UCI Response to the Commission on the Future of UC Working Group Recommendations

Preamble

The current set of Commission on the Future of UC recommendations rightfully emphasizes the need for the University of California to manage its resources more efficiently and suggests ways to do so. However, the document does not attempt to quantify the aggregate effect of such strategies and many of the recommendations are likely to have counterproductive effects such that individual recommendations that appear sound in isolation might not have positive consequences if implemented together (e.g., increasing graduate tuition, increasing overhead rates, paying a portion of faculty salaries from non-state sources). Yet, it is fairly clear to those familiar with the University’s structures and finances that the cumulative effect of all the strategies presented would be insufficient to cover the overall budget shortfalls. By focusing almost exclusively on improving university efficiency without pointing out that the success of such efforts would still not avert a catastrophic deterioration of the University, the Commission’s recommendations, taken as a whole, fail to meet the challenge facing UC.

Without decisive action in the near future to replace the revenue shortfalls created by both the recent reduction of state funds and the state’s refusal to fund the UC retirement plan, the University is sure to lose the majority of its best faculty, particularly those in mid-career with the greatest future potential for service to the University, a loss that could cripple it for decades. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate to lead the State of California to face this very real and immediate possibility as directly as possible in order to allow the University to take the necessary steps to prevent it.

First, we re-commit ourselves to support of our unique multi-campus system that counts all UC campuses as contributors to our “one university” model. This is what makes UC great. Therefore, we reject any plan that would begin to stratify the UC system. The fundamental reality is that, given the low probability that the State of California will restore its funding of the University to previous levels, the University is faced with an immediate choice between the three unpalatable alternatives of 1) a general, precipitous decline in the number and quality of its faculty, 2) a drastic increase in tuition and fees, placing it amongst the most expensive public university systems in the nation, and 3) draconian cuts to programs, structures, and California resident enrollments that would allow a shift of as many resources as possible to preserving the human capital that has been painstakingly built up over the last decades. The faculty clearly sees the first alternative as the one that must be avoided at all costs, but in the absence of bold and immediate action to restore the University’s ability to retain and replace its faculty, this decline in quality will have become its irreversible fate. This stark reality needs to be illustrated to administrators, Regents, legislators and the public in as clear a way as possible in order to make the argument for the necessity, given the state’s financial outlook and the goal of preserving the quality of UC in a form that bears any resemblance to its present capacities, of either previously unimaginable fee increases or dramatically reduced access to the University by California residents or both. Of these two options, we favor the former over the latter. Nevertheless, we refuse to abandon hope for adequate funding and encourage enhanced advocacy efforts. The Faculty Senate must encourage everyone to confront these hard truths, and in particular, we encourage both the Size and Shape working group and the Access and Affordability working group to take up these issues during their continuing deliberations.
Size and Shape

Note; Level of Interest is measured on a 3 point scale (0-2)

Recommendation 1: Increase the number and proportion of non-resident students at the undergraduate level. (pp. 14-18) (Similar to FUNDING STRATEGIES Rec. # 6, pp. 92-94)

Agree    Conditionally Agree   X    Disagree   No Comment

Level of interest: 1.5 High

UCI favors this recommendation only if the increased non-resident enrollments do not displace eligible and funded CA students and if we place caps on the percentage of non-resident enrollment by campus. We remain concerned about the effect on student diversity and the possibility that increased non-resident enrollments will reduce the state’s incentive to fund the UC.

UCI CEP recommends that we hold non-resident students to “truly exceptional standards for admission.”

UCI CPB supports a cap on the number of non-resident students: “It seems quite possible that the real cap on the number of out-of-state students we can recruit (in the long run) will be political: i.e., it is a matter of what we can do without straining our relations with the state legislature to an unacceptable degree. Thus in the absence of such a range, it would be possible for some campuses to move rapidly towards very high numbers of out-of-state students, keeping the increased revenue for themselves while forcing other campuses to constrain their own recruitment of out-of-state students in order to keep the ratio of in-state to out-of-state students in the system as a whole at an acceptable level. Since we run the political risks together, we should consult on how to share them – especially if the financial benefits of out-of-state recruitment will not be shared.”

UCI School of Biological Sciences proposed modifying the Master Plan such that UC admits not 12.5% but some lower proportion of CA high school students, with higher funding per student from the state.

Recommendation 2: Improve the student transfer function by developing more complete lower-division transfer pathways in high-demand majors. (pp. 19-21)

Agree   X   Conditionally Agree   Disagree   No Comment

Level of interest: .88 Medium to Low

UCI CEP suggests that we need to make sure that transfer students have the right courses.

UCI Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools (CUARS) is convinced that transfer students are just as successful as 4-year students. Increasing transfer students has the added benefit of increasing diversity.

UCI CPB suggests that this is worth doing in certain cases. However, the report includes no real discussion of the costs involved or of the feasibility of moving in this direction when the community college system is strained itself. Finally, there is considerable reason to doubt that most community college courses are really comparable in terms of quality.

UCI GC notes that this would work against recommendation 1 above.
Recommendation 3: To improve the student transfer function, enhance the ASSIST website for greater user-friendliness and improved capabilities. (pp. 22-23)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: .44 Low to Medium

We support this recommendation if it is cost effective.

UCI GC notes that this would work against recommendation 1 above.

Recommendation 4: Examine the utility of practice doctorates for allied health professions in terms of national healthcare quality and costs, UC and CSU missions, and the future needs of California residents. (pp. 24-26)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Position: Neutral
Level of interest: .22 Very Low

We have too little information to make an informed decision on this recommendation. The report suggests that there are real doubts about the utility of these degrees. If so, why move aggressively into these areas? In addition, proceeding along the line outlined may be expensive (especially the proposed study and the summit). In general, UCI faculty see practice doctorates as more fitting for CSU, but are reluctant to move on the slippery slope of ceding doctorates to CSU. Faculty noted the unsuccessful UC/CSU Ed.D. programs established years ago.

UCI GC notes that this may help graduate enrollment.

Recommendation 5: Eliminate administrative redundancies across the UC system and promote efficiencies where possible. (pp. 27-28) (Similar to FUNDING STRATEGIES Rec. # 2, pp. 80-83)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: .88 Medium to Low

Increased administrative transparency is important, especially under the tight budget situation. When faculty have little information, they can’t judge how effective the administration is or whether or not they agree with how the funds are spent. UCI administration shares important budget information with senate representatives, but it is not clear how much this is done at other UC campuses. We shouldn’t assume that system-wide coordination is always superior: we have seen cases where system-wide procurement has led to higher prices (Steelcase furniture contract).

UCI CEP wonders what the work group means by administrative redundancies. Given our system of shared governance, we require some redundancies (e.g., administration and senate committees).
Recommendation 1: Manage educational resources more effectively and efficiently to (1) increase the proportion of undergraduate students graduating in four years, (2) create a pathway for undergraduate students to complete degrees in three years, (3) make more effective use of faculty resources, and (4) maintain or improve the undergraduate student experience. (pp. 29-35)

See below for positions on each sub-recommendation

1) Increase the proportion of undergraduate students graduating in four years,

   Position: Agree
   Level of interest: 1.3 Medium to High

   We agree with this recommendation but should keep in mind that there are legitimate reasons for some students to graduate in more than 4 years (the need to work, double majors, change in major). The area of focus should be the number of units students take, not the number of years they spend at the institution.

   UCI CEP is currently considering a new regulation that would allow for students to take as many units as desired within 4 years, but limit the number of units to 220 when students exceed 4 years at UCI.

2) Create a pathway for undergraduate students to complete degrees in three years

   Position: Campus feedback: oppose / UCI Cabinet: conditionally favor
   Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

   Campus units interpreted this to mean that this pathway would be imposed on students and that led them to strongly oppose this recommendation. They pointed out that it would be impractical when teaching resources are reduced and fewer classes offered. It’s already difficult for students to get classes, and this recommendation would make it more difficult for those outside the 3-year program. This pathway will put more emphasis on summer school where less regular-rank faculty teach. It will foreclose participation in EAP and other out-of-the-classroom experiences. Students need time to think and reflect and maybe change majors. It could be bad for public relations. There was concern about reducing requirements for graduation. This puts a large burden on teaching and scheduling. What’s the benefit? There was some support for creating a program that would provide a BA in 3 years plus an MA in 2 years.

   The UCI Cabinet favors this recommendation if it is meant to facilitate (again, not impose) 3 year degrees for well-prepared students. It notes that almost 3% of UC students manage to graduate in 3 years, and they currently accomplish this without any help from UC. This option should not target all students and it should not target all majors. Only some students are prepared to accomplish this. These may be more mature students, returning students, students who have considerable AP/IB credits and those who have decided on their majors. These students would benefit from help in accomplishing their goal of graduating in 3 years. This recommendation offers this type of help while it doesn’t lock them into the program. If a student later decides that s/he wants to change majors, that person simply
leaves the 3-year program. While this recommendation may not save money, it has the potential to improve access to the university by offering a diverse set of alternatives. Therefore, the UCI Cabinet favors the recommendation to develop a coherent curricular program to increase the number of students that finish in 3 years.

3) Make more effective use of faculty resources

Position: Opposed to Mixed
Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

UC faculty are charged with performing research, teaching and service, and there is a proper balance among these. When faculty members are less active in research, they should compensate by being more active in teaching. Some units were unclear on what was meant by “make more effective use of faculty resources.” One unit assumed it meant teaching larger classes with diminishing resources; another thought it meant not offering specific degree programs at all campuses. UCI CAP thought it implied that UC faculty are gaming the system. UCI CAP asked what is meant by: “ensure that existing policies for faculty workload and course release are regularly being evaluated and followed.” It appears that the work group is suggesting that faculty don’t teach as much as they are supposed to teach. None of these interpretations resulted in a positive assessment of the recommendation.

One unit favored reducing faculty buyout rates. But would this lead to larger classes and therefore reduced quality? Course buy outs are complex. Research faculty may be out of the classroom to a greater extent, but they are instructing more students in their labs.

4) Maintain or improve the undergraduate student experience

Position: Favor
Level of interest: .66 Medium to Low

Recommendation 2: Continue timely exploration of online instruction in the undergraduate curriculum, as well as in self-supporting graduate degrees and Extension programs. (pp. 36-39)
Agree    Conditionally Agree    Disagree    No Comment

Position: Mixed
Level of interest: 1.3

UCI faculty expressed skepticism toward on-line education. The cabinet favored a plan to develop a pilot, see what works and what doesn’t work, and slowly integrate successful models in targeted areas. Their vision is that on-line course offerings would remain much smaller in number than face-to-face courses, and that no department would be forced to develop on-line courses if it didn’t think it could be effectively integrated into its curriculum.

The UCI units emphasized that we need evidence that on-line education is effective before we endorse it. It will be complicated to do it well. On-line instruction needs to be one option and carefully integrated into the overall curriculum; we don’t want to compete with the University of Phoenix. On-line instruction probably offers no time savings for faculty. On-line education can be very effective for graduate, focused degree programs for working professionals but there is little evidence that it works for young undergraduates. On-line education limits the exchange of ideas, which is a deeply valued component of our
educational mission.
Recommendation 3: Expand use of self-supporting and part-time programs to expand opportunities for a UC education to existing and potential students, working professionals, and underserved communities. (pp. 40-45)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

The UCI Cabinet pointed out that the demand for such programs tends to be market driven. We already have some of these programs where appropriate; creating additional programs may be costly and result in the dissolution of research effort. Developing many of these programs may move UC outside of its mission.

UCI units were concerned that some units may not be able to offer such programs; they shouldn’t be stigmatized. This recommendation would generate revenue for unused space and create revenue for other university efforts. On the other hand, this moves us in the direction of CSU. CSU and CCC do this better, so why not stick with the Master Plan?

Recommendation 4: Develop a systemwide academic planning framework that incorporates campus goals within the context of priorities identified for the University as a whole. (pp. 46-48)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Position: UCI units: Neutral to Opposed / UCI Cabinet: Conditionally Favor

Level of interest: .55 Low

The UCI Cabinet favors some aspects of this recommendation. Such a strategy may save small programs through collaboration with similar programs at other UC campuses. This is what happened with the Classics programs at UCI, UCSD and UCR. But we do not favor system-wide decisions to close campus programs. For the undergraduate curriculum, allowing students to take courses on other campuses when their home campus doesn’t have that course will be helpful.

If this means consolidating specific majors on a few campuses, we think the work group should consult past UC studies of consolidating lesser-taught languages. These are difficult issues and need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. We need more system-wide support, not system-wide or administrative control.

UCI CEP states: “Decisions about expanding and cutting programs need to remain at the campus level, as the campus administrators and Academic Senate groups involved in overseeing these programs have the best knowledge of both the immediate needs and constraints that should determine these decisions.”

UCI GC favors campus autonomy.

Preliminary Recommendation: The working group seeks UC input on its forthcoming recommendation on quality. (pp. 49-54)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1 Medium

The following sorts of variables should be included in the recommendation on how to measure quality: faculty/student ratio, class size, diversity of courses offered within fields, percentage of student credit hours taught by ladder-rank faculty, per capita stock of lab space, library resources, undergraduate research opportunities, counseling center
employees. In addition, we don’t think that current assessment standards involving learning outcomes should be the sole guide for decisions on resource allocations.

**Access and Affordability**

**Recommendation 1: Reaffirm UC’s commitment to access for California students. (pp. 55-57)**

Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

Can we afford to maintain our commitment? Rather, we should reaffirm our commitment so long as the legislature does its part by providing appropriate support. If we decide that non-resident enrollment is one way to fund California students, access may be strained.

UCI School of Engineering suggests creating a revolving fund whereby non-residents receive UC loans and pay them back with interest.

**Recommendation 2: Reaffirm the University’s commitment to be financially accessible for all undergraduate students admitted to UC. (pp. 58-60)**

Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Strongly Favor / Position of UCI Cabinet: Conditionally Agree
Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

Again, like our response to Access and Affordability recommendation 1, we agree if we have the resources to accomplish this. There is reasonable support for tuition increases to bring UC in line with other public universities.

**Recommendation 3: Reaffirm the University’s commitment to fulfilling graduate education’s role in serving UC's research enterprise, UC’s teaching mission, and the diverse knowledge and workforce demands of the State and beyond. (pp. 61-63)**

Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Strongly Favor / Position of UCI Cabinet: Conditionally Agree
Level of interest: 1.2 Medium

Again, like our response to Access and Affordability recommendation 1, we agree if we have the resources to accomplish this.

UCI CPB states: We are not so convinced about the priority of aligning slots with state needs. First, there are problems of defining these, in both short- and long-term. Who identifies these needs? So we think UC can (or should) respond, in contrast to the community colleges, which may be more oriented to current labor market conditions. Second, even if we could do this, would it make sense? People move after their education. What do we know, for example, about whether nurses work where they are trained? And do we know whether shortages (if there are any) are due to lack of slots or lack of students?"
Recommendation 4: Re-establish UC financial aid eligibility for undocumented California high school graduates. (pp. 64-66)
Agree  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Favor to Neutral / Position of the UCI Cabinet: We favor the proposed action, but don’t think the Commission on the Future of UC is the place to deal with it.

Level of interest: .88 Medium to Low

This recommendation is politically sensitive, impacts only a small subset of students, and therefore is not consequential in terms of the larger budget.

Recommendation 5: Adopt a multi-year fee schedule for each entering cohort of new undergraduate students. (pp. 67-69)
Agree  Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Strongly Favor / Position of UCI Cabinet: While we agree that a multiyear strategy is a good idea, we favor Funding Strategies Recommendation 5 over this one.

Level of interest: 1.2 Medium

We favor FS recommendation 5 because the state is not predictable and UC can’t control the conditions of the contract. This makes the strategy desirable but dangerous. In order to proceed with this strategy, we suggest an explicit statement that UC may break the contract if state funding declines.

UCI CPB writes: “An alternative to a multi-year fee schedule for enrolled students might be to guarantee a schedule for all students that sets the educational fee (tuition) as equal to the total annual per student cost of education at UC minus the state contribution per funded student. This may not increase the predictability for either enrolled students or perspective students. But it does focus the responsibility for predictability where it belongs – on the legislature.”

Recommendation 6: Rename the Education Fee and the Professional Degree Fees (but not the Registration Fee) as “tuition.” (pp. 70-72)
Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.2 Medium
Funding Strategies

Recommendation 1: Develop a multiyear advocacy campaign aimed at grass roots opinion leaders throughout the State of California to foster public and political support for the University as a major priority for state funding. (pp. 75-79)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.4 Medium to High

We need more political advocacy, and especially more at the campus level. But we must expect that legislators will ask us what part of the state budget to cut if UC allocations are increased, and we need an answer. Rather than favor cuts to other important budget items, UC should point out the state’s options for raising additional revenue.

Recommendation 2: Design and implement a system to identify, promote, and adopt the best administrative practices within the UC system. (pp. 80-83) (Similar to SIZE and SHAPE Rec. # 5, pp. 27-28)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: .66 Medium to low

Recommendation 3: Revise practice and policy on charging indirect cost recovery for non-federally funded research. (pp. 84-85)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Neutral to Opposed / Position of UCI Cabinet: Cautious.

Level of interest: 1.2 Medium

This is a complex issue. We can’t reject foundation funding, and we need to remain competitive for grants. OP should work with other universities to modify the policies of non-federal funding agencies.

Recommendation 4: Improve indirect cost recovery rates with federal agencies. (pp. 86-87)

Agree  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Position of UCI schools: Mixed

Position of UCI Cabinet: Cautious.

Level of interest: .88 Medium to Low

The impact on faculty will vary by agency. Physical Sciences faculty have this concern: DOE and NSF make fixed awards. When indir ects go up, research funds go down. We need to remain competitive for grants and we need a coordinated approach across all UC campuses.
Recommendation 5: Adopt a multiyear strategy to replace student fees with tuition, generate new revenue to protect academic quality, and strengthen university planning.  
(pp.88-91)  
Agree  X  Conditionally Agree    Disagree    No Comment  

Level of interest: .88 Medium to Low  

It is beneficial to standardize and simplify our terminology, but we must make sure not to guarantee any fee amount, even a graduated one, since state funding it so unreliable.  It would be helpful to explain the strategic goals here and specify the amount of anticipated increase per year.  One idea is to enact such a policy, without announcing it to parents and others.  Another would be to announce drastic increases in tuition that would go into effect unless the state supports increases.

Recommendation 6: Increase enrollment of nonresident undergraduates.  
(pp. 92-94)  
(Similar to SIZE AND SHAPE Rec. #1, pp. 14-18)  
Agree  X  Conditionally Agree    Disagree    No Comment  

Level of interest: 1.1 Medium  

We support this recommendation, but think that it is important to avoid displacing eligible CA students.  The qualifications for non-residents should be the same or higher than those for CA students.

Recommendation 7: Advocate for a Pell Augmentation Grant to Institutions (“Pell PLUS”).  (pp. 95-100)  
Agree  X  Conditionally Agree    Disagree    No Comment  

Level of interest: .66 Medium to Low  

Recommendation 8: Examine alternate faculty compensation plans.  (pp. 101-102)  
Agree    Conditionally Agree    Disagree    No Comment  

Level of interest: 1.33 Medium to High  

The devil is in the details, but to the extent that such a policy creates flexibility to meet market conditions and needs rather than current constraints and is optional, such a policy would be desirable.  Yet this has the potential to displace graduate student employment.

Recommendation 9: Allow for the possibility of charging differential tuition by campus, as a means of mitigating potential future enrollment impacts on some campuses.  (pp. 103-106)  
Agree    Conditionally Agree    Disagree    X   No Comment  

Level of interest: 1.88 Very High  

This would undermine the UC system; it is the first step towards dissolution of the “one university” system; this is the most problematic and likely damaging of all of the recommendations.  UC campuses have common expectations, differentiating tuition across campuses will lead to stratification by campus, and the end of the UC as we know it.
Research Strategies

Recommendation 1: The University of California must recover a greater share of the costs of research sponsored by outside agencies and make its management of those funds more transparent to ensure accountability to its sponsors and its researchers. (pp. 111-116)

Agree    Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.1 Medium

We need a coherent strategy to pursue a policy change at the federal government level (in the Office of Management and Budget). Public universities need rates similar to those already obtained by the privates. This requires joining with other public universities. With regard to foundation funding, with other AAUs we should jointly approach the foundations with our case for building indirect funding into direct costs.

UCI GC: Transparency is desirable but in this case would cause conflicting demands that may be detrimental. It is best managed by a designated group of administrators with Senate oversight.

Recommendation 2: UC must ensure continued excellence across a broad spectrum of cutting-edge research. To aid in this effort, UC should (1) prioritize internal funds to support world-class research in disciplines where extramural funding options are limited; (2) motivate the development of large-scale, interdisciplinary, collaborative research projects to capture new funding streams; and (3) augment and enhance opportunities for graduate student research and support wherever possible. (pp. 117-121)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

1. Position: Favor
   Level of interest: 1.5 High;

We suggest removing the word “prioritize” and replacing it “continue to use.” We would like to emphasize that schools like Humanities contribute in other ways (e.g., teaching a larger proportion of our students).

2. Position: Neutral
   Level of interest: 1 Medium

We already have lots of opportunity for collaborative research. We suggest removing all barriers to research, including simplifying cumbersome IRB procedures and initiating systems by which IRB protocols accepted at one AAU are accepted at other AAU programs. The current system of approval at each campus is wasteful of faculty time and effort.

UCI GC suggests replacing “motivate” with “provide support for.”

3. Position: Strongly Favor
Level of interest: 1.4 Medium to High

Graduate students are our future.

Recommendation 3: Create multicampus, interdisciplinary “UC Grand Challenge Research Initiatives” to realize the enormous potential of UC’s ten campuses and three national laboratories on behalf of the state and the nation. (pp. 122-125)

Agree   Conditionally Agree  X  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.4 Medium to High

This already happens (Cal institutes, transportation, CalIt2) and should be continued. While we agree that these are beneficial, we can’t afford to create additional initiatives now, with the funding problems. UCI GC emphasizes that such effort should be generated by interested faculty. It would help to edit the wording of the condensed statement of recommendation 3 to include mention of faculty initiative.
The UCI Assembly discussion (but without a quorum) revealed a negative opinion about any new initiatives.

Recommendation 4: Streamline risk management practices to increase the efficiency of the research enterprise, making optimal use of faculty researchers and administrative staff support. (pp. 126-129)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: .77 Medium to Low

We are overburdened by compliance issues because the university is risk averse. There are far too many procedures, both for accounting and IRB. The IRB application should be all electronic. UC should work to decrease our administrative burden by streamlining procedures for safety training, animal and human studies, etc.

Recommendation 5: Proactively demonstrate the significant and long-lasting benefits that UC research provides to California and the nation and advocate at the national level for increased and sustained investment in research. (pp. 130-131)

Agree  X  Conditionally Agree  Disagree  No Comment

Level of interest: 1.33 Medium to High

We should do this by giving attention to the entire spectrum of UC research, and showing how the UC benefits the California economy and the state’s teaching mission.

Additional Comments and General Observations

See preamble at the beginning of this document