San Diego Division of the Academic Senate
University of California, San Diego

Report of the Task Force on
Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies

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Executive Summary

The Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies considered the impacts of COVID-19 during Spring 2020, and found that the experience of students, instructors, and instructional assistants was severely impacted by the crisis.[1] Problems emerged from poor communication, lack of time and resources to plan quality instruction, poor infrastructure for remote teaching and learning, and confusion over instructional policy. In response to these problems, the Task Force considered ways to improve response to this crisis and to future emergencies. Because emergencies are by nature unpredictable, the Task Force concluded that a robust emergency response plan should reduce unnecessary sources of uncertainty and noise that are caused by inefficient communication systems, by a focus on short-term planning, and by a lack of clarity regarding the role of Senate faculty in long-term instructional planning. A key conclusion of the Task Force was that UC San Diego currently lacks an adequate plan to improve the quality of emergency remote instruction in the short to medium term. The Task Force made numerous recommendations regarding the short to medium term response to COVID-19 and future emergency preparedness, including actions for Senate Council, the chairs of instructional units, and for the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) relating to Communication Readiness, Instructional Readiness, and Distance Learning Policy.

Communication Readiness:
- Reduce uncertainty during an emergency by deploying clear top-down communication of changing policies, and improved peer-to-peer communication among campus members.

Instructional Readiness:
- Reduce uncertainty by recognizing and communicating the authority of faculty to elect a remote format of instruction (e.g., when the EPC Policy on Distance Education Courses is suspended), allowing them to make long-term plans and prepare the best possible instructional materials under the present circumstances.
- Provide resources to instructors to facilitate improvement of emergency remote instruction in the short and medium term, including support for undergraduate instructional assistants (IAs) to support synchronous teaching, graduate student researchers (GSRs) to convert existing lecture materials to asynchronous videos, and a working group composed of diverse instructors who can collaborate with the Teaching + Learning Commons to create resources for instructors with different instructional needs.
- Provide the hardware that is necessary to implement UC San Diego's content, particularly in the case of Unit 18 Non-Senate Lecturers and graduate student teaching assistants (TAs).
- Address the reality that online proctoring services are not currently able to accommodate certification of knowledge through proctored testing.
- Address the role of campus "recommendations" in instructor stress and burnout.

Distance Learning Policy:
- Consider creating Senate regulations regarding modality of instruction to parallel existing regulations governing grading and adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses.

The Task Force also concluded that additional work is necessary to address the future of remote learning at UC San Diego, and recommended the creation of a new body to address this question.

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[1] See also July 6, 2020 systemwide Academic Senate memo from Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair, Academic Council: Student/Faculty Survey about Remote Learning during Winter/Spring 2020: https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/kkb-division-chairs-instructor-survey-results.pdf

Summary of Recommended Actions for Senate Bodies and Instructional Units:

Actions for Senate Council
- Senate Council should create an emergency communication web portal.
- Senate Council should put in place a working group to consider creation of a collaborative campus communication system, analogous to CoRespond.
- Senate Council should create a working group of faculty with diverse instructional techniques and needs to collaborate with the Teaching + Learning Commons on the creation of course templates for different types of learning environments.
- Senate Council should establish a Senate Task Force on the Future of Remote Learning at UC San Diego.
- Senate Council should instruct relevant Senate committees to consider the recommendations of this Task Force to determine possible impacts on their own policies (e.g., Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, Faculty Welfare, and the Educational Policy Committee).

Actions for Chairs of Instructional Units
- Chairs should consider strategies for promoting medium-term planning of instruction during COVID-19, transitioning from a quarter-by-quarter planning philosophy.
- The informal "Council of Chairs" group should consider creating a unified communication strategy to reduce irregularities of communication across departments and maximize shared expertise (e.g., by creating a subscription-based repository of annotated campus communications to replace haphazard practices of email forwarding).

Actions for Educational Policy Committee (EPC)
- EPC should review the Policy on Distance Education Courses,[2] with a focus on determining whether elements of this policy should become a Senate regulation.
- In consultation with Senate Council, EPC should consider the adoption of a Senate regulation on distance learning, to permit greater involvement of Senate faculty in the long-term planning of instructional modality that extends beyond individual courses.

Actions for Proposed Task Force on the Future of Remote Instruction at UC San Diego
- Consider the pros and cons of remote (R) classes (i.e., classes designed such that less than half of instructional time takes place in-person) as a vehicle for transmitting knowledge.
- Consider the pros and cons of R classes as a vehicle for conferring the qualities of a UC education (and how aspects of in-person interaction with students, campus groups, labs, and faculty are impacted).
- Consider the long-term strategic plan for UC San Diego's use of R classes and fully-online undergraduate degree programs. Consider the university's mission to provide high-quality education, as well as possible revenues and possible costs flowing from the creation and maintenance of courses, remuneration of creators and instructors, and impacts on campus revenues (e.g., reduced revenues from dining, housing, etc.).

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[2] https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/395276/policy-on-distance-education-courses.pdf

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Appendixes

1. BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2019, a novel coronavirus, SARS COV2, emerged and within months spread globally. By March 11, 2020, 118,000 cases of COVID-19 were reported spanning 114 countries, and leading to at least 4,291 deaths, events which led the WHO to declare a global pandemic.[1] Only two days later, on March 13, 2020, the UC San Diego Educational Policy Committee (EPC) approved a request from Chancellor Pradeep Khosla for a limited-term exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses[2] to permit the use of "remote" instruction and evaluation for the duration of Spring quarter 2020. In response, the campus transitioned to emergency remote instruction across campus with results that were widely viewed as a compromise, including reduced satisfaction in teaching and learning outcomes, and significantly greater amounts of stress and fatigue among instructors, instructional assistants, and students alike.

These struggles emerged from two challenging dynamics. The first concerned communication related to instructional policy. The COVID-19 pandemic created significant uncertainty about every possible aspect of life, including instruction. This caused campus administrators and Senate faculty to revisit every assumption regarding the delivery of instruction, including not only format, but also policies relating to add/drop/withdrawal deadlines, pass/not pass limits, and final exam delivery, *inter alia* (see Appendix 1 for timeline of Senate policy decisions). By all accounts, considerable confusion surrounded these changes, which was exacerbated by a lack of unified emergency communication strategy. Sometimes conflicting information regarding instructional policy was communicated by campus administrators, Senate representatives, department chairs and staff, department "remote teaching leads", and individual campus community members. Due to restrictions on the ability of Senate bodies to communicate via email to instructors, many communications were limited to Senate faculty, and therefore failed to reach Unit 18 instructors and Instructional Assistants (IAs). What's more, campus members reported being confused about who made particular decisions, whether instructors had the authority to make instructional decisions in the spirit of academic freedom, and which communications expressed policy, as opposed to recommendations or best practices.

The second dynamic to unfold over Spring quarter was related to the implementation of remote instruction. UC San Diego instructors, IAs, students, and staff collaborated to make a heroic transition to an emergency remote learning environment in a matter of mere weeks. This involved learning to use a host of novel electronic tools like Zoom (a now ubiquitous teleconferencing tool), Canvas (a newly released Learning Management System), and miscellaneous tools for recording and sharing online videos, conducting online quizzes, scheduling and conducting remote interactions, and proctoring exams. However, although the campus response to emergency remote instruction was admirable, it was also viewed as a significant compromise by faculty and students alike. In the "Instructor and Student Survey Responses on Remote Teaching and Learning"[3] conducted by the UC Systemwide Academic Senate and Institutional Research and Academic Planning (hereafter referred to as the IRAP survey), 60% of instructors reported that their students learned less (or much less) than usual in Spring 2020, consistent with a UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)[4] of over 60,000 UC undergraduates, which found that, compared to regular in-person classes, 50% of students reported learning less (or much less) from

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[1] https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020
[2] https://senate.ucsd.edu/media/395276/policy-on-distance-education-courses.pdf
[3] See also July 6, 2020 systemwide Academic Senate memo from Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair, Academic Council: Student/Faculty Survey about Remote Learning during Winter/Spring 2020: https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/kkb-division-chairs-instructor-survey-results.pdf
[4] https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/ucues-data-tables-main; Note: The 2020 data tables are not yet publicly available on the UCUES webpage at the time this report's submission.

prerecorded remote lectures, 53% reported learning less (or much less) from synchronous remote lectures, 67% reported learning less (or much less) in remote performance or studio-based classes, and 70% reported learning less in remote labs. Given this outcome, the San Diego Division of the Academic Senate's Senate Council concluded that "further non-emergency discussion by the Academic Senate is essential to address educational continuity plans in the long-term."[5]

2. CHARGE

The charge of the Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies was to (1) develop a framework/guidelines which can be used as the basis for instructional planning during future emergencies when the standard in-person delivery of courses is disrupted, such as the one presented during the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) assess the anticipated impact of recent emergency policy revisions, (3) formulate recommendations for a Senate response as the COVID-19 pandemic ramifications extend into the 2020-21 academic year, and (4) articulate a vision for how remote instruction is to be utilized both during and after short- and long-term emergencies.

3. SCOPE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force identified three broad foci that organize its recommendations: Communication Readiness, Instructional Readiness, and Distance Learning Policy. In the sections below, we therefore present recommendations as they relate to these three foci, discussing the four charges above as they arise. A common theme presented in these sections is that, in addition to building policies and systems that are robust in future emergencies, Senate faculty should also prepare immediately for a range of possible COVID-19 outcomes, and transition as quickly as possible from a reactive, emergency mindset to a planful mindset that delivers the highest quality instruction over the coming medium-term period of recovery and uncertainty.

4. COMMUNICATION READINESS

Emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic are by nature unpredictable and create uncertainty that frustrates the effective delivery of higher education. In Spring 2020, confusion on the UC San Diego campus resulted from a series of necessary changes to instructional policy, compounded by multi-channel pre-pandemic communication systems. Also, existing communication systems focused on top-down dissemination of information, and failed to provide channels of feedback to university administrators, which led to moments of discord and distrust on campus. Finally, although the UC San Diego campus is overflowing with expertise on questions relevant to managing the COVID-19 crisis, including expertise related to instructional innovation and remote teaching, the campus community relied chiefly on a single overburdened resource—i.e., the Teaching + Learning Commons ("the Commons")—with no clear mechanism for deploying the onsite expertise of its talented faculty.

The Task Force concluded that these struggles to communicate policy, recommendations, and expertise flowed directly from a near exclusive reliance on email. Email is by nature imperfect for emergency communication. Instructors manage a large number of email messages each day from many different sources, with the result that emergency messages can too easily be lost amidst the daily deluge. In addition, information conveyed by email does not update as policies and recommendations change, with no obvious way for users to identify which emails contain information that is current and which are outdated. Worse, not all campus members receive the same email messages, causing differences in knowledge among community members. Campus administrators and Senate leadership send some

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[5] Charge Memo, Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies, May 26, 2020. (Appendix 6)

information to other administrators, some to department chairs, and some to the entire community. Similarly, whereas some department chairs forward nearly all campus email to their faculty—sometimes to excess— others forward almost no messages to their department members. Meanwhile, anyone who receives an email is free to forward it to anyone they please, resulting in uneven and often random information flow, as well as rumors and misunderstanding. Worse, this irregular flow of information often excludes those most in need of it, such as Unit 18 instructors (who cannot be directly emailed by the Senate, per contractual restrictions), as well as graduate student instructors, TAs and undergraduate IAs. Finally, email is an inefficient platform for collaboration and information exchange in large networks, and does not provide obvious ways for individual community members to request help or advice from the community at large without incurring costs to the entire community in the form of long threads that interest only a fraction of users.

The Task Force considered a variety of alternative communication strategies that might be deployed during the continuing COVID-19 crisis, in future crises, and in "normal" times, as well. It considered potential barriers to entry such as the need to purchase or download software, the need to quickly learn how to navigate a new interface, and the utility of a platform during both emergency and non-emergency conditions. It concluded that four broad directions should be pursued.

First, the Task Force recommends that the Senate create a dedicated emergency communication portal featuring a simple, graphical, up-to-date presentation of current emergency-related Senate policies, a timeline of emergency-related Senate policy decisions, and links to emergency-related resources. Separately, it also recommends that, long term, more general improvements might be made to senate.ucsd.edu to simplify and streamline how information is presented, and also to communicate the nature of the Academic Senate to the campus community—i.e., its structure, its members, its functions, and how its role differs from the roles of campus administrators (all sources of confusion that were exposed during the emergency). The Task Force felt that some amount of confusion in Spring 2020 may have resulted from campus members not fully understanding what the Senate is, and how it differs from and interfaces with campus administration. Members of the campus community, including students at the UC San Diego Design Lab, have expressed interest in helping to design an intuitive, graphical, emergency communication web portal.

Second, the Task Force recommends that to prepare for future crises, the Senate should entertain a more substantial modernization of its communication systems. In particular, it recommends that the Senate collaborate with Senate faculty to explore the creation of a wiki-like campus communication network for knowledge transmission among campus members, analogous to the innovative CoRespond[6] system (created by members of the UC San Diego medical science community to provide timely information regarding COVID-19). A system analogous to CoRespond has multiple benefits that contrast with email or alternative network communication systems such as Slack. For example, such a system would allow community members to pose questions to others on campus and to receive curated responses from local experts, shared in the form of brief, interactive "articles" (like wikipedia entries) that link out to additional resources such as videos, tutorials, primary source research, teaching materials, etc. Also, such a system can be designed to permit—and distinguish between—input from different stakeholders on campus, including Senate leadership, campus administration, and individual members. It can also be curated, as in the case of CoRespond, to ensure high quality and up-to-date information. Most important, a crowdsourcing platform like CoRespond is dynamic and flexible, and can be rapidly deployed to address new and emerging crises, while also serving more mundane and quotidian functions in non-emergency times (e.g., policy, resources, and best practices for grant preparation). Existing entities on campus, including head librarian Erik Mitchell and members of the CoRespond team have expressed interest in participating in such a collaboration. Note that CoRespond was developed in the matter of mere weeks,

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[6] http://covid-help.ucsd.edu/en/support/home

but that even if a novel campus-wide communication system cannot be developed quickly, it is the type of infrastructure that could offer long-term resilience to future crises.

Third, the Task Force recommends that the chairs of instructional units, possibly organized via the informal body of the "Council on Chairs", consider alternative ways to share information with unit members, to harmonize information flow across the campus. Differences in how information flowed across departments was notable during Spring 2020, and was likely due to differences in information sharing practices among multiple entities, including chairs. Some chairs shared many campus communications, whereas others shared relatively few. Those who did share sometimes triggered extensive email threads that were at times germane to only some faculty members, sometimes divisive in nature, and sometimes burdensome for chairs to monitor. Given this, the Task Force discussed the merits of a collaboration among chairs to create a single, secure, shared repository of campus communications (e.g., a series of links to emails from a Google Doc) that might otherwise be shared with faculty via email. Such a repository could be made available to faculty on a subscription basis, and, to maximize sharing of expertise on campus, could allow for annotations and commentary from individual chairs regarding how these communications might be interpreted (either globally, or in the context of particular units, or with respect to the distinction between policy and best-practices). Finally, by permitting instructors to set up notifications indicating new edits to such a repository, chairs could focus email communications on only the most critical updates.

Fourth, the Task Force recommends several actions to clarify the distinction between Senate and campus communications, and between instructional policy and recommended best practices. The Task Force noted that campus members frequently struggled to differentiate Senate policy from campus policies and how each differed from recommended best practices. To remedy this, the Task Force recommends that, within the limits of what is possible, the Senate take greater ownership over its decisions by ensuring that it is the first to announce policy decisions to the campus, rather than allowing its policy decisions to be announced and interpreted first by campus administrators (which creates confusion about who has authority over particular decisions, and clouds the distinction between the Senate and campus administration). Next, as noted below in our discussion of Instructional Readiness, the Senate should work with campus to more clearly communicate the authority of campus instructors to make decisions regarding the content and delivery modality of classes, rather than waiting for campus administrators to take the lead on these questions. Finally, the Senate should engage in frank discussions with campus administrators regarding how each body will communicate recommendations relating to best practices. In Spring 2020, instructors were often positioned between the recommendations of campus, which were generous to the understandable needs of students, and the challenges of quickly constructing new remote classes during a crisis. This situation created incredible stress for faculty. As the COVID-19 crisis continues, the risk of faculty burnout will likely rise if the increased workload and stresses associated with crisis management are left unabated, with possible impacts not only on instructional quality, but also research and grant procurement. The Senate should discuss the problem of faculty welfare with campus as it relates to the communication of recommendations, *inter alia*, and should either request that recommendations be communicated via Senate rather than via campus administrators (to allow Senate faculty to retain instructional autonomy and consider effects of recommendations as they relate to Senate policy and priorities), or that campus include in their communications an explicit discussion of how recommendations are distinct from policy requirements, and may not be possible, or preferable, in many classes.

5. INSTRUCTIONAL READINESS

Instruction at UC San Diego is vulnerable to emergencies because it involves the coordination of thousands of people in specific times and places, planned months in advance. Future emergencies might affect instruction in a range of ways, by impacting technology and communication systems, by impacting

infrastructure like classrooms and dormitories, or by more substantially impacting the health of students and instructors. During the COVID-19 crisis, the main impact was on the format of instruction, as classes were forced into emergency remote mode. As a result, most of the lessons learned relate to format of instruction, though the recommendations below also seek to address novel outcomes.

A key theme of Task Force discussion was that high-quality instruction requires significant time and resources to prepare, and that quality is sacrificed when instructors are forced to rapidly transition from in-person to remote. In Spring 2020, the problems created by a rapid move to emergency remote instruction were compounded by poor access to technology on the part of many students, IAs, and even instructors, leading many to adopt asynchronous content delivery, which greatly limited interaction between instructors and students, resulting in an inferior learning experience. In response to these issues, a recurrent mantra on campus was that UC San Diego instruction should be made more resilient to emergency, which was sometimes associated with a hastened adoption of fully remote, R, classes (i.e., classes designed such that less than half of instructional time takes place in-person).[7] However, after serious consideration of this issue, the Task Force concluded that R course instruction could never play this role of creating emergency resilience at scale, and that our current emergency should not be used as a premise to promote the further adoption of R instruction. Though R instruction may have a role to play on campus, for the vast majority of faculty and students, it is a distant second choice to in-person instruction, and faculty therefore do not wish to invest already sparse time and resources into adopting a mode of instruction that they will not deploy long term. Also, and critically, the scale of our current instructional crisis is far too great to be remedied by large-scale adoption of R teaching. The Task Force learned that R classes currently cost $50,000 or more to develop at UC San Diego and that the campus currently has funds (via the Innovative Learning Technology Initiative and the Course Development and Instructional Improvement Program) to create ~50 R status classes per year, in a context of thousands of classes offered. Also, currently there is no dedicated funding for updating aging R classes, which, even if done every five years, would be very costly even for the small number of currently offered classes. Given these factors, the Task Force recommended a variety of alternative policies and cost-effective investments that would both provide emergency resilience and strengthen non-emergency instruction as well.

5.1 Instructional Autonomy & Long-Term Planning
The first factor considered by the Task Force was instructional planning, autonomy, and flexibility. On July 10, 2020, EPC approved Chancellor Pradeep Khosla's June 30, 2020 request for a one-time emergency exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses to allow for "the use of remote instruction for the duration of Winter, Spring, and Summer terms in 2021 due to the current public health emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic." The Task Force concluded that although the EPC decision creates flexibility for coming quarters, it leaves open considerable uncertainty regarding how this flexibility will be deployed, and who will make decisions regarding Winter, Spring, and Summer course offerings. This is important because, in order to offer the type of education that UC San Diego students and instructors expect, it is critical that preparation of remote offerings begin as soon as possible. High-quality online classes typically take many months to prepare and often involve collaboration among many individuals and entities on campus, including instructors, GSRs who help design content, unit staff who coordinate curriculum design, the Teaching + Learning Commons who participate in video editing and course design review, and, if courses are submitted for R designation (i.e., less than 50% of student-instructor interaction time), they must also receive approval by Undergraduate or Graduate Council.[8]

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[7] According to the UC San Diego Policy on Distance Education Courses, "A course will be considered a Distance Education course if (for some or all students) less than 50% of student-instructor interaction time was designed to occur face-to-face (meaning physically in the same room)" and "must bear the letter R (for Remote) at the end of the course code."

[8] To supplement a standard course approval from Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council, an R course submission must also respond to six additional questions addressing how it will be delivered, what technologies will

Finally, as noted in Chancellor Khosla's June 30th request, "the logistical planning required to offer a mix of in-person and remote courses involves iterative collaboration between the Registrar's Office, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Educational Innovation (AVC-EI), and each of the academic departments."

Long-term planning by faculty is also complicated by uncertainty regarding their authority to make decisions regarding modality of instruction. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, campus administration has expressed different views regarding its own role in determining instructional modality. As recently as the EVC-Deans meeting of July 28, 2020, it was communicated that faculty wishing to shift modality (e.g., from in-person to remote) should request approval through the office of AVC Educational Innovation, Carlos Jensen, whereas an August 5th memo from Dean of Undergraduate Education John Moore to Deans, Chairs and Provosts clarified that, to "streamline the scheduling process, the AVC Educational Innovation will not be collecting course information" and that "unlike Fall quarter, this process will be left to the departments." Critically, however, a basis for the Fall involvement of the AVC Educational Innovation was not previously provided. This raises the question of what role the AVC has in determining the content and format of course offerings, what roles will be claimed in future, and whether Senate faculty retain authority over the delivery of instruction and curriculum moving forward.

Given these considerations, in an August 10, 2020 memo (Appendix 2), the Task Force recommended specific steps to improve long-term planning during an emergency, including (1) discussion with the Executive Vice Chancellor to recognize and communicate the rights of instructors and instructional units to determine instructional format (recognizing that the election of in-person format is contingent upon restrictions imposed by other campus entities as well as state and local authorities), (2) similar recognition of instructional units to determine their curriculum and choices of modality, and (3) clear messaging to instructors that they should exercise this discretion by considering the possibility of impacts of COVID-19 beyond the 2020-2021 academic year.

Beyond this immediate response to COVID-19, the Task Force concluded that future emergency responses and long-term planning will be improved if Senate faculty better understand their rights as instructors to plan the format, content, and delivery mode of their course offerings.

5.2 Resources for Developing Instructional Content
The Task Force considered not only the time that it takes to prepare high-quality, emergency remote classes, but also the resources required to deliver effective remote instruction at scale. Two recurring concerns arose when discussing remote teaching with instructors. First, currently there is no support for a middle ground between emergency-quality remote instruction and high-cost R classes: either faculty use their own resources to develop Zoom lectures of highly variable quality, or they apply for very limited funds to develop expensive R classes. The reality is that neither will do: UC San Diego needs to consider the possibility that emergency remote instruction will continue at scale beyond Fall 2020, and possibly beyond Summer 2021, and that we should strive to do better than emergency quality. Second, and relatedly, many faculty expressed a need for support to conduct high-quality synchronous instruction in a remote format. In addition to the fact that many students and faculty prefer synchronous learning environments, in some cases high quality instruction cannot be provided asynchronously—e.g., in lab classes, student-centered flipped classes, or classes that involve high-touch contingent feedback such as Theatre and Dance, Visual Arts, Music, etc. As reported by the IRAP survey of UC undergraduate students, nearly 70% of students reported learning less (or much less) in performance or studio-based classes, and the same numbers were found for lab-based classes. Importantly, synchronous instruction requires different technologies, training, and support relative to asynchronous instruction. It also requires

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be used for interactions among students and instructors, how students will be evaluated, how student identity will be verified, and how instructional assistants (IAs) will be trained and deployed. Submissions must also include evidence of review (though not approval) by the Teaching + Learning Commons.

different strategies for supporting learners who cannot easily attend synchronous activities, whether due to location or disability. Finally, it relies much more heavily on access to robust technologies, like broadband internet.

Given the uncertainty regarding the trajectory of COVID-19, the Task Force determined that additional thought and resources should be directed toward supporting medium-term emergency remote instruction and learning. Mindful that short- to medium-term investment in remote instruction is costly, in an August 10, 2020 memo (see Appendix 3 for details), the Task Force recommended three low-cost mechanisms for improving instruction, with support for both high-quality synchronous and asynchronous learning. In particular the Task Force recommended (1) that the Senate promote the deployment of paid and for-credit undergraduate IAs to support synchronous learning, (2) that Senate request modest funds to support the creation of medium-term (emergency remote) asynchronous lecture videos, and (3) that Senate create a small network of faculty (e.g, 5-10) from diverse departments who engage in different forms of challenging synchronous instruction, who can work with the Commons to develop remote teaching resources that are compatible with their needs (e.g., plug-and-play Canvas templates, quizzes, peer grading systems, group work, etc). All three measures offer not only the promise of supporting instructors and learners during COVID-19, but also the potential to improve the use of technology on campus long term, if resources are created and deployed in innovative ways.

In the August 10th memo describing these recommendations, the Task Force remained neutral on possible mechanisms to fund the creation of short- to medium-term emergency remote instructional resources. However, mindful that new funds may not be available for supporting the improvement of emergency remote instruction, the Task Force reconsidered this question and suggested that if new funds aren't available, then campus might temporarily divert funds from other sources related to remote instruction (e.g., the Course Development and Instructional Improvement Program). The Task Force reasoned that (1) distributing smaller grants to a larger group of instructors (or instructional units) would have positive impacts on instruction during COVID-19 while also introducing a larger number of instructors to improved use of technology in their instruction, and (2) that without some such redirection of funds, the campus risks repeating the poor outcomes of Spring 2020 for several academic quarters to come, with accumulating impacts on faculty and student well-being, graduate and undergraduate mentoring, research productivity, grant procurement, and the reputation of UC San Diego.

5.3 Resources for Implementing Instructional Content
Just as important as planning and creating excellent classes is the ability to deliver them. In normal times, the vast majority of UC San Diego classes are delivered via in-person classrooms, with costs of building and maintaining this infrastructure delegated to campus. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this infrastructure became unavailable to instructors and they were asked to provide their own teaching infrastructure. In tandem, the campus recognized that technological infrastructure is a critical bottleneck to delivery of remote learning, and therefore created initiatives to supply learners with hardware (e.g., laptops) and internet access to ensure the best possible learning experience. However, the availability of hardware and bandwidth for students is only meaningful if the instructors and TAs they interact with have technology that is equal to this or better. Although UC San Diego has the prerogative to ask instructors to individually replace the classroom infrastructure with quality hardware and bandwidth, doing so risks delegating decisions about the quality of campus infrastructure to under-resourced individuals who may not be able to choose the newest webcams, microphones, headphones, laptops, and highest bandwidth. Given this, the Task Force concluded that although teaching infrastructure would ideally be assured by campus for all instructors where possible, in the context of an emergency and economic crisis, the first investment of available dollars should be in Unit 18 instructors and IAs in order to ensure the best possible experience for learners. To communicate the immediate needs of instructors, the Task Force issued an August 18, 2020 memo (Appendix 4), which recommended (1) that Senate communicate with campus about the need to ensure that Unit 18 instructors and IAs have access to high quality computing

technology (e.g., microphones, headphones, webcams, etc), (2) that the Teaching + Learning Commons, as part of a collaboration with Senate faculty, provide greater support for synchronous instruction, and in particular challenging course types that involve performance, labs, or other high-touch contingent feedback and interaction with groups and equipment, and (3) that greater attention be paid to the problem of Academic Integrity, and the current lack of adequate technical solutions for remote proctoring to certify student knowledge.

5.4 Student and Faculty Welfare During Times of Crisis
Without question, students bore the primary impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. Many students struggled with remote learning, lacked required technologies and private spaces to learn, struggled with economic uncertainty, and worried about their health, as well as the future value of their degrees and employment prospects. In response to this, faculty served the student body at UC San Diego like never before, supporting their struggles, responding to countless email and Canvas messages, and negotiating many individual accommodations for students with novel personal situations not easily managed through standard mechanisms. This easily doubled or tripled the time spent teaching for many instructors, with negative impacts on research, graduate advising, and efforts to procure external funding. This degree of service to students is challenging in the short term, and in the long term could become unsustainable without appropriate measures to support instructors.

The Task Force views each of the proposed recommendations above to be measures that can address faculty welfare moving forward. Better communication, greater autonomy to plan instruction, and more support in the creation and implementation of remote teaching will each impact the well-being and long-term productivity of UC San Diego instructors. However, additional steps can be made to reduce the pressures placed on instructors. First, as already noted, recommendations from campus and other entities were broadcast to the campus without sufficient consideration of the impacts these would have on instructors. Students sometimes interpreted recommendations as policies, or viewed deviations from recommended practices as a lack of care for students. For example, early in Spring 2020 some instructors received complaints submitted from students directly to their dean, with little apparent vetting of these complaints or whether they related to violations of Senate or campus policy. The Task Force recommends that this issue be taken up by the Committee on Faculty Welfare, and that campus be discouraged from broadcasting unsolicited recommendations regarding instructional best practices, e.g., instead proposing recommendations to the Academic Senate, compatible with the authority of Senate faculty to make decisions regarding the content, format, and delivery mode of instruction.

Second, because most students were not physically present on campus during Spring 2020, instructors and IAs became students' primary point of contact with the university, whereas in normal times students might also interact more easily with other students, IAs, or departmental staff who support learners. Although it is likely that staff were also overburdened during the early COVID-19 experience, moving forward it will be important for campus to engage in greater outreach to both students and instructors, to make campus resources more visible and accessible to students, so IAs and instructors do not bear the full load of student crisis management.

Finally, both Senate and the campus should consider that the COVID-19 crisis created a substantially heavier instructional burden on faculty than in typical years, and that instructors have been stretched to their absolute limits. This should be a primary consideration as the campus considers strategies for managing the current—and likely worsening—budget crisis. In almost all cases, adding additional instructional load will significantly worsen not only their experience as employees, but also their ability to deliver high-quality instruction, and to engage in the world class research that makes UC San Diego an international leader in higher education.

6. DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

In addition to the clear challenges in planning, creating, and implementing high-quality remote classes in Spring 2020, members of the UC San Diego campus also confronted challenging questions surrounding distance learning policy—i.e., what counts as remote instruction, when it is permitted, and who should decide when it is permitted. Further, there was confusion regarding the role of campus administrators (e.g., AVC Educational Innovation) in deciding which specific classes should be remote or in-person. Typically, this decision is made by instructors and their instructional units in adherence to Senate policy and regulations (e.g., Policy on Distance Education Courses).

Currently, although the Manual of the San Diego Division of the Academic Senate[9] contains regulations regarding almost every aspect of instructional delivery including grading policy, pass/not pass limits, add, drop, and withdrawal deadlines for courses, it contains no mention of perhaps the most fundamental decision faced in 2020—i.e., the modality of instruction. Instead, UC San Diego's Policy on Distance Education Courses is managed by the Educational Policy Committee. In some ways this makes sense, since this policy was designed to advise units on how to create individual R classes, not to inform campus-wide decision making. Also, housing a policy within a Senate committee allows faculty to make rapid adjustments to this policy as times change, without invoking the full structure that is required to modify Senate regulations. A common worry among Senate leadership—justified or not—is the appearance of being excessively deliberative when dealing with questions that require a rapid response. On the other hand, it is hard to justify why changes to grading and course withdrawal dates should receive a more rigorous review process than policies related to course modality. Few policies are more impactful on the delivery of instruction at UC San Diego.

The Task Force discussed this question, and concluded that it would be beneficial for the Academic Senate to have greater involvement in questions regarding modality of instruction, and further, that there might be ways to involve the Senate without creating excessively cumbersome decision-making processes. One option would be to transform the entirety of the existing EPC Policy on Distance Education Courses into a Senate regulation, placing complete authority over the details of this policy in the hands of the entire Academic Senate as opposed to just one committee of the Senate. However, as already noted, this could also make minor modifications to this policy overly onerous, since it would require the involvement of multiple entities including the Representative Assembly. Another option would be to maintain EPC's oversight of the Policy, but to adopt a separate regulation that clearly designates broader Senate authority over whether this Policy can be suspended. Note that although in normal times this would also require a vote from Representative Assembly, this would not differ from how regulations for grading and enrollment deadlines are currently managed. In times of emergency, Senate Council may act for the Representative Assembly,[10] as it did in Spring 2020, to rapidly approve temporary modifications as needed, and in times when deliberation is possible - such as the coming academic year, the broader Senate mechanisms could be involved.

Making this type of policy change would have multiple benefits both for handling emergency situations and non-emergency business. First, it would allow the inclusion of a larger and more diverse deliberative body who could evaluate a larger set of potential policy impacts, including Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, and the EPC, as needed. Second, because modality of instruction is central to the life of every instructor, a more deliberative and inclusive approach may help to maintain feelings of cohesiveness and trust among the Senate body. Finally, as technology continues to shape the delivery of higher education, it will be increasingly important for the Academic Senate to play a role in managing questions of modality, rather than leaving these questions entirely to campus administrators or to

[9] https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/senate-manual/regulations/
[10] http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Bylaws/242

individual Senate committees. Having no regulations regarding modality leaves the Senate without a foothold in the debate regarding the future of the university, and the role of online graduate and undergraduate degrees.

Separate from the question of whether the broader Senate should have a greater voice in suspending Distance Learning Policy is the more general question of the future of remote learning at UC San Diego. Although the charge of this Task Force did not include a wholesale evaluation of remote learning and its possible merits, the matter was central to almost every discussion. In addition to concluding that R classes cannot scale to address future emergencies, the Task Force also became concerned that our current budget crisis might offer grounds for a wider adoption of online degree programs prior to an adequate consideration of the possible impacts this might have, particularly in the undergraduate space. Wary of fulfilling the stereotype that every good Task Force should end by recommending yet another Task Force, our final recommendation is nevertheless that the future of online degrees is one of the defining questions of our current moment, and of the coming years, and that Senate Faculty should act quickly to have a voice in this future. On July 14, 2020, a systemwide "Online Degree Task Force" reported its discussion of this question, and articulated possible use-cases of fully-online (remote) undergraduate degrees, while also noting challenges of preserving a UC-quality education, and the possible challenges for both learning and campus revenues. The current Task Force believes that these lessons have not been adequately considered on the UC San Diego campus, and therefore reluctantly concludes that the Senate should move to create a Senate Task Force on the Future of Remote Instruction at UC San Diego.

Appendix 1. Temporary Changes to Senate Policies and Regulations in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Approval Date	Action/Request	Quarter	Request Date	Approver	Requestor
2020-03-09	Final exam options and initial discussions about application of distance education policy	WI20	n/a	Senate leadership	n/a
2020-03-09	Relax teleconferencing requirements for MS and PhD defenses	SP20	n/a	GC	Dean of the Graduate Division
2020-03-13	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter	SP20	2020-03-11	EPC	Chancellor
2020-03-19	1. Exempt courses from 25% P/NP limit 2. Extend the deadline to change grading option (P/NP or S/U) to end of Week 10	SP20	2020-03-18	Senate Council	EPC
2020-03-19	Allow Letter Grade Only courses to be offered P/NP or S/U	SP20	2020-03-19	UGC and GC	Senate
2020-03-19	1. Extend add deadline to end of Week 3 2. Extend drop w/out W deadline to end of Week 5 3. Extend drop w/ W deadline to end of Week 7 (UG only)	SP20	2020-03-19	Senate Council	Senate Council
2020-03-30	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter for non-resident first-time first-year students	FA20	2020-03-25	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-02	Use of remote instruction for duration of Summer Session	SU20	2020-03-30	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-09	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter for incoming international graduate students	FA20	2020-04-03	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-13	Extend doctoral time limits by one quarter	SP20	2020-03-20	GC	Dean of the Graduate Division
2020-05-06	Allow "P" or "C-" to satisfy Entry Level Writing Requirement	SP20	2020-04-16	Senate Council	COPE (following SW UCEP and UCOPE discussion)
2020-05-01	Use of remote instruction for the duration of the quarter	FA20	2020-04-28	EPC	Chancellor
2020-05-11	Extend relaxing teleconferencing requirements for MS and PhD defenses	SP20	n/a	GC	Dean of the Graduate Division

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Appendix 1. Temporary Changes to Senate Policies and Regulations in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Approval Date	Action/Request	Quarter	Request Date	Approver	Requestor
2020-06-03	Extend the deadline to change grading option (P/NP or S/U) to end of finals week (Week 11)	SP20	2020-06-02	Senate Council	EPC
2020-06-30	Extend the deadline for undergraduates to drop w/W to the equivalent of the end of Week 9 (90% of term)	SU20	2020-06-25	Senate Council	EPC
2020-07-10	Use of remote instruction for the duration of the quarter	WI21, SP21, SU21	2020-06-30 (sent 2020-07-02)	EPC	Chancellor

August 10, 2020

PROFESSOR MARIPAT CORR, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies: Recommendations on Senate
                        Faculty Autonomy to Plan Remote Instruction for Winter, Spring, and Summer 2021

On July 10, 2020, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) approved Chancellor Pradeep Khosla's June 30, 2020 request for a one-time emergency exception to EPC's Policy on Distance Education Courses "to allow for the use of remote instruction for the duration of Winter, Spring, and Summer terms in 2021 due to the current public health emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic." This included two specific requests, repeated for each of Winter, Spring, and Summer, which were approved as follows.

First, for each quarter, EPC approved "an emergency limited-term exception to implement a flexible plan for [each quarter] … incorporating educational approaches ranging from fully in-person, to blended in-person/remote, to fully remote." Second, for each quarter, EPC approved "an emergency limited-term exception, such that if at any time between now and the end of [each quarter] a heightened state of emergency associated with COVID-19 makes in-person teaching infeasible [for each quarter], the campus may return immediately to fully remote instruction [for that quarter]."

The Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies considered this outcome and concluded that although the EPC decision creates flexibility for coming quarters, it leaves open considerable uncertainty regarding how this flexibility will be deployed, and who will make decisions regarding Winter, Spring, and Summer course offerings. This is important because, in order to offer the type of world class quality education that UC San Diego students expect, it is critical that preparation of remote offerings begin as soon as possible. High quality remote classes typically take many months to prepare and often involve collaboration among many individuals and entities on campus, including instructors, GSRs who help design content, unit staff who coordinate curriculum design, the Teaching + Learning Commons ("the Commons") who participate in video editing and course design review, and, if courses are submitted for R designation, approval by Undergraduate or Graduate Council. Also, as noted in Chancellor Khosla's June 30th request, "the logistical planning required to offer a mix of in-person and remote courses involves iterative collaboration between the Registrar's Office, the AVC-EI, and each of the academic departments."

Long-term planning by faculty is also complicated by uncertainty regarding their authority to make decisions regarding format. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, campus administration has expressed different views regarding its own role in determining format of instruction. As recently as the EVC-Deans meeting of July 28, 2020, it was communicated that faculty wishing to shift modality (e.g., from in-person to remote) should request approval through the office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Educational Innovation (AVC-EI), Carlos Jensen, whereas an August 5th memo from the Dean of Undergraduate Education, John Moore, to Deans, Chairs and Provosts clarified that, to "streamline the scheduling process, the AVC Educational Innovation will not be collecting course information" and that "unlike Fall quarter, this process will be left to the departments." Critically, however, a basis for the Fall involvement of the AVC-EI was not previously provided. This raises the question of what role the AVC-EI has in determining the content and format of course offerings, what roles will be claimed going forward, and whether Senate faculty retain authority over the modality of instruction moving forward.

Given these considerations, and given the EPC's July 10th approval of Chancellor Khosla's request for flexibility in instructional format in coming quarters, the Task Force judged that it is imperative to immediately resolve uncertainty regarding how this flexibility will be deployed and who has authority to decide instructional format for themselves and for particular classes. Delaying instructional format decisions to the last moment each quarter risks the worst possible outcome for both instructors and learners at UC San Diego, and may also risk long term impacts to the reputation of the University, potentially squandering an opportunity to lead, and to act as a model to peer institutions. To promote the creation of high quality instructional resources that can be deployed over the coming months or years of continuing COVID-19 impacts, the Task Force recommends that the following steps be taken without delay, before the beginning of Fall quarter 2020:

1. Senate leadership should immediately begin discussions with the EVC to recognize and clearly articulate the rights of instructors to determine the instructional format of their classes and should work to articulate clear processes for communicating these preferences to campus both during COVID-10 and extending into the future. The Senate should inform instructors that, given the suspension of the distance learning policy for the next academic year, there are currently no Senate restrictions on the rights of faculty to choose a remote instructional format for course offerings in Fall 2020, Winter, Spring, and Summer of 2021 (in collaboration with their instructional unit, and recognizing that the election of in-person format is contingent upon restrictions imposed by other campus entities as well as state and local authorities). The Senate should also investigate the rights of Unit 18 lecturers and graduate student IAs to elect a remote instructional format, given their different contractual relationship to the University.

2. Similarly, Senate leadership should begin discussions with the EVC to recognize and clearly articulate the authority of instructional units over curriculum design within their units, including decisions regarding format of instruction (remote or in-person) *modulo* the availability of willing instructors.

3. To take a proactive stance to providing quality instruction, Senate leadership should clearly communicate to instructors to prepare for the future, and the possibility that the COVID-19 crisis may impact operations beyond Summer 2021. As noted in a separate August 10, 2020 memo from this Task Force, although rapid vaccine development may begin to offer solutions by as early as January 2021, best-case scenario rollouts will be gradual and may not offer full protection to the UC San Diego community for some time to come. Via a memo to chairs and/or faculty, the Senate should alert instructors to this situation, and should be encouraged to develop high quality remote techniques that create instructional flexibility through the short- and medium-term. In keeping with this, in a separate memo we recommend that the Senate request additional investment in medium-term remote course development.

In addition to these recommendations for immediate action, the Task Force looks forward to communicating a final report in the coming days.

Sincerely,

David Barner, Chair
Janet Becker
Tom Erbe
Stephanie Fraley
Barry Grant
Juan Pablo Pardo Guerra
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        S. Constable
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August 10, 2020

PROFESSOR MARIPAT CORR, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies: Recommendations on Resources to
                Improve Remote Instruction during Short Term and Intermediate Term COVID-19 Crisis

On July 10, 2020, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) approved Chancellor Pradeep Khosla's June 30, 2020
request for a one time emergency exception to EPC's Policy on Distance Education Courses to allow for "the use of
remote instruction for the duration of Winter, Spring, and Summer terms in 2021 due to the current public health
emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic."

Following on this decision, Executive Vice Chancellor Elizabeth Simmons communicated this flexibility in a July 15th
email, in which she also encouraged "departments to identify which courses they wish to be able to regularly offer via
distance education - and to get them designated as R courses by the Senate." Among the reasons offered for this
recommendation were the ability to "accommodate sudden enrollment pressures, smooth out curricular bottlenecks that
were slowing students' academic progress, and create flexible summer offerings."

The Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies considered both the EPC decision and
the EVC's subsequent recommendations to convert existing classes to R status. It came to two broad conclusions, to be
detailed in a forthcoming final report. First, it agreed that a small minority of instructors should explore the option of
converting large lecture-based courses to R status. In particular, instructors who foresee teaching in a remote or flipped
modality for the foreseeable future - and beyond the pandemic - should consider this option. Second, the Task Force did
not view this option as a general solution to the problem of instruction during the pandemic. For the vast majority of
faculty and students, remote instruction is a distant second choice to in-person instruction, and faculty therefore do not
wish to invest already sparse time and resources into adopting a mode of instruction that they will not deploy long term.
Also, and critically, the scale of the problem is far too great to be remedied by large scale adoption of R teaching. Not
only is the process of R designation ill-suited to emergency instruction due to extensive development, review, and
approval processes, but R classes are too costly to create and maintain at scale. The Task Force learned that R classes
currently cost $50,000 or more to develop at UC San Diego and that the campus currently has funds via ILTI and CDIIP
to create ~50 classes / year to R status, in a context of several thousand classes offered, and with no dedicated funding for
updating aging classes.

Nevertheless, in order to thrive in the COVID-19 context, UC San Diego must resume offering high quality instruction as
soon as possible, whether in-person or remote. Although rapid vaccine development may begin to offer solutions by as
early as January 2021, best-case scenario rollouts will be gradual and may not offer full protection to the UC San Diego
community in the short term, making the timeline for full return to in-person teaching uncertain. Given this context, the
University needs a coordinated plan for short- to medium-term improvement of remote instruction, pending a return to
in-person interactions. What elements might such a plan involve?

First, the Task Force concluded that advance planning is critical to quality instructional design. As described in an
August 10, 2020 memo, instructors should be alerted immediately of the potential for COVID-19 to impact instruction
not only in the short term, but also in the medium term (beyond the coming academic year) so that they can plan
effectively. Relatedly, the Task Force recommended that the Senate assure instructors and units of their freedom to elect
a remote format for Fall 2020, Winter, Spring, and Summer 2021. EVC Simmons's e-mail came close to this by noting
that flexibility exists. However, the Task Force notes that similar flexibility existed for Fall quarter 2020, and yet
considerable uncertainty remained among instructors regarding who had the authority to deploy it.

Second, if we are to avoid repeating the experience of emergency-quality remote instruction of Spring 2020, UC San
Diego must invest both in long term R classes, as it does now, but also should deploy much smaller per-class investments
to ensure quality non-R remote instruction. Conscious of the very real budgetary challenges currently faced by UC San
Diego, the Task Force consulted with campus administrators, faculty, and members of the Teaching + Learning

Commons ("the Commons") to identify three initiatives that are collectively of low-cost, and yet could offer important benefits to instruction:

1. To ensure that non-R remote instruction in the next months (and possibly years) is of UC quality, the Task Force recommends a modest investment of funds to record and edit high quality online lectures, especially for large lecture-based classes. The Task Force learned that although official R classes typically cost $50,000 or more per class to develop, high quality non-R remote materials might be created for less (e.g., $10,000 - $15,000), if funds are deployed to pay GSRs to transform previously recorded lectures (e.g., podcasts) into short scripts, and to purchase inexpensive green screens, editing software, and video editing hours (e.g., which can be shared within instructional units). Small grants to departments that are coordinated by instructional tech leads could optimize these investments, minimizing redundancies in GSR training and equipment purchases, while decentralizing video creation and editing to reduce load on the Commons.

2. The Task Force recommends that the Senate communicate to instructional units ways to deploy undergraduate IAs to support synchronous instruction. The Senate might also seek out funding for paid undergraduate IAs to supplement this effort. To facilitate resumption of high quality synchronous instruction, undergraduate IAs might be deployed to help manage synchronous non-lecture activities like chat rooms, breakout rooms, in-class polling, and spill-over discussion and office hours. Undergraduate IAs can also help grade low-stakes assessments that are more common in remote instruction, and that help reduce the need for high-stakes proctored exams - a still unresolved problem. The Task Force also concluded that graduate student TAs might be more effectively deployed to support synchronous methods.

3. The Task Force recommends the creation of a small network of faculty (e.g, 5-10) from diverse departments who engage in different forms of challenging synchronous instruction, who can work with the Commons to develop remote teaching resources that are compatible with their needs (e.g., plug-and-play Canvas templates, quizzes, peer grading systems, group work, etc.). Such a group should also identify which software platforms merit widespread adoption on campus for synchronous teaching (e.g., Perusall, Explain Everything, etc.), and address concerns related to academic integrity, including alternatives to high-stakes proctored exams. The creation of such a working group may be possible via volunteer participation, or through temporary course relief to involved instructors.

In addition to these recommendations for immediate action, the Task Force looks forward to communicating a final report in the coming days.

Sincerely,

David Barner, Chair
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August 18, 2020

PROFESSOR MARIPAT CORR, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies: Academic Senate Technical
Readiness Strategies in 2020-2021 and in Light of Future Crisis

During Spring Quarter of 2020, both students and instructors adapted quickly to the use of online technologies for Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). Campus technology teams, including Educational Technology Services, provided recommendations on *software* tools to facilitate ERT (e.g., Canvas, Zoom, etc.). The effectiveness of these tools likely varied significantly by instructor and student experience, course content, and course needs. Based on the June 2020 draft report "Instructor and Student Survey Responses on Remote Teaching and Learning" (hereafter referred to as the IRAP Survey),[1] instructors felt confident that they could use these tools well (80%), however only a slight majority of students felt similarly confident (62%). A potentially greater challenge for campus was how to support *hardware* needs for students and faculty during the shift to ERT. The success of ERT - and therefore of UC San Diego's educational mission during COVID-19 - hinges on both faculty and students having access to computers, peripherals (webcams, microphones), and broadband internet. During Spring 2020, students who needed such technology were offered equipment loans from campus. However, for these investments in students to be worthwhile, they must be equaled or rivaled by the technology available to instructors, the main bottleneck on the quality of remote interactions. Although the majority of instructors reported having access to the technology required for remote teaching, the Task Force learned that some categories of instructors who operate with fewer resources (e.g., Unit 18 lecturers, graduate student instructors), struggled to obtain the technology required to serve UC San Diego students, placing in jeopardy campus investments in student hardware, and instructor investments in the creation of quality remote content.

In light of these challenges, the Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies recommends that campus and the Academic Senate prioritize three key challenges facing faculty and students in the upcoming Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters:

1. **Ensure technical resources are available to instructional staff.** For remote teaching, instructors need access to hardware capable of supporting their educational mission. Specifically, the critical path of course content often is the instructor's technology (bandwidth, laptop, ability to write on slides, etc.). As campus hires Unit 18 lecturers and instructional assistants (IAs) during the 2020-2021 academic year, it should ensure that these instructors have access to the technologies needed to deliver quality instruction to learners, including high quality broadband internet, and hardware such as microphones, webcams, headphones, and portable computers, whether these be provided by instructors or by campus entities. In theory, this could be accomplished by articulating which resources are provided to instructors and IAs, and what must be provided by the employees. To the latter point, campus should be aware that many IAs might be excluded from the possibility of employment - a condition for continuing studies at UC San Diego - and that such a policy could impact the most vulnerable Unit 18 instructors, including members of underrepresented groups. As such, campus should aim to provide resources, where possible, to instructional staff to ensure high quality instruction.

2. **Create a working group to identify tools for synchronous instruction.** Faculty have expressed a strong desire to resume synchronous instruction to improve engagement with their students and to avoid issues with remote assessment (see recommendation 3, below). Also, in some cases, it is difficult to provide quality instruction asynchronously - e.g., lab classes, or other classes that involve performance or contingent interaction and feedback in theater and dance, visual arts, music, etc. For example, in the IRAP survey of the UC undergraduate experience in Spring 2020, it was found that nearly 70% of students reported learning less (or much less) from remote performance or studio-based classes, with similar numbers reported for lab-based classes, whereas numbers were lower for other class-types (~50%). Given this, the Task Force recommends that Educational Technology Services and the Teaching + Learning Commons prioritize finding effective software tools for synchronous instruction or provide more guidance to faculty on how to use existing tools to support synchronous learning. In particular, support for remote synchronous instruction should consider how to accommodate classes

that require high-touch contingent feedback. As indicated in a forthcoming final report, the Task Force recommends that this issue be addressed by a working group of instructors who deploy diverse instructional practices and tools, in collaboration with the Teaching + Learning Commons.

3. **Determine effective techniques for knowledge certification (e.g., remote proctoring).** In the IRAP survey, a core concern for both faculty and students was the maintenance of academic integrity for class assessments. Although the Teaching + Learning Commons, in concert with the Academic Integrity Office (AIO), has provided guidelines for how to mitigate concerns through frequent formative assessments, it is unclear how many instructors are aware of these practices, or will be able to incorporate them into their classes. Moreover, certification of student knowledge and skills is a key responsibility for faculty and for the institution and there remains no clear solution from campus on how to ensure academic integrity in an exam setting. The above mentioned newly formed working group should include members from AIO and should focus on addressing the problem of remote proctoring. Once a solution is found, the Teaching + Learning Commons should provide training to faculty on how to employ this solution in classes.

In addition to these recommendations for immediate action, the Task Force looks forward to communicating a final report in the near future.

Sincerely,

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[1] http://senate.ucsd.edu/media/431205/remote-teaching-and-learning-survey-draft-results-6-8-20.pdf

August 18, 2020

PROFESSOR MARIPAT CORR, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies: Academic Senate Communications
              Strategies in 2020-2021 and in Light of Future Crisis

During Spring Quarter 2020, communication was perhaps one of the greatest problems encountered by instructors at UC San Diego, particularly as campus resources, policy, and emergency-related health information changed. Instructors, students, and staff received communications through many different channels including Senate leadership, department chairs, campus administrators, staff and colleagues. Faculty reported that this information was frequently confusing, conflicting, out of date, or that it was difficult to distinguish policy from recommendations. To mitigate confusion, campus quickly created a coronavirus portal (covid19.ucsd.edu) to manage information and reduce email for health-related policy and updates, and subsequently campus instructors have been pointed to additional resources such as returntolearn.ucsd.edu, commons.ucsd.edu, and keepteaching.ucsd.edu. This complex communication landscape hampered the ability of Senate leadership to effectively communicate crucial changes to instructional policy. This problem was particularly acute for Unit 18 lecturers since they did not receive crisis-related emails from Senate leadership (due to their contractual status), and because the Senate website did not provide streamlined policy updates in its interface. Information relating to instruction often made its way to Senate faculty, but communication with Unit 18 lecturers was left up to individual departments. The result was an uneven dissemination of information, and instructors who were uncertain about how to proceed at critical moments in a rapidly changing quarter.

Given these concerns, the Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies discussed several recommendations for how Senate faculty might improve communication at UC San Diego, to be detailed in a forthcoming final report. Here, in the interest of acting quickly to serve faculty in the 2020-2021 academic year, we describe one of those recommendations, which can be implemented immediately. Specifically, the Task Force recommends three modest changes to the Academic Senate website, to create a more effective clearinghouse for the dissemination of information on educational policy during the 2020-2021 academic year and beyond.

1. The Academic Senate web page should include a dedicated emergency communication portal (e.g., senate-emergency.ucsd.edu) providing summaries of instructional policy, guidelines, and requirements that have been, or may be, impacted by COVID-19 (or future emergencies). For example, this might include the current status of all instructional policies that were affected in Spring of 2020 (see Appendix 1). This emergency portal might also include content similar to the UC Berkeley Academic Senate Instruction FAQ for Instructors-Fall 2020.[1] Such a portal could communicate instructional policy to all instructors and provide the Academic Senate with a clearer voice on the interpretation of campus instructional policy. Separately, the Task Force noted that the Academic Senate might promote a better understanding of its role, how it contrasts with other bodies on campus, and what its policies are by conducting an overhaul of how its website is organized, similar to e.g., the UCLA Academic Senate webpage.[2]

2. Owing to considerable confusion regarding changes to add/drop, withdrawal, and other deadlines in Spring of 2020, the Task Force recommends that the Academic Senate emergency portal should link to the Office of the Registrar's campus calendar,[3] which provides up-to-date information regarding upcoming deadlines. When necessary, the link to this calendar might be accompanied by links to relevant policy statements.

3. The Task Force recommends the creation of an online archive of important events and policy decisions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., beginning with content from Appendix 1). Such a tool, which might be linked from the above-mentioned portal, would be useful not only to navigating the current situation, but might also be valuable in the case of future pandemics, natural disasters, and possible disruptions due to the looming climate crisis. This could be as simple as a timeline with links to relevant historic and current documents. In addition to policy decisions, the timeline might include easy reference points—the date of public-

school closures, lockdowns, etc.—that would provide a context for future members of the Academic Senate and the UC San Diego community to comprehend how we responded to the current crisis.

In addition to these recommendations for immediate action, the Task Force looks forward to communicating a final report in the coming days, which will include additional recommendations for long term changes to Senate faculty communication strategies.

Sincerely,

David Barner, Chair
Janet Becker
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Attachment

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[1] https://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/issues/coronavirus/instruction-faq-instructors-fall-2020
[2] https://www.senate.ucla.edu
[3] https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/enroll/calendar20-21.html

Attachment 1. San Diego Division Limited-Term Exceptions Approved in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Approval Date	Action/Request	Quarter	Request Date	Approver	Requestor
2020-03-09	Final exam options and initial discussions about application of distance education policy	WI20	n/a	Senate leadership	n/a
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2020-03-13	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter	SP20	2020-03-11	EPC	Chancellor
2020-03-19	1. Exempt courses from 25% P/NP limit 2. Extend the deadline to change grading option (P/NP or S/U) to end of Week 10	SP20	2020-03-18	Senate Council	EPC
2020-03-19	Allow Letter Grade Only courses to be offered P/NP or S/U	SP20	2020-03-19	UGC and GC	Senate
2020-03-19	1. Extend add deadline to end of Week 3 2. Extend drop w/out W deadline to end of Week 5 3. Extend drop w/ W deadline to end of Week 7 (UG only)	SP20	2020-03-19	Senate Council	Senate Council
2020-03-30	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter for non-resident first-time first-year students	FA20	2020-03-25	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-02	Use of remote instruction for duration of Summer Session	SU20	2020-03-30	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-09	Use of remote instruction for the duration of quarter for incoming international graduate students	FA20	2020-04-03	EPC	Chancellor
2020-04-13	Extend doctoral time limits by one quarter	SP20	2020-03-20	GC	Dean of the Graduate Division
2020-05-06	Allow "P" or "C-" to satisfy ELWR	SP20	2020-04-16	Senate Council	COPE (following SW UCEP and UCOPE discussion)
2020-05-01	Use of remote instruction for the duration of the quarter	FA20	2020-04-28	EPC	Chancellor
2020-05-11	Extend relaxing teleconferencing requirements for MS and PhD defenses	SP20	n/a	GC	Dean of the Graduate Division

Attachment 1. San Diego Division Limited-Term Exceptions Approved in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Approval Date	Action/Request	Quarter	Request Date	Approver	Requestor
2020-06-03	Extend the deadline to change grading option (P/NP or S/U) to end of finals week (Week 11)	SP20	2020-06-02	Senate Council	EPC
2020-06-30	Extend the deadline for undergraduates to drop w/W to the equivalent of the end of Week 9 (90% of term)	SU20	2020-06-25	Senate Council	EPC
2020-07-10	Use of remote instruction for the duration of the quarter	WI21, SP21, SU21	2020-06-30 (sent 2020-07-02)	EPC	Chancellor

SENATE TASK FORCE ON REMOTE LEARNING LONG-TERM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
CHARGE
May 26, 2020

BACKGROUND
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academic Senate responded swiftly and decisively on matters within the Senate's purview (i.e. educational policy) related to remote instruction, grading, and enrollment deadlines. However, the consensus following discussions at Senate Council is that further non-emergency discussion by the Academic Senate is essential to address educational continuity plans in the long-term.

CHARGE
The charge of the Task Force is to (1) develop a framework/guidelines which can be used as the basis for instructional planning during future emergencies when the standard in-person delivery of courses is disrupted, such as the one presented during the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) assess the anticipated impact of recent emergency policy revisions, (3) formulate recommendations for a Senate response as the COVID-19 pandemic ramifications extend into the 2020-21 academic year, and (4) articulate a vision for how remote instruction is to be utilized both during and after short and long-term emergencies.

COMPOSITION
- Chair: David Barner (Psychology)
- Members:
    - Janet Becker (SIO)
    - Tom Erbe (Music)
    - Stephanie Fraley (Bioengineering)
    - Barry Grant (Biological Sciences)
    - Mark Hendrickson (History)
    - Suzi Hong (Family Medicine and Public Health)
    - Alexandra Newton (Pharmacology)
    - Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra (Sociology)
    - Leo Porter (Computer Science and Engineering)
    - Lynn Russell (SIO and Graduate Council Chair)
    - Dennis Trinidad (Family Medicine and Public Health)
- Consultants:
    - Anthony Burr (Music and Undergraduate Council Chair)
    - Geoffrey Cook (SIO and Educational Policy Committee Chair)
    - John Serences (Psychology and University Committee on Educational Policy Chair)
- Staff support: Lori Hullings

The Task Force may call upon administrators with specialized expertise and representatives from Associated Students and the Graduate Student Association to advise the Task Force as consultants.

TIMELINE
- Task Force meets June-August 2020
- Report to be submitted by September 14, 2020.