December 10, 2009

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

Dear Harry:

RE: Final report of the 2008-09 joint Administration-Senate Task Force on the Education Abroad Program

The above report was sent for review to our UCR Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Planning and Budget (P&B) and International Education. Common among the three committee reports was the lack of specific suggestions. Regarding the campus home for the EAP program, there is a long history of the EAP being located at the Santa Barbara Campus. There was no clear explanation on how the process is to be streamlined and what the involvement of the campus departments would be. P&B members, felt that the document could have been improved significantly if an organization chart had been included that indicated the lines of reporting among the Director of UCEAP, the UOEAP Governing Committee (recommendation 2), UCEAP, University Committee on International Education (UCIE), the Budget Working Group (recommendation 4), campus EAP directors and UCOP (i.e., the Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Programs and Coordination) and (b) lists the responsibilities of each unit. It is not clear who is in charge, the UCEAP Director or the UOEAP Governing Committee? Both the UOEAP Governing Committee and Budget Working Group, include members of UCIE and UCP&B, suggesting that the Budget Working Group could logically be a subcommittee of the Governing Committee assisted by the staff of UOEAP and UCOP.

P&B members also felt that in its present iteration, the proposed organization, and hence, administration of UCEAP appears unnecessarily complicated and poorly integrated, which will likely slow implementation of the joint Senate-Administration Task Force’s recommendations and weaken the academic programmatic strength of UCEAP and student access in the present budget climate.

In addition, the Committee on International Education had the following to add:
UOEAP Governing Committee

We are very concerned about Recommendation 2 regarding the UOEAP Governing Committee, which "will act as the primary governing structure through which UOEAP will coordinate its activities with other UC internationalization efforts systemwide." As described in the report and in its Appendix B, the Governing Committee is chaired and led by the UC Executive Vice President & Provost, who has also appointed its membership which reports directly to him, mitigating the spirit of shared governance. While the nature of the membership continues to be in a state of flux, many of the current appointees have little, if any, experience with international affairs, including the EAP. We would like to see: 1) a more comprehensive representation of the UC campuses, since imbalances currently exist, and 2) more representation by senate faculty members, preferably those with EAP experience. We are concerned that important votes were taken at the first Governing Committee meeting without full membership. Although members of the University Committee on International Education (UCIE), including its Chair, are among the appointees of the Governing Committee, we are uncertain as to the role of the UCIE and its relationship to the Governing Committee. We would like the Academic Senate to make sure that the UCIE is consulted on important issues taken up by the Governing Committee.

UOEAP Relocation and the Issue of Course Articulation

With respect to the proposed relocation of UOEAP (Recommendation 3) in 2010-2011 to a campus location from its current Goleta facility, we feel that the Task Force Report has not provided a convincing argument for the advantages of the move (p. 5). There is a long history of the EAP being located at the Santa Barbara campus, and in light of the many issues and concerns that have been raised; it seems that it would be appropriate to have it placed at another campus. Financial details have not been supplied, nor are we clear as to how specific centralized functions now executed by UOEAP, such as collection of fees, remitting of financial aid, and other important processes, will become the responsibilities of each individual campus. How shall we ensure that UOEAP, after it becomes part of one UC campus, continues to serve the need of all the other UC campuses? We have reasonable doubt that the UC system, at present, has the financial stability to successfully make such a move.

One important concern is the role of the UOEAP’s involvement in monitoring the rigor of courses offered at International Study Centers. Certainly, course-by-course articulation is a function of individual campuses, but securing necessary information about the courses is greatly facilitated by a centralized UOEAP function, and this important service should be maintained. While all EAP courses are by Senate agreement transferable, campus departments must have significant course information to fulfill their articulation obligation. Over the years, the professional staff members of UOEAP have deep understanding of educational system and course construction at all EAP partner institutions. Without the consistent and readily available information from the UOEAP staff, campuses and students would be significantly delayed in the processes of advising, graduation, etc. It would take each campus years to build the trust with overseas staff, and to gather course information. It also requires an unnecessary expenditure, of an unknown amount, to attempt to replicate such a core UOEAP function.

UOEAP Fee & Other Cost Effective Means of Administration
The Task Force Report has made the Recommendations (Recommendation 4 and 5) regarding the development and implementation of a simplified UOEAP budget appropriations scheme, including the imposition on students of a UOEAP fee.

A proposal of an alternate EAP Fee Structure drafted by Vice Provost Dan Greenstein is currently on the table. We strongly embrace a structure in which students participating in EAP should be paying fees equivalent to, or at least very close to, the cost of studying at their home UC campus; such a fee structure has traditionally been a successful “selling point” for the EAP to attract student participation. In our opinion, it may limit the access of students to the education abroad experience; students from low income families may be especially impacted. As such, the imposition of a new EAP fee structure may be especially important to the UCR campus given the percentage of our students on financial aid.

Another issue is the substitution of EAP fees for registration and education fees during the quarters in which students participate in the program and travel. It is imperative that the participants retain the status of “UC Students” even if they are not paying explicitly defined UC student fees, should such a substitution model be adopted; their UC student status must be preserved. Students must be able to register and receive grades on their home campus, as they currently do; they must remain eligible for all forms of financial aid; they must be able to use their eligible financial aid to fund EAP participation, and retain all rights and privileges available to UC students. The proposed fee imposition must result in some “return to aid” funds to enable disadvantaged students to participate. These funds should be transparent, not intercepted elsewhere in the system, and should be returned to the campuses in agreement with the number of participants from each individual UC campus.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

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