2008-09 Annual Report of the Committee on Courses of Instruction

In fulfilling the charge set by the Berkeley Division by-laws, the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) accomplished the following activities during the 2008-09 academic year. Professor Kristie Boering served as chair.

I. Actions on Course and Instructor Approvals, Variance Requests, Degree Conferrals, and Course Codes

- Approved 1,055 changes to campus courses, including new offerings, updates, and withdrawals
- Approved 14 UC Extension courses and 220 instructors (denied 3 instructors)
- Reviewed 126 variance requests (121 approved, 5 denied), including 10 degree rescissions and 4 grade grievances
- Reviewed 342 student-facilitated course proposals (spring and fall 2009), and contacted departments in cases when instructor of record supervision was not evident
- Conferred degrees and honors on behalf of the Academic Senate for Summer 2008, Fall 2008, and Spring 2009
- Approved the creation of a new course code for courses offered through the Berkeley Center for New Media (NWMEDIA, 01/30/09; replaces CNM)

II. Procedural Decisions

- Total Instructional Effort (TIE) Codes
  Total Instructional Effort (TIE) is a newly adopted system of codes that the Office of the President developed to report faculty workload activity to the State of California Legislature. Staff from the Office of Planning and Analysis attended a COCI meeting to explain the system. COCI revisited its 2006-07 plan to individually review courses that had been assigned TIE codes that did not correspond to the instructional formats. Instead, COCI sent a letter to departments asking them to check their courses that had been classified as non-matching and to correct any errors. Approximately half of departments responded to the letter with corrections.

- Variable Discussion Sections
  The committee was faced with requests from two departments to eliminate or make variable (e.g., 0 to 1 hours) discussion sections from a large number of their upper and lower division courses. These changes were requested due to budgetary constraints related to hiring graduate student instructors (GSIs) as well as for pedagogical reasons. The committee discussed pedagogical equivalency of courses offered
with and without discussions sections. After lengthy communications with both departments, COCI eventually approved a revised list of courses, after large lecture and lower division courses were removed from the request and pedagogical concerns had been addressed. COCI Senate staff also collected data on the number and nature of courses that have been approved with this variable discussion format, the reasons given for the requested change, and the historical trend in such requests. The data were reviewed by COCI and the issue was brought to DIVCO and forwarded to EVCP Breslauer.

- **Grade Grievance Procedures**
  COCI discussed a scenario in which a student wished to dispute a grade but whose grounds for grievance did not fall within those described by Berkeley Division Regulation (BDR) A207. Grade grievance procedures were clarified by requiring a student to explicitly state the grounds for the grade grievance and also that those grounds must fall under BDR A207. Revisions to the Procedures for Grade Appeals Based on the Alleged Use of Non-Academic Criteria in the COCI handbook were approved.

- **COCI Handbook**
  The Committee approved additional revisions to sections of the COCI Handbook as follows:
  - 2.4.1 Student-Facilitated Group Study Courses (98 and 198 “DeCal” Courses)
  - 2.7 Creation of New Academic Units and Sub-departments
  - 3.1.3 Submitting Requests for Acting Instructor-Graduate Student Approval

### III. Key COCI Issues

- **Online Course Follow-up**
  COCI invited several instructors to attend meetings to present their experiences teaching online courses. The instructors shared successes and challenges. The instructors were Professor Charles Henry (African American Studies 124, The Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.), Professor David Presti (Molecular and Cell Biology N62, Brain, Mind, and Behavior), and Lecturer Sonia S’hir (Arabic 1AW-1BW, Arabic Without Walls). The presentation of Professor Thomas Laqueur (History N5, European History Since the Renaissance) had to be cancelled due to exceptional time constraints on the last meeting of fall semester given the extensive deliberations on the variable discussion format requests for a large number of spring 2009 courses.

- COCI received updates on the Business Process Analysis Working Group meetings and projects, and provided input to the group. Senate
Analyst Sumei Quiggle served as the project lead, and Chair Boering served as a sponsor.

- COCI received updates on the new Kuali course review and approval software in development.

- Professor John Huelsenbeck represented COCI on the Coordination Board for Admissions, Financial Aid, and Enrollment Management. He updated COCI on issues including budget difficulties limiting hiring of GSIs.

- A COCI representative to a joint Berkeley Division-Administration task force on remote and online instruction was requested. Professor Thomas Devine volunteered to serve. The proposed charge and timeline were discussed at Divisional Council (DIVCO); however, the task force was not actually constituted during the 2008-09 year.

- Chair Boering co-chaired a Joint Task Force on Exams with Vice Provost Christina Maslach. She apprised the committee of all meeting discussions pertaining to COCI business, especially COCI’s interpretation and implementation of Senate Regulation (SR) 772, which requires that undergraduate courses hold final exams. COCI discussed how its request process is seen as burdensome by some faculty, and discussed ways to streamline its procedures in order to increase faculty compliance while still maintaining oversight.

- COCI also discussed the academic calendar, a topic stemming from the Joint Task Force on Exams. The committee discussed the number of final exams scheduled per day, the desirability and number of days of reading/ review/recitation (RRR) days, and alternatives to holding exams on Saturdays. A letter was sent to Division Chair Firestone outlining COCI’s support and some concerns.

IV. COCI review of Academic Senate Policies and Issues

- EVCP Breslauer’s Response to DIVCO’s Response to Instructional Continuity Post-Disaster or During an Extended Emergency
  Comments submitted to DIVCO 04/20/09

- Proposed Amendment to Berkeley Division Regulation A251 (Disposition of Final Exams)
  Comments submitted to Divisional Council 01/07/09

- Access and Excellence
  COCI did not choose to forward comments.
IV. Unfinished Business and Future Action Items

- Updates to grade grievance procedures
- Consideration of relegation of certain course actions to departments or to Academic Senate staff
- Clarify syllabus requirements
- Review of “estimated total number of required hours of student work per week” field on course approval form
- Major revision of COCI Handbook