



320 STEPHENS HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
AEPE

March 9, 2023

REVISED

MARY ANN SMART
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Subject: AEPE on increasing enrollments

Dear Mary Ann,

The Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education committee has been kept apprised of new requirements to expand undergraduate enrollment by 1% per year through 2030. Specifically, we understand that a target has been set to serve 48,200 full-time students by the academic year 2036-37. The 2030 Capacity Plan indicates that in order to achieve that goal, Berkeley will require several resources currently in scarce supply. Committee members have raised a number of concerns about this planned enrollment growth if we hope to maintain our high standards of academic excellence for our undergraduate population. Below, we summarize our concerns:

The current UCB budget has not kept pace with the needs of an expanded student body. Several departments and colleges are currently running budget deficits in order to support learning in the classroom. For example, the College of Chemistry is currently sustaining a \$1.5M deficit to cover its teaching costs and estimates this figure may rise to \$5M following the recent graduate student strike.

Growth in student enrollment does not, and will not match faculty resources.

Twenty years ago, Berkeley employed 1,528 ladder-rank faculty serving a study body of approximately [32,900 students \(23,400 undergraduates\)](#). Last year, [1,454 ladder-rank faculty](#), served a total student population of [45,307 students, \(32,479 undergraduates\)](#). As enrollment has expanded, the number of ladder-rank faculty has actually *declined* rather than risen to meet the challenge.

The faculty : student ratio has decreased precipitously, degrading the student experience. The combination of a growing student body and a declining faculty has

resulted in larger class sizes. Over the past three decades, the student:faculty ratio has grown from 18:1 to 30:1.

Many Berkeley students need additional support to foster academic success. The percentage of students who need additional support due to a disabling condition has increased by over 50% in the past approximately five years ([2014](#) – [2020](#)).

Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) costs are likely to rise substantially in the near future, further straining teaching budgets. The resolution of the recent strike will result in [new, steep costs](#) to support the teaching mission of the University. We anticipate that the student:GSI ratio is likely to rise as a result. Without substantial infusions of state funding, increases in undergraduate enrollment will further strain GSI budgetary and/or workload pressures.

Several foundation-level courses are already significantly over-enrolled and understaffed. As examples, in Spring, 2023, Chem 1A (a course that currently enrolls approximately 1,500 students), Computer Science 184, and Chem 1AL all had student waitlist over 100 students.

Online courses will not appropriately address the requirements for enrollment growth. The 2030 Capacity Plan indicates that some enrollment expansion can be absorbed through online learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has offered an important opportunity to experiment with online learning and AEPE members have had numerous discussions about the promise of online learning for Berkeley undergraduates. Online courses can offer some benefits, but there are significant limitations to the quality of the learning experience that should be recognized. Almost one-half of Berkeley students select STEM-oriented majors that do not lend themselves easily to online learning (e.g., many courses are lab-based), or courses require substantial financial investments for conversion.

UC Berkeley is facing an acute housing crisis, campus housing accommodations are severely limited, and many current students cannot find or afford housing in the local community. According to an [Office of Planning and Analysis report](#), Berkeley's current housing shortage for students is more severe than any other campus. Demand continues to outstrip supply. Among undergraduates completing the annual UC survey, 35% were unaware of the problematic housing situation prior to attendance. "Finding affordable housing" was listed as "very" concerning by about one-third of transfer entrants and one-fifth of freshman entrants. And 10% of survey respondents indicated that they had experienced homelessness at some point during their academic experience

at Berkeley. In addition, campus officials have met with [extreme resistance](#) in the local community to some new building projects, slowing progress overall.

Most of Berkeley's building infrastructure is old and unsafe for students. At a 2022 meeting of campus leaders and faculty, many of Berkeley's buildings were described as being an "urgent risk" to students. The estimated costs of repair exceed \$7B. More students will continue to stress our crumbling infrastructure.

The number of full-time staff in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions is unlikely to keep pace with projected enrollment growth. Just 20 years ago, the number of freshman applications to Berkeley was noted in the press as a "[record number](#)." That year, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions received 36,960 freshman applications. (8,679 students were admitted.) Last year, the campus received [128,230 freshman applications](#) and admitted 14,568 students. The number of staff currently employed in the OUA office is 50, which is out of alignment with the [expected metrics issued by BOARS in 2011](#) for an application pool of this size.

Members of AEPE are seriously concerned that Berkeley's reputation as the #1 public university is at stake. Sustained enrollment growth without concerted efforts to address the issues we have raised above threatens to diminish the excellence in which we take such pride. Moreover, some have raised concerns that our [WASC accreditation](#) may even be in jeopardy should enrollment expansion occur absent a notable increase in campus resources. Specifically, we have concerns that Berkeley will be out of compliance with standard [2.10 \(Student Learning and Success\)](#) and standard [3.1 \(Faculty and Staff\)](#). If students are unable to access the course sequencing they need due to class impaction, this is likely to result in slowing timely progress to degree. Similarly, as above, without significant increases in faculty resources, we cannot deliver the Berkeley education upon which we have heretofore built our academic reputation. We ask members of the Divisional Council to please elevate our concerns to central campus administrators, to UCOP, and to the Regents at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Jill Duerr Berrick

Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
Professor of Social Welfare