UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

July 6, 2020

ACADEMIC SENATE DIVISION CHAIRS

Re: Student/Faculty Survey about Remote Learning during Winter/Spring 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a summary of key findings and recommendations from a draft report on UC instructor and student experiences with remote instruction during the COVID-19 emergency. The draft report (linked in the summary) is a collaboration between the systemwide Academic Senate, led by University Committee on Educational Policy Chair John Serences, and the UC Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) and IRAP Vice President Pamela Brown. The report draws on data from a Senate survey to instructors about their experience with remote instruction in the second half of the spring semester/quarter, and also data from this year's UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), which included new questions to students, suggested by the Senate, about their experience with remote instruction. We believe that campus faculty and administrative leaders will find the results enlightening and informative as they plan for continued remote instruction.

I ask Senate Division Chairs to route the summary to their chancellors and EVCs as well as to their respective Committees on Educational Policy. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair
Academic Council

cc: Provost Brown
Vice President Brown
UCEP
Academic Council
Senate Directors

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UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
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Monday, July 6, 2020

RE: Student/Faculty Survey about Remote Learning during Winter/Spring 2020

Dear Kum-Kum,

The Systemwide Academic Senate surveyed instructors about their experience with remote instruction during the 2nd half of the spring semester/Spring quarter, receiving just over 4,800 responses across all nine undergraduate campuses (including professor and teaching professor titles, adjunct professors, unit-18 lecturers, and graduate student instructors).

The Systemwide Academic Senate partnered with UC Office of the President's Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) unit to incorporate questions about remote instruction into the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) that is currently being administered. The summary below reflects responses collected as of May 12th, 2020 and represents approximately 33,000 undergraduates.

See the full draft report for more details about the respondents and a more in-depth analysis of the results.

Summary of key findings:

- *65% of students were somewhat to very concerned about having reliable access to the internet.* Anecdotally, many instructors and students also reported that students had problems taking online exams, accessing and uploading assignments, streaming synchronous lectures, and otherwise engaging in course-related activities.
- 20% of instructors reported that they sometimes or rarely had access to a quiet space to teach. For students, *35% were very concerned, 25% were concerned, and 21% were somewhat concerned about having access to a quiet space to study (81% total expressed concern).*
- 60% of instructors reported that their students were learning less or much less compared to in-person courses, and 54% of students reported learning much less or less from synchronous remote lectures compared to in-person lectures.
- 73% of instructors reported that the quality of remote interactions with students was worse or much worse, and 59% of students reported that the quality of interactions with instructors was worse or much worse.
- 72% of students were more or much more concerned about the quality of interactions with other students in classes, with 75% more or much more concerned about the amount of interactions with other students.
- A majority of instructors and students felt that remote teaching/learning was harder.

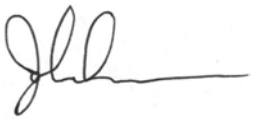
- Open-ended survey responses and reports that have come to the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) highlight significant concern about the lack of robust exam proctoring solutions. The concerns center on cheating, the invasion of student privacy, and amplifying existing inequities that are caused by forcing students to use video proctoring in their personal living spaces and by unequal access to quiet spaces to take proctored exams (e.g. ProctorU requires a quiet, empty room and many students struggle to meet this basic requirement).

Recommendations

While some of these findings are likely not surprising given the rapid pivot to remote teaching and learning during Winter/Spring 2020, the results highlight several structural problems that must be addressed by each campus as non-in-person instruction appears likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

- Given that 65% of students expressed concern about reliable internet access, campuses should develop a mechanism to distribute reliable mobile hotspots (similar to programs run by public K-12 school districts).
- 81% of students expressed concern about having access to a quiet space, sometimes because they were forced to share a computer in a common space with others in their household. Distributing basic computing equipment (e.g. a Chromebook) may enable some students to more easily access quiet space to learn (again, similar to programs run by public K-12 school districts).
- Given concern about exam proctoring services, privacy, and inequity, campuses could explore additional technological options and/or could work to create safe in-person testing spaces. Concurrently, both faculty and the administration should collaborate to develop best practices for promoting academic integrity during remote learning. For example, having students take many short, low stakes exams as opposed to 2-3 long, high stakes exams may reduce cheating and remove the need for invasive proctoring. The Teaching and Learning Commons on each campus, with additional support from the administration, might provide expert guidance to lead the way in these efforts.

Sincerely,



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