



November 10, 2010

DANIEL SIMMONS
Chair, Academic Council

Re: Request for Systemwide Review of Council Recommendation and UCLA Statement on the Future of the University

In response to Harry Powell's letter of August 11, 2010, requesting Systemwide review of the Academic Council's recommendation on the Future of the University and UCLA's Statement of Academic Senate Values and Recommendations, both documents were forwarded to the Berkeley divisional committees on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA), Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE), Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (BIR), Educational Policy (CEP), Graduate Council (GC), and Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities (SWEM). Comments from these committees were then discussed by the Divisional Council.

We believe that a recommendation on the future of the university should provide vision; a roadmap for a world class, public research university for the twenty first century. Any strategy for addressing our current financial challenges must take the long term approach. It is not enough to maintain our excellence. We must also convince the people of California that our educational programs, research, and service are valuable, relevant, and worth supporting. In this context we cannot support the Academic Council recommendations as written.

Although we agree that it is important to maintain the quality of the faculty of the university, we feel that articulating this principle as a guiding priority overlooks equally important principles: that eligible undergraduate students in California should have access to the university; that a UC education should be affordable; that UC programs should continue to attract the best graduate students in the world; and that the people and economy of California should continue to benefit from the research and service of the university. There is an intrinsic complexity in pursuing these principles together, and we are concerned that the Academic Council recommendations do not adequately acknowledge or address this complexity.

Furthermore, we believe that by focusing on remuneration as a means to ensure the excellence of the faculty, the recommendations of the Academic Council sell the faculty short. Competitive salaries and benefits are important, but they are not enough to create or maintain a world-class university. If competitive remuneration is bought at the expense of other priorities, the university will fail to attract either the best scholars or the support of the people of California. For example, in a recent survey the Berkeley faculty identified the quality of their graduate students as the single most important factor in their job satisfaction here. Similarly, the faculty value staff and administrative support systems to allow them to focus on teaching, research and service (this is acknowledged in the Academic Council recommendation, but with no discussion of how to pay for such support), a world-class library, and up-to-date teaching and research facilities. These are important elements of quality, and increasing faculty salaries at their expense would be counterproductive.

We agree that the University must continue to pursue alternative funding sources as aggressively and creatively as possible, sunset programs that are underperforming, and exercise restraint when embarking upon new capital projects. We cannot, however, support the approach advocated by the Academic Council, and several recommendations of the Commission on the Future that fail to recognize the important, unavoidable differences among the campuses. Painful decisions and compromises will have to be made to ensure the future success of the university, and we strongly believe that each campus should have as much discretion as possible to optimize its decision-making on the basis of local opportunities and constraints. For example, the alternative funding sources available at campuses with medical schools differ from those at campuses that can attract and accommodate non-resident students over and above the number of students funded by the state. Downsizing the faculty makes no sense at campuses that could accommodate new or expanded self-supporting degree programs. While a moratorium on new building may sound like an excellent idea to faculty at a relatively new campus with excellent facilities, it is less compelling at the older campuses where old buildings that have deteriorated significantly due to years of deferred maintenance severely undermine the ability of the faculty to teach and conduct their research. And such a moratorium makes no sense if private funding is available for both the project and to support the additional expenses likely to arise with the new building. Indeed, project costs are still relatively low, and such projects can be an important part of an economic recovery in California.

Returning to the recommendation to reduce the number of faculty, even for the short term, we consider this a serious threat to continued quality. First, absent a reduction in student numbers, this would increase workload, which would put us at a competitive disadvantage with our peers for recruitment and retention and divert faculty time from research to teaching and service, impairing both our competitiveness and the

University's intellectual contribution to the State of California. Second, as departments shrink, they will necessarily narrow in coverage, undermining the quality of the education that we can deliver. Such a narrowing may reduce the quality of graduate students we can attract, again putting us at a competitive disadvantage compared to our peers. Third, new faculty appointees, particularly at the more junior ranks, advance cutting-edge research and revitalize academic programs. A low replacement rate carries the threat of intellectual stagnation. Fourth, a reduction in faculty seriously threatens one of the hallmarks of UC's excellence, namely our process of grooming junior colleagues to assume leadership positions. There could well be a dearth of faculty qualified to take the reins when our current senior faculty retires.

Although the risks of fewer faculty may be better than the alternative for the very short term, we cannot support this as a long term strategy, because it conflicts with the goal of maintaining the excellence of the faculty. Why would promising junior scholars choose to join departments with few faculty members at their career stage? Why would established faculty join departments "in retreat?"

The recommendation by the UCLA faculty to modify or disestablish academic programs that are moribund seems better than allowing across-the-board attrition. However, we caution that it is challenging to identify those programs that truly are moribund; in particular, very small programs should not be seen as "easy pickings". Many are excellent and play an important role in creating the intellectual breadth across campuses that attracts and retains the very best scholars. Disestablishment should only occur after careful reviews by relevant Senate committees, recognizing the costs that would be involved in reversing such decisions.

At this juncture the two documents would seem out of step with the recommendations of the Commission on the Future. We believe that any statement from the Academic Council to the Commission on the Future should state that we approve of the Commission on the Future's re-commitment to the Master Plan, commitment to streamlining the undergraduate experience, declaration of the importance of research and graduate education and commitment to more cooperation among the campuses in undergraduate and graduate programs. However, this approval need not be unequivocal. For example, we question the need to formalize three-year baccalaureate degrees. In addition, we see sound reasons for the existing differences in the approach that different campuses take to undergraduate education. These approaches have emerged organically from decades of debate and compromise in our unique communities, as well as from observation of results. This evolutionary process was, presumably, the reason for the Regents delegating to the faculty the responsibility for designing curricula, and must be allowed to continue. Our undergraduate curricula should no more converge than those offered by the Ivy League schools or the Big Ten or by all Jesuit colleges; such convergence would reduce the choices that California's high

school students have for public higher education. Nonetheless, we consider it important to identify those areas where the Academic Senate agrees with the recommendations of the Commission on the Future.

In summary, we urge the Academic Council to develop a statement that reflects a commitment to the principles that have made the University of California great, and acknowledges the difficult choices that will have to be made to ensure its greatness in the decades to come. While we are gravely concerned about the compensation gap between UC and its peer institutions, we believe that any statement that fails to note the importance of access and affordability, or the impact of the University's teaching, research and service on California, will ultimately damage the institution. Given the complexity of the trade-offs needed, and the different circumstances of the campuses, it is essential that, once the general priorities are agreed upon systemwide, the detailed choices are left to individual campuses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona M. Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Fiona M. Doyle
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Materials Science and Engineering

cc: 2010-11 Divisional Council