

The Fortnightly

April 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are now five weeks into remote instruction and four weeks into shelter-in-place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. People from across campus continue to do remarkable work in support of the health and welfare of our students, and of our research and teaching missions. We are immensely grateful to the Senate staff for all their tireless efforts. Some wonderful examples of Berkeley staff and faculty contributing to the resolution of the crisis are highlighted on the [campus homepage](#). Thank you, and keep it up! It is hard, but extremely important. UC Berkeley has always been a place of innovation and resilience, and we see that so clearly during these difficult times.

We have been meeting weekly with the GA and ASUC leadership teams. These discussions have been very helpful. Many of our students are experiencing financial hardships and several resources have been set up to help them

- [Basic Needs Center](#): supports emergency rental assistance/eviction prevention, emergency food awards, and students in basic needs crisis including health/medical.
- [Financial Aid & Scholarships Office](#): supports relocation expenses related to COVID-19, wage loss from off-campus employers, and technology needs.

Up to date info: We are providing up to date information of the campus's effort can be found @ tinyurl.com/UCB-BNC-C19

If you could share the links above with your former students and friends of the campus and ask for their help, we are certain their generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Your Divisional Council (DIVCO) met on Monday, April 13. The announcements included:

- **A taskforce is being formed now to make decisions for fall**, including around instruction, research, housing, and events. We face huge uncertainty about what conditions will look like in the fall, but some decisions must nonetheless be made in the next two weeks. Some faculty, parents, and others are concerned about returning to campus in the fall without extensive social distancing, antibody testing, or contact tracing. We should therefore assume that fall will be at least somewhat disrupted, and the taskforce will look at a range of hybrid online-in-person models.

- **The taskforce looking at proctoring and final exams is making good progress**, despite some challenges, and anticipates having recommendations to campus on Monday, April 20.
- **The financial situation for the campus over the next 18 months or so will be pretty terrible**, with a current estimate of additional expenses and lost revenue around \$210M. However, the longer-term outlook is better: because we had eliminated the structural deficit, we just need to manage through this difficult period. For the UC campuses with medical schools, the outlook is significantly bleaker.

The central work of DIVCO this week focused on the review of the [Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute](#) (HWNI), the review of a proposed [Presidential Policy on Gender Identity and Lived Name](#), a review of the work of the taskforce on the proposed Upper Hearst construction project, and a discussion of a statement from the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation concerning finance reform and the current economic challenges. In addition, we had the pleasure of meeting with [Eugene Whitlock](#), the new Associate Vice Chancellor for People and Culture (formerly HR).

The Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute is a remarkable unit and a research powerhouse, with great record of placing graduate students in jobs and postdocs. They do not hold any 100% lines, and are not a teaching unit, and they report to five different deans. The review focused on questions of whether they should have a more canonical structure, for example as a department or a unit reporting to only one dean, and also on questions of climate. As always, the Chair of the Divisional Council will submit a memo summarizing the discussion and recommendations to the Administration.

The proposed Presidential Policy on Gender Recognition and Lived Name would require campuses to collect information on gender identity in a more inclusive way, and to allow students to use their lived names rather than legal names for university purposes. DIVCO's discussion was based on written comments from the Committee on Faculty Welfare, the Graduate Council, and the Undergraduate Council. Members were broadly supportive of the goals of the proposed policy, but concerned about implementation. Comments will go forward to the Systemwide Academic Senate.

Proposed construction project at Upper Hearst. The proposal to build housing and an academic building for the Goldman School of Public Policy on the site currently occupied by the Upper Hearst parking structure has been paused in litigation for almost a year, during which time a taskforce reviewed the proposal and its finances. The taskforce was unable to reach any consensus about the finances of the project—using

different models, some on the task force argued that the project would be a net economic benefit to the campus, while others argued it would be a net negative. The two written reports to DIVCO from the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation and the Committee on Faculty Welfare, both opposed campus continuing with the project, and the majority of DIVCO members concurred.

The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation prepared a draft statement regarding finance reform in the context of COVID-19. The statement was discussed briefly, and will be revised and discussed again.

We also had a discussion with **Eugene Whitlock**, who came to campus as the Associate Vice Chancellor for People and Culture (formerly HR) about six months ago, following a distinguished career as an attorney in both the private and public sector. He has already made some important changes, seeking to improve the culture of work on campus for staff. For example, Whitlock has changed our job announcements to include a discussion of our strategic plan and principles of community. His next priorities include improving the employee experience and developing the craft of management through expanded training for staff. DIVCO members were happy to learn about his work, and look forward to continued collaboration.

We hope you and yours are safe and well and we thank you for your continued interest and engagement in our Senate and our campus.

Sincerely,

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