internal and an external need. CRIR suggests it is problematic that the "internal and external uses are comingled, the assumption being that the same kind of matrix that we use internally will be useable and accessible by the general public. A distinction between the internal evaluation and the external document is essential. The internal matrices are already in place by most departments to one extent or another. How the UC communicates the current information to the public and how it can then be understood and audited by the public is more germane to the focus of any task force devoted to the issue of improving UC's chances for external, public funding. "

In addition, there is concern that assessment programs could create the kind of pressures currently seen in K-12 education whereby "teaching to the test" becomes the major focus in a course. CRIR comments that "standardized testing is a completely inadequate way to assess the educational process in higher education. If we take No Child Left Behind as an example of learning outcomes (to use the parlance favored by UCOP), it is quite clear that it reduces analytical and creative thinking. Further, it promotes a system that encourages conformity to and prioritization of "outcome" quantification, rather than the substance of real education. These are antithetical to a liberal arts education."

Finally, several groups commented on the infusion of resources that would be required to assist faculty in the development of assessment tools and for the development of useful reporting systems. Obviously, the needed resources would be difficult to obtain in the current budgetary situation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Joel Michaelsen, Chair

UCSB Division

U N I V E R S I T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A , S A N T A C R U Z

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125 CLARK KERR HALL
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December 15, 2009

Henry Powell, Chair
Academic Council

RE: UCSC Response to Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Harry,

The following committees from the Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate reviewed the UEET Report; Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW), Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB), and the Committee on Teaching (COT).

In general, committees find considerable agreement with the principle of faculty responsibility for assessing student learning outcomes. Reaching this goal will require considerable attention to disciplinary detail and variation. As importantly, the task may require a non-trivial dedication of resources. On this last point, committees raised questions and concerns. I will attempt a summary of the varied responses: there are points of agreement, questions and suggestions.

I. Points of agreement

Committees were in complete agreement with the principles that guided the report, namely that responsibility for assessing student learning resides with the faculty; that assessment should be discipline specific and locally (campus) defined, with Senate oversight and participation; and that departmental assessment programs must be supported by the required administrative resources and infrastructure for effective implementation. In general, we accept the findings and recommendations as sound, though we were surprised that no representative from UCSC participated on the committee despite our campus' historical founding commitment to undergraduate educational excellence.
We were also somewhat taken aback by the limited and quite inconsistent examples of "assessment" reported as underway at the various UC campuses, and regret that whomever reported on UCSC's efforts neglected to mention CEP's ambitious plans, laid out under General Education (GE) reform last year, to routinely review GE courses.

The Committees also agree on the definition of assessment as an on-going three-stage process that identifies learning goals, measures students' mastery of the goals, and uses the results to improve instructional programs as well as to refine learning goals**.** Also, we agreed that the process and methods for assessing majors' achievement of specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum and should provide ongoing feedback to improve the department's instructional program. The process should also be symbiotic to allow for modifications of the learning goals and the assessment process if needed.

We were particularly glad to learn that standardized tests are not recommended as the means to carry out assessment. We agree that clearly defined educational objectives-- coupled with appropriate learning assessment programs--have the potential to significantly improve the quality of undergraduate education at UC. The assessment process should be kept as simple and straightforward as possible without resorting to standardized tests. It would be preferable to integrate assessment with required coursework, including papers, exams, projects and performances. For some disciplines, the analysis of pass rates and grade distributions in specific courses--together with surveys of graduates and alumni--may provide an adequate assessment of learning outcomes.

II. Areas of concern

1. Time and resources: Although we agree that the assessment process should build on existing departmental structures, we are very much aware of the resource implications. The committees believe that developing the assessment process, performing departmental/program assessment, and developing accountability reports will require time and effective administrative support at the campus and system-wide levels. The following are some of the needs we identified: faculty time, staff assistance, training, and consultation.

Our Committee on Teaching was especially interested in learning more about UC Irvine's multi-year plan to assist faculty in establishing assessment programs. This initiative seems to have provided workshops, consultations, and assessment grants to Senate faculty "to help identify learning goals in the major, to align learning goals to the major's curriculum, and to assess whether graduating majors were meeting those goals." Another campus worth examining is UCSB, where we learned that sponsored events have helped focus attention on the benefits and challenges of assessment through its Office of Academic Programs, with faculty grant support. Access to other models and receiving information on what other departments/campuses are doing would, in the end, help maximize resources. Campus administration should facilitate this process of consultation and should provide the corresponding venues. It might be helpful to provide an example of an assessment program on which faculty/departments can model their assessment tools.

2. Intercampus collaboration: Campus development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses. The report mentions several efforts at sister campuses which seem to have made headway and are already in place. Consultation with these campuses would be very helpful. For example, COT was very interested in learning more about UCLA's use of capstone courses for assessing student learning for WASC review (departments are provided with assistance in establishing learning outcomes and associated assessment approaches). Their document *Guidelines for Developing and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Majors* might be of great assistance to other campuses in this process.

3. Training and mentoring: We strongly believe that parties involved in the process would profit tremendously from concerted efforts directed to training. Although faculty know and can state very well the learning goals in the courses they teach, it might sometimes be difficult to translate them into discourse that the general public or "stake holders" can clearly understand. Junior faculty, the sector that will likely bear the brunt of responsibility for stating learning goals and assessment, would probably profit the most from training and mentoring efforts.

There is no specific mention or discussion of curricular diversity, diversity assessment or diversity accountability anywhere in the report. We are concerned about this omission given that an absolute majority of the people of the State of California, whom we presumably serve, are people of color. Moreover, we felt that with current global economic, political, and cultural configurations that curricular diversity is essential to the excellence of the undergraduate curriculum and the assessment of its success. Our Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity specifically recommends that the Report suggest the UC-wide development of "core courses" very early in students' undergraduate training that focus on the multi-national, multi-cultural, and multi-racial character of society with each campus' faculty designing what they feel is most appropriate. We note a tendency in the Report toward quantification by flattening out the diverse kinds of knowledge that students have and/or faculty may wish to teach that represent an understanding of the diversity of the human community and the vast character of human cultures and experiences. This quantification tends to reify a Eurocentric and Western epistemology giving them a privileged and permanent

status that does not adequately assess or account for global diversity. This tendency toward quantification also tends to privilege the sciences over the humanities and humanistic social sciences, and assumes a common measurement scale for all the UCs.

III. Questions

The following are questions that arose as we discussed the contents of the Task Force report:

1. GE reform: The Committee was wondering how the UEETF's present recommendations on how UC campuses should assess undergraduate success in reporting both to UCOP and the public fits in with UCSC's GE reform. We thought that it might be timely if the current efforts to reformulate course proposals to fit the new GE requirements take into account the recommendations from this report. We were also wondering if these recommendations had made their way to the departmental level, where new course descriptions are presently being put together.

2. Articulation: The question of whether there were any provisions for articulation within the departments and between departments and the divisions was brought up in the discussion.

3. Undergraduate experience: If the undergraduate experience was to be assessed (beyond the academic), how should it be approached?

4. Resources: It may be desirable to produce an implementation plan, with an explicit accounting of resource needs and funding sources.

IV. Suggestions

1. Minors: In our discussions, the issue of extending this process beyond departmental majors to minors was brought up. We believe minor programs should be included and encouraged to formulate assessment programs as well.

2. Skills vs. knowledge: The difference between "skills" and "knowledge" also came up, and it was suggested that both be assessed.

3. Students' investment: Some of our members pointed out that a student's investment in a course is an important metric that should be included in any assessment program. It should also be examined if the learning method was meaningful to the individual student.

Sincerely,

Lori Kletzer, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO UCSD

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January 20, 2010

Professor Henry C. Powell
Chair, Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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Dear Harry,

In response to your request of October 8, 2009, the San Diego Division sought and received comment from the appropriate Divisional committees on the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force. The Divisional Senate Council also discussed the Report at its meeting on January 4, 2010.

Reviewers agreed that the sentiments expressed in the Report are laudable. The careful consideration of the knowledge that faculty members wish to impart to students and the construction of effective means for evaluating whether that knowledge has been mastered are fundamental to a successful university education. These goals are implemented in a myriad of ways on each campus, necessarily differing by, and dependent on, the nature of each discipline. In some disciplines, such as engineering, external and long-standing professional organizations have established national criteria already used on UC campuses. Also, some campuses (including UCSD) have developed educational effectiveness measurements as one aspect of participating in a WASC accreditation review.

Concerns were expressed, therefore, that the report's purpose is more political than educational. The report appears to propose a new level of (unfunded) bureaucracy to monitor the accomplishment of goals that are already core to the University and already being implemented on campuses. At a time when available funding for teaching is being slashed, implementation of this proposal could inevitably redirect scarce resources away from essential tasks. Reviewers urged the examination of other ways of communicating to the public the effectiveness of UC's undergraduate educational enterprise that would not result in new unfunded mandates to the campuses.

Sincerely,

W S Hodgkiss

William S. Hodgkiss, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

cc: F. Powell

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Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH, Chair
Robert Newcomer, PhD, Vice Chair
Peter Loomer, DDS, PhD, Secretary
Jean Olson, MD, Parliamentarian

January 4, 2010

Henry C. Powell, MD
Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: UCSF Response to the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Chair Powell:

Please find attached the UCSF Division response to the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force, as prepared by our Committee on Educational Policy.

Please contact me (efuentes@sfghpeds.ucsf.edu)or UCSF Academic Senate Director Heather Alden (heather.alden@ucsf.edu) if you have questions or need more information.

Sincerely yours,

Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH

Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate

cc: Martha Winnacker, Director, UC Academic Senate

University of California
San Francisco

Academic Senate
senate.ucsf.edu

Communication from the Committee on Educational Policy
Thomas Kearney, PharmD, Chair

December 16, 2009

Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate
500 Parnassus Avenue, Box 0764

Re: Review of the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Chair Fuentes-Afflick,

As requested, at its November 4 and December 9, 2009 meetings, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force submitted to the San Francisco Division for review and comment.

Overall, the committee supports the ideas put forth in the report however they have concerns about the burden of implementation and the use of faculty and department time on matters that might already be handled by other campus agencies such as alumni associations. The concerns were as follows:

(1) The report's suggestions, especially in tracking undergraduate learning objectives, seem burdensome and difficult to implement. While the committee agrees that there should be some external measure to determine if students are developing competencies, it wondered about the ability of faculty to implement the proposed ideas.

(2) The report focused "on defining and assessing student learning outcomes as the primary way to evaluate educational effectiveness" (pg. 7). These are activities faculty deliver and control, however the proposed methods of tracking and determining said effectiveness require substantial financial and physical manpower to implement and maintain, which would also be beyond what can be supported in the current fiscal environment.

(3) CEP also wondered why the tracking of former students didn't fall to the campus alumni association rather than departments? If these organizations contact alumni to determine living locations why not also ask about professions and other information sought by the departments?

(4) Separately, if tracking were to start at the point of acceptance to the University by an alumni association, the University could then track all of their information whether or not they choose to attend that campus. Then, if they pursue graduate education, the university system already will have data on them. If a database such as this was centralized for use by all at UC Systemwide, it would be a phenomenal resource for online surveys, and other options, especially for seeking of donations.

We therefore support and recognize the potential value of the ten recommendations as put forth by the UEETF, but suggest that the timetable for implementation be contingent upon the availability of adequate

resources and administrative support. This will require an additional assessment of the short-term and long-term fiscal impact for implementation of each recommendation and identification of who bears responsibility for additional resources.

Sincerely,

The Committee on Educational Policy

Thomas Kearney, PharmD, Chair
Peter Loomer, DDS, PhD, Vice Chair
Abbey Alkon, RN, PhD, PNP
Sergio Baranzini, PhD
Kurt Giles, PhD
Vineeta Singh, MD
Douglas Schmucker, PhD
Sophia Saaed, DMD
Elisabeth Wilson, MD, MPH

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January 14, 2010

HENRY POWELL, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force Report

Dear Harry,

The University Committee on Academic Freedom discussed the July 2009 report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force at its meeting on November 10, 2009. The Committee had several concerns about the proposal, which are reported below.

Committee members noted that every campus already has a complex of set of processes for the evaluation of teaching at every level, from individual courses and instructors to undergraduate and graduate degree programs. UCAF members were concerned that report of the Task Force did not give sufficient attention to the processes that are already in place, and to ways in which the current proposals could be integrated with them. In so far as the Task Force Report leads to the addition of new forms of evaluation and/or higher levels of reporting beyond what departments and campuses are currently doing, it will require additional resources, which need to be acknowledged and budgeted for.

Most generally, the Committee noted that the responsibility to determine course content and instructional methods and to evaluate teaching has been delegated by the Regents to the Faculty. In so far as the recommendations of the Task Force are going to lead to the development of campus-wide and system-wide forms of assessment and accountability for undergraduate education, the Senate should be more than just "a key player" in these developments. These new forms of evaluation must remain under the control of the Faculty.

Sincerely,

Raymond Russell

Raymond Russell, Chair
UCAF

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January 4, 2010

Henry Powell, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force

Dear Harry,

UCEP had the opportunity to discuss the report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force (UEETF) during its November and December meetings. Overall, UCEP endorses the basis for evaluating undergraduate educational effectiveness as outlined in the report, including that "responsibility for assessing student learning resides with the faculty; should be discipline specific and locally (campus) defined".

The strength of undergraduate programs at UC stems from the faculty and their grounding in a multi-campus research university, and it is appropriate that development of methods for assessing achievement of educational goals originate within the curriculum from those who know the programs best. At the same time, there is a need for objective oversight, and the UEETF suggestion that the assessment process be included within the normal program review is both appropriate and necessary. Program review assures that faculty and administrators who understand the discipline being reviewed evaluate the program. The periodic nature of the review process will not only ensure that outcome assessment is regularly reviewed but will also provide an evaluation of how outcome assessment is being used to improve teaching and learning. We agree with the report in that this review process should not be in addition to other assessment means, but should take advantage of existing structures used to evaluate and improve programs and be incorporated as a part of other programs for assessment developed for accreditation agencies such as WASC or ABET.

While there has been national interest in trying to use different measures of outcome assessment as accountability measures, we believe the principal benefit of outcome assessment to be its use as a means of evaluating and improving educational programs. We support the idea that each program should provide web access to their learning objectives and assessment results, and believe that making this information publicly available provides a measure of accountability.

We do not believe that much would be gained by trying to aggregate program assessments into some overall college or university measure. We agree with the report's assessment that the general standardized exams currently available, such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), are poorly conceived and validated and do not adequately assess learning at a disciplinary level where it would be most appropriate.

We particularly do not see substantial benefits to the idea that programs should try to assess “value added”, as advocated by the CLA and as is currently being done in the VSA program being piloted by many universities. While UEETF advocates developing methods for aggregating measures of learning achievement, the use of overall measures of learning to describe the effectiveness of the education at a given University is at odds with the philosophy that learning assessment should be discipline-based and developed at the program level. While some overall assessment of outcomes expected from a General Education curriculum is appropriate, such an evaluation should be in addition to a disciplinary and curriculum-based assessment program. Each UC campus has its own particular strengths and disciplinary emphases, and the comparative benefits to students and UC constituencies from the diverse set of programs at any given campus cannot be evaluated by a single numerical measure, nor is it appropriate to compare campuses using some aggregate measure from different sets of programs and departments. We support the UEETF suggestion of using exit and alumni surveys to provide insight into graduate contributions to their families, workplace, and community. Overall, we believe that approaches to assessing and improving curriculum and approaches to demonstrating accountability should be addressed separately.

While we are very supportive of a disciplinary-based faculty-driven assessment process, we are also concerned with the likely time involvement for faculty to develop such a process. It is essential that there be a support system readily available for the development of assessment programs, including access to the help of experts in the field of assessment to provide guidance for developing measures, availability of a means for communication within and among similar disciplines on different campuses to share assessment ideas and methods, development of a systemwide repository that could store examples of good practices, and funding to support local campus development efforts and intercampus sharing of information.

While we understand some of the rationale used by WASC and other accrediting agencies for not wanting to base learning effectiveness on the letter grading system that is a part of the educational system, we do believe that grades can represent a valid means of assessing student achievement in different disciplinary areas. It should be feasible in at least some situations to imbed learning assessment within the already existing process for evaluating student learning and assigning grades. The course of action proposed by UEETF makes the assessment process more visible and formal, and it is likely that the basis for grades will be more apparent when the proposed assessment processes are fully implemented.

The committee appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback on the report from the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force.

Sincerely,

Keith R. Williams

Keith Williams, Chair
UCEP