January 22, 2019

To: Cindy Larive  
Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

From: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

Re: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

Dear Cindy:

I write to provide the consultative responses from Senate Standing Committees and faculty Executive Committees to the Report. Also included is feedback from the Ad Hoc Committee on Remote Learning, Hybrid, and Online Courses.

Aside from these responses, Executive Council had an extensive discussion of the Report at its January 14, 2019 meeting. During this discussion, multiple committee chairs reiterated the comments detailed in their respective committee memos, while also raising some additional questions and concerns. These include but are not limited to the following matters:

- specific, contentious issues are not addressed in the report and require further consultation and discussion;
- the Report is in a manner that appears to already presume a set of conclusions for the campus’s path forward on the matter at hand;
- there are significant places in which cited data appears to either be inconsistent or to have been drawn from unknown sources;
- online courses may be better suited for upper division courses and more advanced students, as opposed to lower division courses and students who are early in their undergraduate years;
- BCOE faculty ought to have been much more involved in putting the report together, given the College’s history of engagement with online/hybrid courses;
- summer sessions could be better leveraged in any potential plan to grow online/hybrid courses;
- there has been no third-party assessment of the effectiveness of online/hybrid courses currently offered by UCR;
- UCR should develop robust procedures for implementing and assessing online and hybrid courses;
- it is important to seriously consider growing online and hybrid learning in a space constrained environment, but doing so requires significant analysis, planning, and broad consultation; this work must be conducted at an appropriate pace and not rushed.

I am confident that this thoughtful engagement will yield a constructive way forward on this crucial issue.

Peace

dylan
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

October 19, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Rajiv Gupta, Chair
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Report Review: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

The Committee on Academic Personnel reviewed and discussed the final report from Provost’s taskforce for hybrid and online education. CAP found the report to be comprehensive in its identification of unique challenges of online education. However, there was significant concern expressed regarding the impact of the proposed rate of adoption of online courses on faculty and students.

The report recommends that UCR aim to put 50 courses online each year for the next five years and, in the longer term, UCR should aim to deliver around 25% of its courses online. While these goals may be in line with similar efforts at other institutions, CAP found that the justification and readiness for meeting these goals at UCR is lacking in the following respects.

- CAP strongly believes that the freedom of faculty members to choose how they teach should not be impinged upon. Therefore, online courses should be offered only in numbers that can be sustained by volunteering faculty. It is unclear if the individual departments on campus have identified suitable courses and faculty volunteers to justify introducing online courses at the proposed rate.

- Teaching portfolio plays an important role in the merit and promotion process. The urgency of developing and introducing a teaching evaluation process appropriate for online courses cannot be overstated. This issue must be addressed before online courses are offered in large numbers.

- Student surveys seem to confirm the benefits of online courses (e.g., flexibility in schedule and pace of learning) for certain segments of student population. However, it is also clear that students prefer face-to-face instruction for the courses in their major by a wide margin. This suggests that there are likely some drawbacks associated with online courses. As a result, there should be a plan to measure and demonstrate that the academic performance of students in online courses is comparable with those in conventional courses.

In summary, offerings of online courses should only be scaled up after it has been demonstrated that courses currently being offered are satisfactorily meeting student needs, teaching evaluation procedures for online course have been developed and implemented, and enough additional faculty volunteers are available to teach the courses.
December 18, 2018

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Paul Lyons, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Provost’s Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education Report

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the Provost’s Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education at their December 7, 2018 meeting and noted several significant concerns with the report, including both the methodology and the recommendations reflected in the document. The Committee noted concern that the report’s conclusion appeared to reflect a presupposed outcome rather than a thorough, multifaceted review of online education nationally and at UCR.

In particular, the Committee was concerned that data and research were used loosely and, in some cases, inaccurately to support the report’s conclusions. Data presented appeared at times open to interpretations other than that given, including instances where it appeared to support an opposite conclusion from the one presented. Additionally, the selection of comparable universities was a concern. The comparator campuses were not those against which UCR would routinely be compared, and the rationale for selection was not transparent. This would seem important as the report did not appear to include institutions that compared to UCR and the campus’ student body, either statistically or aspirationally.

The Committee did not feel that the report’s conclusions and recommendations were drawn in clear and logical progression from the analysis. For example, the rationale for adding 50 online courses a year or seeking to place 25% of courses entirely online was not adequately justified in the report. The Committee expressed a specific concern over any recommendation to prioritize “large and/or general education courses,” in light of research suggesting that incoming students from disadvantaged backgrounds – a key demographic for such courses – are typically least well prepared to benefit from substantial online elements in their courses.

Lastly, the Committee noted concern that the report identified strengths and opportunities associated with online learning; however, it left unaddressed many of the challenges associated with online education, both nationally and specifically to UCR. Examples include intellectual property of the courses, student access to technology and potential barriers to success for students reflective of UCR’s undergraduate population.

The Committee recommends that the Taskforce address these concerns in matter that ensures the process forward with online education at UCR is fair. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the
Senate be involved in this process at every stage because of the Senate’s oversight over and responsibility for courses and curriculum.
November 27, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Boris Maciejovsky, Chair  
Committee on Diversity & Equal Opportunity

Re: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

Members noted that the introduction of online courses fundamentally changes key aspects of instruction and the final report does not address these aspects. First, the report does not address a comprehensive study on learning outcomes. Specifically, it does not provide any information on how the study was conducted and why the recommendations were based off such a small number of students given the impact these changes would have on the entire student body. Second, before the proposal is implemented, CoDEO thinks that there would need to be a process to receive fair student evaluations as the current trend for online classes is that evaluations are markedly lower. Third, CoDEO recommends that further study be done to evaluate the quality of the courses and the effects on a diverse student population. Specifically, with online courses, the student-to-student interaction is largely removed which has the potential to take away some of the strengths of UCR in its capacity as a diverse university. The weakening of student-to-faculty interaction further heightens the issues related to convenience over actual learning outcome. Fourth, CoDEO is also concerned with the possibility that URM junior faculty would disproportionately be assigned to teach these courses rather than based on a selection process that is strictly volunteer basis. Overall, CoDEO requests that a more comprehensive report and final assessment be provided for consideration before the campus moves forward with making such a large investment. Multiple alternatives (e.g., changes in class scheduling) should also be analyzed and presented for consideration.
November 6, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Wee Liang Gan, Chair
Committee on Courses

Re: Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education’s Report

The Committee on Courses discussed the report from the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education in our meeting on October 23, 2018. The committee appreciates the taskforce’s effort and recognizes the need to address the issues studied by the taskforce. However, the committee has the following concerns. One member did abstain from voting to support this list of concerns.

(1) The report seems to present a somewhat one-sided view to support an agenda of having substantially more online courses. For example, on page 1, the report mentions that "when instruction is delivered online using best practices, it is at least equally as effective as traditional face-to-face instruction". However, if one delves into their reference 4, one finds discussions of how students in online courses do not do as well as students in in-person courses. The committee recognizes that for some courses, online mode-of-instruction can be as good as or even better than in-person mode-of-instruction, but there are also legitimate concerns about the effectiveness of online teaching, which should not be ignored.

(2) The survey conducted by the task force elicited responses from 198 faculty of whom 158 are ladder faculty (page 2). The report states that 54% of the faculty respondents "strongly or somewhat agree that UCR should offer more online options to students in bottleneck or gateway courses where appropriate to do so" (page 3). There is reason to believe the respondents did not form a representative sample. Later, the report claims "most UCR faculty say they are interested in online education" (page 5), which thus goes beyond the available evidence.

The report would be more convincing if it presented the full results of the faculty survey. The committee believes that concerns as well as support from faculty who took the survey should be shared and taken seriously.

(3) The report did not directly explain how moving large gateway courses online will solve bottleneck issues (page 4). The committee appreciates that moving large classes online will solve some scheduling issues and relieve classroom space
constraints, but feels that many important details were not provided. Do we have data on the scale of the bottleneck issues? What kind of class sizes does the taskforce have in mind for online gateway courses? Will more Teaching Assistants be needed and be available? The committee also feels that there may be certain courses that are genuinely difficult to teach online, such as those including labs. If one of the purposes of moving large gateway courses online is to solve bottleneck problems, then these issues should be considered.

Additionally, research regarding which categories of students do best and which do worst in online contexts are of particular importance to UCR. Available evidence suggests that underprepared students, beginning students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are least likely to thrive in online courses. Is this evidence compatible with a push to put large introductory courses online first?

(4) The taskforce created a model group of universities consisting of UCI, OSU, ASU, PSU, and UCF, with the rationale that these universities are likely to have meaningful overlap with UCR "in terms of mission, values, and student demographics" (page 2). The committee had concerns about how representative this list of universities is, or whether it was picked to support an agenda of substantially increasing the number of online courses. Why didn't the taskforce study other UC campuses besides UCI, including those with better-developed online teaching programs, such as UCLA?

According to US News website ranking of U.S. universities, UCR is ranked 85, OSU 140, ASU 115, PSU 230-301, and UCF 165. Did the taskforce study higher ranked universities? A search on US News website shows that 4-year graduation rates are: UCR 53%, OSU 33%, ASU 45%, PSU 21%, and UCF 40%. UCR also appears to have better freshmen retention rate than these universities.

The committee is concerned that that OSU, ASU, PSU and UCF may not be the appropriate models for us to follow.

(5) The report states that "in the longer term, the taskforce believes that UCR should aim to deliver about 25% of courses online" (page 4). There is no explanation of how the taskforce came up with this percentage. Did the taskforce conduct any detailed study of our campus needs?

The committee recognizes that in the longer term, it is quite likely that there will be an increased presence of online teaching at most universities. However, the committee feels that instead of a randomly selected target percentage, our focus should be on bringing to the faculty's attention online pedagogical methods that might be suitable for their courses (traditional, hybrid, and online), and fostering an environment that promotes and facilitates the adoption of such methods where they improve access and teaching effectiveness.
The report states that "UCR should aim to put 50 courses online each year for the next five years, beyond new ILTI courses" (page 4). This does not seem realistic in view of (2) above and campus resources.

(6) The report presented a few of our students’ views on online courses. It may be helpful to communicate the students’ views to faculty more systematically. Several committee members have had lengthy discussions with their own students about online pedagogy, and learned a good deal from students’ thoughtful and nuanced responses.

(7) The committee feels that the report deserves credit for bringing up core infrastructure, support, and sustainability issues, but that these should be central to future discussions. For example, many current online courses are highly dependent on the faculty members who designed them. How can we move towards clearer and more standard expectations about course design and online architecture that would allow courses to become more sustainable, without locking in features of the currently underdeveloped landscape of best practices?

How can we guide faculty who are designing classes that include online elements, and train students to be effective online learners, in a stable and consistent way?

Finally, are we looking at the wrong unit of analysis by concentrating on ‘online courses’. Most courses on campus today already have some online elements, such as homework turned in over iLearn or class discussion boards. Some are more hybrid, with some contact hours (a problematic term) taking place via digital media, others face-to-face. Some are delivered primarily or entirely online (including examinations, discussions, and consultation). As online media, communications, and information tools continue to develop, does our campus need a strategy for supporting good teaching using all suitable technologies (from the chalkboard to the internet, and others only beginning to emerge), rather than focusing on ‘online courses’ as a distinct category?
COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

November 27, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez
   Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Daniel Jeske, Chair
   Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) met on 11/13/2018 to discuss the "Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report." FWC is supportive of the idea of developing online and hybrid courses but has reservations about several practical aspects of the implementation of this initiative. A main concern is that the proposed growth plan might be unrealistically ambitious, but there are also concerns about potential impingement of academic freedom. Detailed comments are as follows:

1. FWC expresses concerns that the proposal to create 250 new online courses over the next five years might be overly ambitious and wonders if the estimated resources (Appendix A) will be sufficient. It was noted that UCR has a history of underestimating the cost of new initiatives, and it was also reported by one committee member that the instructional design team at ASU (one of the comparison Universities) is at least three times larger than the size of the current team at UCR.

2. FWC has concerns that most of the comparison Universities discussed in the report are not of the same caliber as UCR; most are comprehensive teaching universities and only one (UCI) is a research university ranked higher than UCR.

3. FWC is glad that the task force firmly stated that resources for online development are the obligation of the campus and not the faculty. However, FWC is concerned that the proposal underestimates the amount of time and preparation faculty will need to develop, deliver and train (themselves and their TAs) for online courses.

4. FWC is concerned that new faculty (especially untenured) may be naively coerced into developing new online courses as part of departmental effort to comply with the growth plan.
5. FWC emphasizes the need for pedagogical suitability with respect to individual instructors as a key component to deciding what should be offered online.

6. FWC has concerns about how the drive for more online teaching might impact academic freedom. This could arise relative to decision on what courses are mandated to be online and also if certain technologies or formats for online teaching are imposed on faculty. The practical aspects and logistics of online classes may also force instructors to give exams which are adapted to some online grading system as opposed to asking students open-ended questions or asking them to write essays.

7. FWC is glad to see the firm statement from the task force about protecting faculty rights to IP, but is concerned that pursuing the "iOPM" model offered by Noodle Partners or another for-profit company may run counter to that principle. Partnering with a for-profit company to manage online courses raises issues about shared governance, data privacy, academic freedom, quality and sustainability of the effort.

8. FWC underlines the importance of the established senate committee on online education and hopes it will be an effective faculty voice while the online revolution unfolds at UCR. Issues the committee could weigh-in on include a review of best online teaching practices and a review of current software/hardware technologies that could work well for online teaching. FWC notes the composition of the committee should be evaluated to ensure adequate representation from departments with large service courses and that non-senate faculty on the campus with extensive experience with online teaching should also be members of this committee.

9. Concerns about exams in online classes were discussed. Space becomes an issue for classes where students have the option to physically come to the campus. In other cases, online proctoring is costly, intrusive and can be fooled.

10. FWC believes there is a need to protect the faculty involved in online teaching from the potential risk of negative teaching evaluations associated with pedagogical experiments. The training mentioned in the report is certainly helpful, but it is unrealistic to expect it to be some sort of panacea. Besides, such training often results in the faculty trying new approaches they would not even think about trying before, and the outcome can be rather unpredictable.
Graduate Council discussed the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report at their November 15, 2018 meeting. The Council was under the impression that the report did not address self-supporting programs, only state supported programs. If that is the case, to avoid confusion, it should to be explicitly stated that this report only pertains to state supported programs. It is not clear the effect this will have on graduate courses. An estimate of how many impacted courses would benefit from online offerings would be useful to know. The Council also felt that there should be more detail and discussion about TAs.
December 4, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Joseph Genereux
Vice Chair, Committee on Library and Information Technology

Re: [Campus Review] Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

The Committee on Library and Information Technology reviewed the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report at their November 15, 2018 meeting and note the following concerns. The first concern was whether the resources allocated are adequate to support the ambitious expansion, without having to divert resources from ITS; the document doesn’t make clear that the technology implementation expertise of the proposed new hires will be adequate for them to provide comprehensive support to the project. Certainly, there will be new needs for storage and bandwidth that should be addressed, and potential upcoming changes in the Learning Management System provider should be taken into account as well.

There are some implications with regards to library resources. The taskforce should address what type of access non-UCR students will have to journal subscriptions and library services.

Regarding the courses themselves, we suggest that before the expansion, a minimum technological shelf life should be established to which all new courses must adhere, to ensure that new online courses do not prematurely lose functionality as support for software infrastructure evolves. Also, there should be some plan in place to ensure that and evaluate whether the quality of online courses remains similar to that of our existing curricula, and the impact of online course expansion on the experience of our undergraduate and graduate population.

It is concerning that the report does not address course ownership. Faculty generally consider ownership of the intellectual resources associated with a course that they develop to reside with them.
The members of the Committee on Planning and Budget discussed the final report from the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education in detail over two meetings. We are unanimous in feeling that this is not an adequate blueprint for guiding an expansion into online course and curriculum development. The committee believes that the Senate should be setting the standards for online education, which would guide future planning in this area.

Our first concern is the in-principle enthusiasm for online courses that guides the report. Basic questions are never asked or considered:

- Why should the campus move to offer a given percentage of courses online?
- What defines a high-quality online course within the UCR curriculum?
- How can specific courses or parts of the curriculum be identified in which online instruction would enable student access or more successfully deliver instruction over current practice?

There is no analysis of the scholarship evaluating online instruction. Student interest in online instruction, while relevant, is not sufficient justification for a major push to change how 25% of UCR courses are delivered. Information derived from other universities is primarily about how many classes were created in what time period, without an investigation of the impact on metrics...
such as persistence, graduation rate, student engagement, etc. Comparing GPA in select courses offered traditionally and online does not sufficiently speak to this. So too, there is surprising little information about online course development within the UC system; the universities offered as exemplary in this area are not comparable to UCR.

How and why was the goal of 25% of courses set? Is it wise to work such a change based solely on incentives to individual faculty members, without consulting departments or colleges on where the need and potential impact of such classes would be potentially highest? The report refers to “bottleneck courses” without identifying any such and without a plan that would ensure the development of a quality online option where student access is identified to be blocked. We do not see the 25% of courses goal as reasonable or convincing. This seems one more case of moving quickly and on a scale that our current infrastructure cannot support.

We do not oppose the development of online courses per se, but we are alarmed by the lack of careful consideration of how to produce high-quality courses in high-impact areas with the best potential for supporting excellence in undergraduate education. A targeted development of needed courses of the highest possible quality would seem a more sound investment. More thoughtful, data-driven information than this report provides is essential before moving forward.
December 20, 2018

To: Dylan Rodríguez, Chair  
    Riverside Division

From: Tom Stahovich, Chair  
    Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Remote Learning, “Hybrid”, and Online Courses

Re: Provost’s Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education Report

The Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Remote Learning, “Hybrid”, and Online Courses reviewed the Provost’s Taskforce on Online and Hybrid Education Report at their December 11, 2018 meeting.

The Committee is supportive of efforts to increase the use of online education on campus. However, the Committee has concerns about the large scale of the proposed increase. Teaching 25% of courses online could have far reaching effects. For example, the campus environment is an important part of a university experience. There is concern that students who take a large portion of their lower division courses online may lack this important experience, which in turn could negatively impact retention, persistence in majors, and time to graduation. The Committee recommends that the Senate consider restricting the number of units that students can take as online courses, particularly during the freshman year.

Additionally, the Committee is concerned about the potential impact on faculty of the proposal to offer 25% of UCR’s courses online. Developing and teaching online courses can take a significant amount of faculty time, which could reduce productivity in other areas, such as research. Additionally, teaching evaluation for online courses are often lower than for in-person courses. These factors could effect merits and promotions. The Committee recommends that the Senate consider ways that teaching credit for online courses can be considered in the merit and promotion process.
November 28, 2018

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Thomas Stahovich, Chair
Executive Committee, Bourns College of Engineering

RE: Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

On November 13, 2018 the BCOE executive committee met and discussed the Final Report from the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education. While the committee is supportive of online education (we offer an MS Online program), the committee does have some concerns with the plans articulated in the report. For example, offering 25% of courses online could detrimentally change the nature of the university experience. Research has shown, for instance, that a student’s engineering identity is a significant indicator of educational and professional persistence. It is unknown how a substantial shift from on-campus to online courses would affect students' sense of engineering identity, and hence their persistence. In recent years, many engineering programs, including the ones in BCOE, have increased the number freshman engineering courses as a means of increasing student / faculty interaction and promoting student persistence.

The Report cites several research studies, including a meta-study. However, care must be taken in generalizing from these. The authors of the meta-study (“Online Learning in Postsecondary Education a Review of the Empirical Literature (2013-2014)” state that “Many of the included studies are vulnerable to methodological limitations that endanger the robustness of their results.” Additionally, these studies primarily examine the efficacy of individual courses, and there is much less research on the effect of moving a significant portion of the curriculum from on-campus to online.

Many instructors have found that teaching an online course requires more time and effort than teaching an in-person course. Thus, requiring research-active faculty to teach online courses could have a detrimental impact on their research productivity. Furthermore, teaching
evaluations are sometimes more negative for online courses than for in-person courses. Both of these issues could negatively impact merits and promotions for faculty.

Finally, the committee is disappointed that was no representation from BCOE on the task force. Although Frank Vahid was listed in the report as a committee member, he was not a member. The report may have benefitted from the considerable experience BCOE has accumulated from creating and operating our MS Online program, the only fully online program on our campus, as well as from faculty interest and ongoing work in BCOE on computer-assisted teaching and learning.
TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair  
UCR Academic Senate

FROM: Margaret A. Nash, Chair  
GSOE Executive Committee

DATE: November 12, 2018

SUBJ: Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education

The Executive Committee of the GSOE generally is supportive of the hybrid and online education initiative. Several GSOE faculty members have been or are teaching hybrid and/or online courses and have had success with these courses. We recognize that there are many advantages for some students, and for the university.

At the same time, we also want to voice some concerns about the effectiveness of online instruction, the need for training of instructors, and the evaluation system.

The efficacy of online courses is not as well established in the research literature as this report suggests. For example, the study by Wu cited in footnote 4 on page 1 actually presents a more complicated picture than the report indicates (that "online instruction is equally as effective as face-to-face"). In particular, Table 1 in this report (especially the Xu & Jaggar and Tanyel and Griffin studies) seem worrisome. First, most of the research is on courses in economics, statistics, information systems, psychology, leaving open the question of how well the online model works in courses where students are engaged in critically examining controversial topics. Second, the Xu & Jaggar study (which looked at a wider range of courses) indicates negative effects on persistence and grades especially for African American students, younger students, and at-risk students. The Tanyel and Griffin study also looked at a wider range of courses and found higher rates of failure and withdrawing from classes for online courses. Therefore, we recommend close study of UCR’s online and hybrid courses, examination into which types of courses work well and which do not, and attention being paid to what type of students succeed in these courses (i.e., majors or non-majors in the course field, students with high or low GPAs, residential or non-residential, students of color, at-risk students, etc.).

Second, we urge the Taskforce to take seriously the need to prepare faculty for teaching in this format. The report discusses this issue, but does not seem to come
to any conclusion about what type of training will be available, and whether it will be required. There is a need for high quality, evidence-based training in how to design effective online instruction. Such training should at the least be made available as a part of this expansion, if not required.

Finally, we believe that more consideration needs to be paid to evaluations. Currently, the same evaluations are used for the online and hybrid versions of courses as are used for face-to-face versions. The current evaluations are inadequate and ill-suited for these other instructional formats. A separate type of evaluation, reflecting the conditions of those courses, needs to be devised and used.
January 17, 2019

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
   Riverside Division

From: Sandra Kirtland Turner, Acting Chair, Executive Committee
      College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Re: Campus Review: Report Review: Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education
    Final Report

The CNAS Executive Committee discussed the Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Report at its November 20, 2018 meeting. The committee appreciated the goal of exploring the potential impacts, opportunities, and difficulties involved in the expansion of online and hybrid education at UCR. The committee agrees that UCR needs to be more deliberate about its approach to implementing online education but also agrees about the benefit of added flexibility for UCR students. The committee’s discussion noted that online instruction brings challenges both for students and faculty. In particular, there was concern that it is difficult to measure the quality of instruction in an online course particularly because current evaluation tools are designed for in-class instruction. Members of the committee noted anecdotal evidence that instructors often receive different evaluations when teaching the same course both in-person and online (with the online versions receiving lower scores), although these observations are at odds with what is written in the report indicating evaluations that favor the online offerings. The committee agreed with survey results that general education classes should be a higher priority for offering online compared to upper division courses. The committee also noted that although there has been limited support available for developing and managing online instruction (aimed at individual faculty who have received ILTI grants), there appears to be no concrete technique being communicated to UCR faculty as to best practices for effectively developing and teaching online courses. There were additional questions regarding the potential intellectual property ownership issues arising from the preparation of online course materials. Finally, the committee questioned whether the current method of identifying an online course in the schedule of classes was adequate. The committee understands that students can only identify a course as online once they hover a cursor over the class location and/or meeting time.
November 30, 2018

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
    Academic Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Acting Chair
      CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report

This memo summarizes the points raised in the discussion of the Executive Committee of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences on the Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report.

1. Questions about details in the report
   --p. 4: How was it determined that “UCR should aim to put 50 courses online each year. . .”?
   ditto for “UCR should aim to deliver about 25% of courses online”?
   --Other than the need to “prioritize large and /or general education courses,” who would
determine which courses should be offered online? Is this mainly based on initiative from instructors,
departments or programs? But would that not lead to possibly skewed distribution of online courses
(e.g., one instructor or department wanting to offer more online courses)?

2. Teaching preparation
   --p. 5 “Work with willing faculty members and provide appropriate support and
   incentives.”
   --Certainly, financial support should include course buyout (that is, course release for new
online course where appropriate. How to determine whether this is warranted: e.g., if instructor is
 teaching an online course for the first time, if the course is completely new (has not been taught as face-
to-face course) or radically redesigned. Should relevant guidelines for faculty support and incentives be
determined on a campus-wide basis, or would some guidelines be determined by the
department/program or school?

   --“Clear ownership of intellectual property.” (p. 5, 8 of report)
   The report does warn against the school entering into agreements that would potentially create problems
about intellectual property ownership, but this issue needs to be clearly thought out as early as possible,
rather than later, when serious problems arise. The CHASS Executive Committee stressed the grave
concern of faculty on this matter. The UCOP policy cited many need elaboration.
--In addition, what happens if an online course developed and initially taught by one instructor is taught later by another instructor? And if more than one instructor (in collaboration or sequentially) are involved in the course, how to determine intellectual property ownership?

3. TA concerns
   --TA training for online courses is noted and described schematically in the report, but there are many other concerns, such as:
     --some TAs prefer to work on online courses (by inclination; or they cannot or prefer not to be on campus, etc.):
       --how to formulate equitable way of determining the amount of work compared that of a TA in a face-to-face course; similarly, how to evaluate and be able to compare the performance of the two kinds of teaching
       --should TAs be allowed to work only for online courses while a graduate student at UCR, and if so, how may this affect their teaching experience and evaluations that may well be significant parts of their full cv when looking for jobs?
     --What about the time needed to train a TA for teaching in an online course? Will this be considered part of the TA’s teaching duties? Will the TA be compensated for this training time?
     --The report notes that “online classes lead to larger course enrollments” (p. 11), but this may not be true, if more specialized online and hybrid courses are developed. Thus, if an online version of a course that is offered requires fewer TAs than the face-to-face version, how will this affect the TA positions that a department or program can offer? The financial implications need to be thought out in detail.

4. Teaching evaluations for online vs. face-to-face courses
   --Report points out the necessity of adequate training for both the faculty and TAs preparing to teach an online course (p. 8, 11) and that teaching evaluations need to be redesigned to be equitable and useful for online and hybrid courses. The CHASS Executive Committee suggests that until these policies can be put fully into practice, careful distinction be made in using teaching evaluations for face-to-face and online courses for personnel actions.

In sum, the Provost's Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education Final Report thoughtfully addresses many of the issues that concern the development of online courses at UCR. The CHASS Executive Committee had a lengthy discussion and this memo summarizes points raised in our discussion, and we stress that UCR faculty and administration should continue to monitor developments and draw guidance from the experiences in other institutions as they develop a program of online and hybrid courses.

Lucille Chia, Acting Chair
CHASS Executive Committee
January 10, 2019

TO: Senate Division Chair Dylan Rodriguez

FROM: Maurizio Pellecchia, Chair Executive Committee, School of Medicine

RE: comments on “Provost’s Taskforce for Hybrid and Online Education”

The School of Medicine Executive Committee evaluated the document at the November 2018 FEC meeting.

The FEC members noted that our School already has implemented several hybrid classes, although many of the proposed tools are not yet available at our School. The plan at glance seems adequate. However, although the incentives for faculty participating are appreciated, these seem all in all relatively modest. The FEC also wonders if future plans would allow sharing the resources/infrastructure/know-how/personnel also to graduate teaching, given that several of these classes have been moving already towards the proposed hybrid format.

Kind regards,

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The members of the SPP Executive Committee found the Taskforce report clear in identifying issues, presenting facts, and addressing known concerns. We applaud the use of survey data from faculty and students but would like to know more about how the data were collected and how representative they can be claimed to be. We recommend that before any policies are implemented that a thorough presentation of the plans be presented to each unit. We recommend this because the circumstances within different units could vary substantially -- we would certainly like this for the School of Public Policy.

Addendum: January 17, 2019

The School of Public Policy would like to call the Senate’s attention to the mixed record of research on online education. Blended or hybrid models often work well, but the record for fully online courses is mixed. Most of the research is flawed because it does not examine the same students in online and face-to-face classes. The few studies that make this apples-to-apples comparison find that online courses work well for motivated, mature, and diligent students, especially working professionals. However, lower-division students who have had weak secondary school educations, and especially males and minority students, do not appear to perform as well in online courses as they do in face-to-face courses. The best study so far is of community college students in the State of Washington. See Di Xu and Samantha Smith Jaggars, “Adaptability to Online Learning: Differences Across Types of Students and Academic Subject Areas” (2013).

The Xu and Jaggars abstract is as follows: Using a dataset containing nearly 500,000 courses taken by over 40,000 community and technical college students in Washington State, this study examines how well students adapt to the online environment in terms of their ability to persist and earn strong grades in online courses relative to their ability to do so in face-to-face courses. While all types of students in the study suffered decrements in performance in online courses, some struggled more than others to adapt: males, younger students, Black students, and students with lower grade point averages. In particular, students struggled in subject areas such as English and social science, which was due in part to negative peer effects in these online courses.
Xu and Jaggars recommend that students not be allowed to take online courses in their first year and that students who do not receive at least a B grade point average in their first year be prevented from taking online courses until their grades reach that level. With sufficient scaffolding to aid self-directed learning, online courses can be successful for a wider range of students, but this scaffolding is costly to implement. We do not think that UCR students are comparable to Washington State community college students, but the Xu and Jaggars study nevertheless provides a cautionary tale relevant to the administration’s enthusiasm for online courses. These courses are not for everyone and should not be offered to students who are unlikely to succeed in them.