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November 21, 2007

**SYSTEMWIDE SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIRS**  
**DIVISION CHAIRS**

**RE: Informal<sup>1</sup> Systemwide Senate Review of A Proposed UC Undergraduate Mission Statement**

Dear Systemwide Senate Committee and Division Chairs:

On behalf of Chair Michael T. Brown, a proposed UC Undergraduate Mission Statement is being forwarded for your *informal* review and comments. As background information, in November of 2005, the Academic Planning Council requested that the University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) consider whether the University of California should form a Senate-Administration Task Force on Undergraduate Education to make recommendations about UC's undergraduate enrollment and program planning decision-making over the next decade. In April 2006, the Academic Council endorsed the UCEP recommended the formation of the Task Force and that among other things the Task Force would "... develop and articulate a clearer philosophy of undergraduate education that would enhance public understanding of the unique value of an undergraduate education at UC." The Undergraduate Education Task Force has met, and believing that a UC Undergraduate Mission Statement would serve to specify systemwide goals for undergraduate education, has drafted the proposed statement that Council has agreed to send out for informal review and comment. The Task Force use the comments received to revise the statement that will be sent to the Academic Planning Council who will determine the proposal's readiness for formal review.

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<sup>1</sup> "Informal" review is basically no different than a request for a formal review, other than it gives the Senate an opportunity to have input **at the beginning stages of a proposal**, and providing guidance to the originators as they develop the proposal that will at a future date be sent out for formal review.

In order to meet the Task Force's February 1, 2008 deadline, we are requesting that both **Systemwide Senate Committees** and **Divisions** submit responses by **January 9, 2008**.

As a reminder to Systemwide Senate Committee Chairs, please note that **requests for comments are sent out to all System-wide Senate Committees. Each committee may decide whether or not to opine.** Please notify the Senate Office either directly by emailing me or through your Committee Analyst, if your committee chooses not to participate in this review.

Cordially,



María Bertero-Barceló, Executive Director  
Academic Senate

Encl: 1 - Towards A UC Undergraduate Mission Statement

Copy: Academic Council Chair Michael T. Brown

Divisional Senate Directors

Academic Senate Committee Analysts

October 22, 2007

To: Academic Council

From: Keith Williams, Chair, UCEP  
Chair, Undergraduate Education Planning Group

Re: Towards a UC Undergraduate Mission Statement

Attached is a draft of a document the Undergraduate Education Planning Group, a group appointed last spring by Provost Hume, has been working on as part of its task of identifying issues for in-depth planning efforts related to UC undergraduate education. The group felt that there needed to be a framework for future planning efforts, and decided that a mission statement, focused more specifically on the goals of undergraduate education, might serve as a set of guiding principles for future committees asked to address specific planning topics.

The specific intent for the mission statement was that it reflect what we think is or should be occurring in undergraduate education at UC, and that it reflect the specific qualities unique to the University of California. It is labeled "Towards a UC Undergraduate Mission Statement" because we view this as an evolving document that can still profit from input from a variety of sources. The current format includes a comprehensive mission statement, followed by a more in-depth explanation of what is meant by the various phrases included in that statement. We believe a somewhat shorter and more concise statement would be also useful, but have left that to evolve from further discussion of the statements.

The Academic Planning Council (APC) met October 16, 2007 and recommended that this document be circulated for informal comment to a variety of committees, including the Academic Council (AC) and whatever other committees AC deems appropriate for campus input. The document is going to be circulated as well to UCEP, the Deans of Undergraduate Education, ASUC, and a committee of admissions directors. The attached document is available for distribution to campuses as the Academic Council deems appropriate.

The mission statement is being put out for informal discussion of the evolving mission statement, asking for comments on: the format, style, and length; suggestions for wording changes, corrections, additions, deletions; other items or statements/phrases that should be included that highlight the unique aspects of UC undergraduate education; and whether a future evolution of this document should be considered for adoption as a UC undergraduate mission statement?

The Undergraduate Education Planning Group will craft a revised UC UG mission statement based on feedback from the various groups reviewing the document, and will resubmit the revised draft to APC. APC will then suggest if and what further action should take place concerning the statement. I ask that any comments be returned by Feb. 1, 2008 so that a revision can be available by the spring meeting of APC. Comments on the document can be directed to Suzanne Klausner in the Office of the President ([Suzanne.Klausner@ucop.edu](mailto:Suzanne.Klausner@ucop.edu)).

## **Towards a UC Undergraduate Mission Statement**

The mission of undergraduate education at the University of California is directly related to the fundamental mission of the University in a world-class research and public university context. The mission of undergraduate education is to provide a civil and inclusive environment that conveys the most current knowledge, theories, ideas and perspectives; provides insights and experiences based in research and practice; fosters the abilities to interpret, organize and communicate information critically, ethically, analytically and creatively; and cultivates resourcefulness, imagination and innovation. Graduates should be capable of contributing to society in ways that encourage independent thinking and enhance leadership potential, and that facilitate meaningful engagement with others in diverse vocational, living and social environments. They should be capable of making significant and relevant contributions to issues important to California, the nation and the world, and be able to improve the quality of their lives and the quality of life of others. The mission is enabled and facilitated by the advantages provided by the richness and variety of a multi-campus public land-grant research University, its programs and facilities, and its distinguished faculty.

## **What does this mission statement really mean?**

The mission of undergraduate education at the University of California is directly related to the fundamental mission of the University in a world-class research and public university context.

- The University's fundamental missions are teaching, research and public service occurring in the context of a world-class research and public university.

The mission of undergraduate education is to provide a civil and inclusive environment...

- UC is committed to providing an environment open to, appreciative of, and reflecting differences in culture, race, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, and social circumstance. The campus community encourages the presentation and discussion of diverse and competing ideas, and is committed to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all, with freedom to express personal beliefs within appropriate bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.

...that conveys the most current knowledge, theories, ideas, and perspectives; ...

- While attaining a base of knowledge is important, even more vital is understanding how information can provide a better theoretical understanding that can lead to a more thorough comprehension and help initiate new ideas and insights. Fundamental to this is putting information into context by viewing it from a variety of perspectives to appreciate how different aspects apply in varying situations.

... provides insights and experiences based in research and practice; ...

- Research is fundamental to educational efforts at UC. Students encounter research and its process in a variety of ways - e.g., through instructional and faculty research laboratories; through undergraduate research projects; and through faculty lectures that incorporate the most up-to-date information and interpretation. There is also much to learn from the practical world, and in addition to real-world examples inherent in coursework and laboratories, engagement in local and regional activities through internships, volunteer work and community service adds another valuable dimension and context to a student's education.

... fosters the abilities to interpret, organize and communicate information...

- Beyond having a base of knowledge is the need to understand methodologies used to interpret and organize the constantly fluctuating scope of information available, and it is essential to be able to communicate orally and through the written word these thoughts and concepts to others who might learn from and contribute to their value. These abilities are important in both general and disciplinary aspects of education.

... critically, ethically, analytically and creatively; ...

These abilities should be applied in a reasoned way...

- critically – refers to the importance of constantly challenging assumptions and conclusions while being objective and keeping an open mind to unanticipated or unexpected relationships.
- ethically – following moral principles is a fundamental part of the basic tenets of academic freedom and responsibility, and are essential in all aspects of teaching, research and service.
- analytically – analysis should be done logically, systematically, and thoroughly so that the conclusions reached have the best chance of being representative of the true state of affairs
- creatively – new ideas and new approaches often come from using imagination and creativity to examine information from different perspectives and explore novel interpretations – to think beyond the parameters of traditional consciousness and experience

... and cultivates resourcefulness, imagination and innovation.

- At least as important as gaining knowledge is developing the ability to use that knowledge in novel, productive and useful ways that enables personal and professional growth. UC strives to develop in students the ability to be resourceful, to initiate and to innovate, bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives to discovery and understanding. A capstone experience involving teaching, research or public service could be one way of demonstrating significant progress in developing these abilities..

Graduates should be capable of contributing to society ...

- UC graduates can contribute to the world in which we live in a variety of ways – through interactions in daily living, through their chosen field of work, or by continuing their education in graduate or professional schools.

... in ways that encourage independent thinking and enhance leadership potential,...

- UC strives to produce graduates who have developed skills that will enable them to progress to positions of leadership. Fundamental to this is being able to work independently and creatively while also having the ability to work effectively within groups.

...and that facilitate meaningful engagement with others in diverse vocational, living and social environments.

- The need to interact effectively with others, and the benefits gained by doing so, are of basic importance to success in modern society. These interactions might occur during ones personal life or in the workplace or other professional environments. Engagement can occur in a wide variety of

circumstances and might include cross-cultural encounters, span socioeconomic levels, or involve individuals and groups that have both similar and differing views.

They should be capable of making significant and relevant contributions to issues important to California, the nation and the world,.,.

- UC graduates have the potential to make important and relevant contributions in the various areas of their expertise and understanding. Depending on their living and work situations, this might be within a local or regional scope, or might expand to California, national or global activities, and contributions can take place in varied areas such as business, education, government, or public interest.

...and be able to improve the quality of their lives and the quality of life of others.

- An education should have personal benefits through improving the quality of life of the individual involved in addition to gaining an education. Coincident with this, however, is a responsibility to use that education in ways that benefit society in general and enhance the quality of life for others.

The mission is enabled and facilitated by the advantages provided by the richness and variety of a multi-campus public land-grant research University ...

- In addition to the resources of each individual campus, students can draw upon the combined expertise and assets across the multi-campus UC system., benefiting from intercampus programs, systemwide centers in Sacramento and Washington DC, cooperative global research efforts, and the many interactions UC has with government, business, and public-interest entities.
- The land-grant origin for the University ensures that there is direct benefit to California and the nation from the research and teaching efforts of UC faculty, exemplified by programs such as the continuing education efforts of Agricultural Extension offices.

... its programs and facilities ...

- The educational efforts at UC are varied and extend well beyond classroom and laboratory walls. The undergraduate experience is enabled by a variety of support services, student-related programs and activities, and service and internship opportunities that enhance the more structured and traditional learning environment. The collaboration and combined efforts of the multi-campus system add a variety of additional opportunities for students.
- UC is noted for the quality of its libraries, museums and arts venues, the distinction of its research and teaching laboratories, and the attractiveness and originality of campus infrastructure....and its distinguished faculty.
- The breadth and depth of faculty expertise and the quality of their accomplishments provide an exciting and inspiring foundation in all areas of discovery and innovation. Each undergraduate campus has a broadly-based liberal arts curriculum complemented by faculty with specific disciplinary expertise and accomplishments that rank them among the best in the world.

### **Why Have A Mission Statement Focusing on Undergraduate Education?**

- **Relevance to UC Constituents**

- UC strives to reach a quality and effectiveness in teaching as intentionally and fervently as it is noted for in research. A mission statement focusing on undergraduate education provides a general benchmark against which students, parents, faculty, administrators and others can judge the efficacy of teaching efforts, courses, majors and degrees. The mission statement can be a philosophical foundation upon which outcome measures of success can be based.
- UC desires to incorporate undergraduate students as full participants in the UC mission of research, service and teaching. A mission statement should reflect those goals and highlight specific examples of how undergraduates benefit from and contribute to the UC mission..
- The ideals advocated by the mission statement should be an integral part of daily University consciousness, and only by intentionally and continually evaluating the effectiveness of efforts to meet these educational objectives will we have the best chance of reaching them. A succinct but cogent mission statement is the first step toward such evaluation by providing a clear statement of purpose.