



February 5, 2013

To: Jose Wudka
Chair, Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Irving G. Hendrick
Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: University of California Online Education Agreement

The Committee on Faculty Welfare is generally supportive of the draft agreement concerning online education which you forwarded to us. The contributions of the San Diego and Berkeley Divisions have greatly strengthened the draft and moved it from being unacceptable to acceptable in the minds of most of our members.

Two major changes account for this: First, the rights and respect given to individual faculty members who develop online courses appear to have been incorporated into the contract language. Second, the rights and authority of the Academic Senate are affirmed and protected. Absent the faculty member who originated a course, contract language enabling a course to be revised and updated by someone else according to regular Academic Senate and instructional unit course revision protocols seem reasonable.

Our committee approval notwithstanding, the “generally supportive” clause in the topic sentence above was not accidental. At least some of us remain concerned about the range of freedom given to an instructor for introducing one’s own research and interpretation into the course. Even one who originates a course will not want to be bound up tight against introducing new research and interpretations into the course. Similarly, a person teaching a course designed by someone else will inevitably have his/her own interpretations and take on the material covered. We have observed that as a practical matter, only the “course description, learning objectives, and topical outline” are locked in. Presumably, a course change proposal will be needed according to Academic Senate protocols only when changes in those features are made. Nevertheless, the detailed nature of online courses makes implementing this a bit worrisome, at least to some of us.