Senate-Administration Workgroup on Distance Learning for Academic Excellence and Resilience – Report

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Workgroup on Distance Education for Academic Excellence and Resilience

During Summer 2020, a Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies and the Administration's Educational Continuity Task Force were convened to make short- and long-term recommendations arising from the impacts of COVID-19 on campus teaching. To build on the efforts of these two task forces, and in light of the campus' experience in dealing with COVID-19, the Senate-Administration Workgroup on Distance Education for Academic Excellence and Resilience was convened. The workgroup was charged with developing recommendations for how distance education can help UC San Diego deliver high quality education, provide faculty and students with desirable flexibility, and build academic resilience to minimize the disruptive impact of future emergencies (see charge Appendix A).

1.2 Summary of Report

The Workgroup met every two weeks during Winter 2021 and Spring 2021 quarters and again every two weeks during Fall 2021 and Winter 2022. The committee discussed the findings and recommendations from the Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies & Strategies and the Educational Continuity Task Force which led to discussions about the actions the UC system, divisional Senate, and UC San Diego have taken to support distance learning and remote instruction, along with efforts to uphold academic excellence and organizational continuity. Data from university and system-wide surveys about student and faculty experiences in the remote learning environment were evaluated and the need for surveys to collect additional data were discussed. These latter discussions led to the data presented in Section 5. The committee discussed at length known effective pedagogical practices to address the needs of remote learners and instructors. Committee members reached out to colleagues from other UC campuses and peer institutions to understand their experiences and the impacts that distance education has had on institutional resilience and the productivity, wellbeing, and success of distance learners. This included a readiness assessment for remote degrees, conducted by the Arizona State University.

Specifically, the difference between R-Courses and Emergency remote instruction was clarified with a discussion regarding the value of in-person instruction vis a vis remote instruction, the value of well-designed R-courses, and the opportunity to create hybrid courses (see Section 4 for discussion of different modality types). The workgroup discussed the process for Senate approval for these different course modalities. This report summarizes the discussions and recommendations, specifically those related to Emergency Remote Instruction, R-Courses, and Hybrid courses. Also included is a discussion of the future delivery of Summer Session courses and a preliminary discussion of remote degrees.

1.3 Summary of Recommendations

The Workgroup on Distance Education for Academic Excellence and Resilience makes its recommendation consistent with the following values:

- ***We should work to maintain and improve quality of instruction:*** Measures related to course content and delivery, regardless of modality, should lead to improvement in the student's learning experience, as measured objectively through assessments of learning outcomes.
- ***We should expand accessibility of educational opportunities:*** Our measures should enhance the pool of aspiring students, thereby creating equitable opportunities for a more diverse group of learners.

1.4 General Recommendations

In the service of improving quality of instruction and increasing accessibility, we recommend the following:

(i) Encourage best practices in course design for both in-person and remote courses. The Teaching + Learning Commons already provides these resources for faculty; the Undergraduate Council's course subcommittee is best equipped to provide oversight.

(ii) Encourage more hybrid ('flipped') courses. This is an established best practice and provides increased accessibility and resiliency. Because the Course Development and Instructional Improvement Program (CDIIP) already funds such projects, the campus might look at ways to expand this support or accelerate efforts.

(iii) Increase the inventory of well-designed R-courses. This might require additional resources for the Commons. Faculty should be encouraged to think in terms of both asynchronous and synchronous R-courses.

(iv) Monitor the success of online Masters degrees with an eye towards the possibility of future online undergraduate degrees. Consider the results of the campus' Online Readiness Assessment. The campus may need a separate workgroup to study this.

1.5 Policy Recommendations

The workgroup discussed a number of policy questions and makes the following recommendations:

(v) The Policy on Distance Education Courses should remain with EPC, but Senate Council should be the body that decides whether it might be suspended under emergency circumstances. This is the current practice; the workgroup feels that this is the right balance between oversight and flexibility. Because in-person and R-courses are otherwise subject to the same policies (e.g., credit hours, faculty workload, etc.), the workgroup makes no new recommendations in this area.

(vi) The Senate should consider modifying the Policy on Distance Education Courses to require that R-course proposals come from academic units and not from individual faculty members. The proposals should make clear how the proposed R-course fits in with a larger academic plan (e.g., to avoid bottlenecks, reduce over-large courses, provide greater scheduling access, accommodate the needs of diverse learners, and improve student success and time to degree). This should lessen the burden on graduate and undergraduate council in reviewing such proposals and ensure that the sometimes significant resources needed to create an R-course are invested wisely. Finally, the requirement that R-courses employ the Quality Matters rubric should be clarified to ensure that both synchronous and asynchronous sub-modalities are supported.

(vii) The Senate should consider ways to strategically increase remote options during Summer Session.

(viii) In-person and R-courses with identical numbering (e.g., CAT 125 vs. CAT 125R) should automatically satisfy the same requirements (general education, minor, and major) and serve as pre- co-requisites for the same courses. No extra petitions should be required to use an R-course to satisfy a requirement.

(ix) Courses that are otherwise entirely remote (both R-courses and emergency remote instruction) must have remote exams, unless there are provisions to accommodate students not in the San Diego area (e.g., through testing centers). Optional in-person exams or activities should be allowed, but remote students should not be disadvantaged.

1.6 Process Recommendations

Finally, the workgroup makes the following recommendations around process:

(x) The Teaching + Learning Commons provides a valuable resource for course design – both for in-person and R-courses; they should be appropriately resourced to help the campus increase well-designed courses and also increase the number of R-courses.

(xi) Once the justification for R-courses is handled at the departmental level, Undergraduate Council should consider moving R-course approval to the course subcommittee.

(xii) The administration should work with the Office of the Registrar to identify and remedy causes for delays in the eCourse approval process.

(xiii) The university's schedule of classes should have the ability to distinguish between in-person, remote, hybrid, synchronous, and asynchronous instruction. Class modalities should be transparently coded so that it is clear when students are expected to attend in-person or synchronously. This lack of transparency has been the source of much frustration.

2 Introduction

Just before Spring quarter 2020, the global pandemic resulted in an emergent need to shift teaching to remote instruction. All facets of the University sprang to action to support operations, faculty, and students during these challenging times. The University was instrumental in establishing community wide standards with its Return to Learn efforts.

During Summer 2020, a Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies and the Administration's Educational Continuity Task Force were convened to make short- and long-term recommendations arising from the impacts of COVID-19 on campus teaching. To build on the efforts of these two task forces, and in light of the campus' experience in dealing with COVID-19, the Senate-Administration *Workgroup on Distance Education for Academic Excellence and Resilience* was convened.

2.1 Workgroup Charge

The workgroup was charged with developing recommendations for how distance education can help UC San Diego deliver high quality education, provide faculty and students with desirable flexibility, and build academic resilience to minimize the disruptive impact of future emergencies (see Appendix A). Specifically, the committee was tasked to:

1) Develop recommendations for how UC San Diego should position itself to minimize the impact of future disruptions to the educational mission, be they pandemics, earthquakes, wildfires, or other emergencies.
2) Examine how remote and online teaching programs and tools should be developed in anticipation of future disruptions.
3) Consider and make recommendations on the role of remote (R) classes as vehicles for (a) delivering a high-quality education and (b) providing campus resilience.
4) Examine and report on how remote and online instruction could be used to provide faculty and students with flexibility in order to accommodate educational, research, engagement, and EDI priorities aligned with the campus strategic plan.

3 Justifying Remote Instruction

Our campus has been slow to adopt remote instruction. Currently, just over 1% of our courses are approved R-courses (see below). There is concern that remote instruction might be less effective than in-person courses; this may have been reinforced by recent experiences during the pandemic. However, there is a body of literature and practice that shows that remote instruction – when well-designed and delivered - can provide effective, quality, high-engagement instruction and advance institutional goals.

When discussing both in-person and remote instruction, it is useful to keep the following principles in mind:

- ***We should work to maintain and improve quality of instruction:*** Measures related to course content and delivery, regardless of modality, should lead to improvement in the student's learning experience, as measured objectively through assessments of learning outcomes.

- ***We should expand accessibility of educational opportunities:*** Our measures should enhance the pool of aspiring students, thereby creating equitable opportunities for a more diverse group of learners.

Remote instruction, like all instruction, is most effective when students are actively engaged – with peers, faculty, and material. Therefore, remote courses must be designed to facilitate engagement. We should point out that many in-person courses fail to pay sufficient attention to this important aspect as well. We will see evidence that while remote instruction can face challenges engaging students, careful design and assessment can mitigate these challenges. It is important any negative impressions of distance education from pandemic teaching not be applied to all remote learning. Similarly, it is important that we continue to assess and improve teaching and learning in all modalities.

A primary motivation for promoting more use of quality remote courses comes from our need as an institution for increased access and advancement of educational equity. Students face a variety of challenges that can be mitigated through some remote instruction. Note that this is true even when the majority of our courses remain in-person (as will be the case at UC San Diego). A strategic approach to offering bottleneck courses remotely can mitigate space issues and provide increased accessibility. Given that these courses are often part of prerequisite chains, their increased availability can have a positive effect on time to degree. In addition, several programs aimed at promoting student success (e.g., Summer Bridge) can reach a wider audience if both in-person and remote options are available. Many students must juggle other commitments such as family/caregiving or employment while studying. This is especially common among our underserved/underrepresented student populations. A small number of well-chosen online classes can make it easier for them to accommodate such commitments. Students who leave the university before graduation may also benefit from remote instruction to facilitate degree completion. The key is that the campus be intentional in selecting its remote offerings to facilitate these goals. The campus will never abandon its primarily in-person, residential focus; but, remote instruction can strategically augment this experience and remove critical hurdles.

Finally, remote instruction, by virtue of its modality, promotes digital literacy – one of the five core competencies assessed by our accrediting agency, WSCUC.

Much of the resistance to remote instruction may come from unfamiliarity with well-designed remote courses. The pandemic experience may have exacerbated this, as all faculty have had some experience with remote instruction, much of which was – by necessity – rapidly implemented. It is also the case that our campus has lacked a strategic vison for remote learning. Therefore, even well-designed remote courses tend to be offered in an ad-hoc manner. The remainder of this report will try to unravel several of these strands and make recommendations that could lead to a more intentional approach.

4 Modes of Instruction

Three modes of instruction (emergency remote instruction, R-courses, and hybrid courses) are related to distance learning and are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced colleges and universities to pivot instruction to ***emergency remote instruction***, which offers courses online in response to a crisis or disaster. This mode of instruction contrasts

with well-planned online learning experiences, which use a structured model for design and development. Emergency remote instruction relies on fully remote teaching solutions to deliver what is normally face-to-face with the assumption the courses will return to the original format once the crisis has passed.

At UC San Diego, ***R-courses*** represent a fully online modality that requires careful planning; this includes identifying the required content, while also paying specific attention to how the instructor is going to support different types of interactions (e.g., between students and content; students and students; and students and instructor). While information transmission remains an important element of the course, these carefully-planned interactions further support the social and cognitive learning processes. Therefore, R-Courses require significant planning and development time.

It is particularly important to understand the distinction between emergency remote instruction and R-courses (referred to as 'remote' versus 'online/digital' learning in the literature – e.g., see National Council for Online Education 2022). There is a tendency to conflate these modes of instructions as both representing 'remote' or 'online' and assume that characteristics of emergency remote instruction apply to R-courses as well. Below we present assessment data that differentiate these modes.

Hybrid courses (often referred to as 'blended' or 'flipped' courses) replace some of traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning approaches such as video lectures, online discussions, or activities. The amount of face-to-face instruction in hybrid classes varies significantly depending on the institution, class, discipline, and learning objectives.

The following sections highlight the differences between these modes of instruction and raise further questions that need to be addressed.

4.1 Emergency Remote Instruction

The emergent need to switch to remote instruction just prior to Spring quarter 2020 led to many changes in the way courses were taught and students learned. Many lessons were learned during the COVID-19 experience. Challenges included the constantly changing policies and uncertainty as new information about the pandemic emerged. However, highlights include the rapid support that the Teaching + Learning Commons provided to the learning community with extensive resources made available to faculty and students through the Return to Learn website. Furthermore, the IT department worked diligently and rapidly to enhance the virtual computing environments so that students and faculty would have access to software required for research and learning.

The quality of instruction varied significantly in the first quarter of remote instruction. Some instructors recorded their lectures and treated the remote course as if the students were in-person, with little change to improve engagement. Teaching and learning communities popped up throughout campus as faculty worked together to share resources and best practices, but the information was often overwhelming. During summer 2020, some faculty, concerned with student engagement and success, reached out to the Commons to receive assistance in improving the delivery of their emergency remote courses. When it became clear the pandemic would continue into the 2020-2021 academic year, instructors had more lead time to plan their content delivery.

4.1.1 Approval

The Senate issued a limited-term exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses through Summer Session 2021 to adapt in-person courses for remote and hybrid delivery as a temporary measure in response to COVID-19. The exception allowed for remote instruction without Senate approval of an R-course.

Beginning July 1, 2021, academic departments, working with the Registrar, were able to change classroom requests and/or instruction modality for specific courses, as needed to support students impacted by visa or

travel restrictions, handle any county/state/CDC restrictions on classroom occupancy, and accommodate specific faculty needs. Due to the Omicron variant, all instruction reverted to remote delivery for the first month of Winter 2022; after this period, the Senate, again, issued an exception to allow faculty to continue with remote instruction for the remainder of the quarter, leading to about 40% of all sections offered remotely. Spring 2022 will be largely in-person (again, with limited exceptions – about 6% of all sections), but Summer 2022 will allow for remote instruction (currently at 41%).

In the case that students are separated from campus due to unforeseen circumstances, lecture and course content can be delivered remotely. Course content encompasses lectures, learning materials, syllabi, and readings. Instructors are asked to consider the mode of delivery that maximizes flexibility while still meeting the expected course learning outcomes. This can be accomplished through synchronous vs. asynchronous delivery. Synchronous instruction allows students to ask questions in real time, creating a sense of community. Students can also develop and demonstrate skills in real-time. However, time zone differences, scheduling issues, and technical challenges may make synchronous instruction difficult for some students. Furthermore, synchronous delivery, particularly when accompanied by recording, raises privacy questions. Coupled with technical challenges, synchronous instruction can lead to distractions and disengagement. On the other hand, asynchronous instruction allows students to manage their time and participate from multiple locations and with varied technology. It does, however, run the risk of creating isolation between students and students and the instructor.

The mode of delivery during COVID 19 was often discipline specific; some disciplines – e.g., in the Humanities - emphasized live interaction and dialogue that was not easy to implement through an asynchronous learning management system. Pedagogical tools to facilitate different types of contact that could be delivered remotely were necessary, leading to a variety of vetted and unvetted methods, with varying degrees of success. This underscores the importance of making training available to maximize effectiveness.

4.1.2 Faculty Effort/Workload

Faculty workload increased significantly during remote instruction, as they created and monitored virtual discussion boards, offered more office hours, and/or revamped assignments and assessments.

4.1.3 Student Effort

As with in-person instruction, student effort was variable, although this is the case regardless of modality. The COVID pandemic did reveal novel or exacerbated issues. For example, the digital divide was brought into sharp contrast: some students struggled with lack of technology resources (computers and internet access). Home environments were also variable - many students lacked adequate private space to effectively engage in remote instruction. In addition, emotional and mental health hardships emerged as some students navigated the pandemic (e.g., financial and health challenges with their family and friends and an inability to be self-driven and follow through with their coursework). Students were allowed to take courses Pass/No Pass which may have led some to reduce their effort and engagement.

4.1.4 Role in Resilience

In sum, as the name suggests, emergency remote instruction responds to the need to set up remote instruction quickly. Therefore, the time it takes to prepare for emergency remote instruction is less than that required for R-courses. Nevertheless, we learned a great deal about the resiliency of our faculty, staff, and students during the pandemic. While resources, such as technology and infrastructure, were sometimes delayed, the University was able to effectively maintain business operations.

4.2 R-Courses

The UC San Diego Policy on Distance Education Courses defines Distance Education courses (henceforth, 'R-courses') as those that have greater than 50% distance instruction. The type of instruction may vary based on several parameters (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, etc.). Currently, UC San Diego has over 50 courses

approved as R-courses. Given that a greater inventory of R-courses can mitigate against future emergencies and that R-courses do provide increased modes of access, the workgroup discussed how to facilitate increased R-courses, while ensuring quality. In addition, the workgroup heard from Senate representatives who raised concerns about the R-course approval process.

The UC San Diego Policy on Distance Education Courses is a regulation of the Senate's Educational Policy Committee (see Appendix B). Fundamental to this policy is the requirement that "All courses offered at UC San Diego should meet the same high standards in terms of the educational experience they offer to students, regardless of the mode of instruction." The policy itself regulates various aspects of approval and delivery.

The EPC Policy states that "All campus policies and regulations for courses and instruction (registration deadlines, academic integrity, etc.) that apply to conventional courses also apply to distance education courses." Therefore, the only difference between conventional and R-courses is the mode of instruction. We refer to this as the 'EPC's Fundamental Principle'.

There was a good deal of discussion around different modes of instruction. Discussion centered around three topics: faculty effort/workload, student effort, and faculty/Senate attitudes towards R-courses.

4.2.1 Faculty Effort/Workload

A common perception that leads to skepticism towards distance learning is the idea that R-courses, once developed, run on autopilot, with minimal faculty effort. In this regard, it is important to distinguish the MOOC format ('Massive Open Online Courses') from the type of distance learning approved under the EPC policy. We do not currently support MOOC -style courses for matriculated programs. It is also important to separate the initial effort in developing an R-course (which is significant) from the time faculty must devote to their delivery. In line with the EPC's Fundamental Principle, delivery time should be equivalent, regardless of modality. Thus, in the same way that faculty, teaching conventional four-unit courses, are expected to interact with students for approximately four hours a week (three in class and one in office hour), faculty teaching R-courses should have the same expectation. However, the nature of faculty interaction is likely to be more varied in R-courses. Examples include live Zoom sessions, on-line fora, video responses/updates, and virtual office hours, among others. It is important that these be designed to provide students with opportunities for access to promote rigor and engagement. Of course, just as it is the case that students do not always avail themselves of in-person opportunities in conventional courses, the same may be true for R-courses. Nonetheless, the availability is crucial.

There have also been questions around whether R-courses should count towards faculty workload. To a large degree, workload decisions are the purview of departments and divisions. However, the EPC's Fundamental Principle may apply here as well; given that faculty effort is not tied to modality, workload credits should follow. It is important to combat the perception that an R-course can run on autopilot without faculty involvement or engagement. This should not be the expectation for faculty teaching such courses, and it should not be the expectation of the department or university. Engagement and faculty involvement are as important in creating a rich learning experience online as in in-person settings; faculty should be expected to put in equivalent amounts of time into their teaching, though in different ways.

Finally, it is widely assumed that R-courses are always asynchronous and their development takes significant effort (particularly to design and record the video segments). However, there have been R-courses with significant synchronous content. Indeed, the (a)synchronous distinction is orthogonal to the R-course modality.

4.2.2 Student Effort

The Senate policy on credit hours is as follows:

> The value of a course in units ("quarter units" or "quarter credits") shall be reckoned at the rate of one unit for three hours' work per week per quarter on the part of the student, or the equivalent. (Regulation 600, B.3)

R-courses are also subject to this policy. For example, a four-unit course should involve twelve hours of effort per week. In the case of R-courses, this may be divided between videos, readings, on-line fora, office hours, assignments, etc. An R-course proposal details how this would be achieved.

4.2.3 Attitudes towards R-courses

There seem to be two competing narratives around R-courses: faculty who are interested in designing these courses sometimes feel that the approval process is too cumbersome; on the other hand, the Undergraduate Council, which is charged with reviewing and approving R-course proposals, feels that there is a lack of campus direction with respect to approval criteria. We try to unpack these two concerns in the following paragraphs.

While there is a feeling that the R-course approval process is cumbersome and therefore discourages R-course proposals, the committee found that this has more to do with two elements outside the Senate's purview: the demands of R-course development and the eCourse approval process. Currently, the Undergraduate Council reviews R-course proposals, according to the policy's criteria; once these courses are placed on the council's agenda, evaluation proceeds quickly.

Nonetheless, among the Senate policy's requirements is endorsement by the Digital Learning Hub in the Teaching + Learning Commons. The Commons' charge is to provide Teaching + Learning resources. To that end, their instructional designers meet with faculty to help with course development, using best practices, including employment of the Quality Matters (QM) rubric (See Appendix C). The endorsement of a course by the Commons, therefore, provides a degree of quality assurance. Three issues emerged in the workgroup discussion: workload, timing, and gatekeeping:

Workload: The development of quality R-courses takes time. Faculty need to be committed to investing in the process. There are also limited resources in the Commons; this may be the single most limiting factor in the creation of an extensive R-course inventory.

Timing: Most faculty collaborate with Digital Learning's instructional designers (IDs) to develop their R-courses. The entire development process (design, create course assets and media, build in Canvas) takes about 2 quarters. Typically, these R-course proposals are sent to Undergraduate Council before the development is complete. The Commons endorses these proposals as the QM rubric is embedded in the ID design process. Some instructors choose to develop R- courses on their own. In this case, the Digital Learning team collaborates with the instructor on the QM review and the endorsement indicates the state of this review. Digital Learning ensures the course passes the QM review before the course is offered.

The Undergraduate Council has been approving these courses on a temporary 3-year basis, pending evidence of success. This evidence may include enrollment and performance data (e.g. DWF rates) as well as student feedback (student feedback design may be facilitated by consultation with the Commons' Assessment Hub).

Gatekeeping: The Commons, as a support unit, works to maintain a collaborative and supportive role rather than a gatekeeping role. Digital Learning has created a QM worksheet for instructors to use to ensure quality online courses. When faculty choose to design their own R course, it has proved beneficial for them to first do a self-review of their course using this worksheet and then submit it to the Digital Learning team for feedback. This process expediates the QM review process and the Commons' endorsement of the R proposal.

QM does not assess what is taught or the pedagogy employed (and, therefore, should not impinge on academic freedom); it is a tool focused on the accessibility of the course design. In other words, it helps assess how easy or hard it is for a student to interact with the content. It is not an assessment of the content itself. For online courses, the focus on accessibility is paramount to student success and their satisfaction with the learning experience.

A common concern about the approval process for R-courses is that they are held to a higher standard than face-to-face courses. We discuss this more below.

Another bottleneck to R-course approval is unrelated to modality. All courses, in-person and remote, must be reviewed through the eCourse approval process. The approval workflow includes multiple units (department, Registrar and Senate). Approvals should be submitted a minimum of three quarters before the effective quarter of the new approval. The role of the Registrar is to review the course approval prior to Senate review to ensure it has all required fields completed accurately and in alignment with the requirements of the Student Information System. Only 5-10% of course approvals are accurate and go straight through eCourse approval process. The remaining proposals require departmental modifications – this back-and-forth takes time.

Since the pandemic, the Undergraduate Council has seen an increase in the number of R-course proposals

- 2019-20 7 proposals
- 2020-21 23 proposals
- 2021-22 (as of 4/1/22) 12 proposals

It may be that some of the 2020-21 proposals were already in the works, pre-pandemic; however, it is possible that some proposals were submitted to allow for continued remote instruction, post-pandemic. The Undergraduate Council has discussed each proposal at length. Often these discussions raise the concern that the campus has not provided sufficient guidelines around the criteria for approving R-courses. While these proposals now require consultation with the Digital Learning Hub, questions persist. In particular, the council's conversations have brought up the following questions:

- What are legitimate reasons for creating R-courses?
- Should R-courses be the initiative of individual faculty or submitted by the department/program?
- How do R-courses fit into existing curricula?
- Should there be a moratorium on approving R-courses, pending clarification of these questions?

The chair of Undergraduate Council visited the workgroup to discuss these concerns. The consensus was that the campus should be more intentional in the process for R-course approval (see Section 6).

Furthermore, while we do extensive assessment of online courses and require these to carefully articulate learning outcomes, in-person courses do not have these requirements. In addition to creating a two-tiered system and perpetuating misconceptions about the efficacy of online courses, this actually makes it hard to effectively assess the effectiveness of online course delivery, because we do not always have good metrics to compare against. This does not mean we recommend less assessment of remote courses, but rather more focus on assessing in-person instruction to ensure we have a realistic baseline, and address problems throughout our curriculum, regardless of modality.

4.2.4 Role in Resilience

R-courses afford flexibility for students and institutions, but they require significant effort in their design in order to create intentional learning relationships and foster engagement with peers and the content, as well

as problem-solving and skills development. For this reason, there are only about 50 currently approved R-courses and fewer have actually been offered to date. While all faculty and students have now engaged in remote teaching/learning through emergency remote instruction, only about 1-2% of faculty and students have had a true R-course experience. If the number of R-courses were to increase to provide meaningful flexibility and resilience, there would need to be clear guidelines around their approval and their role in department/program curricula. Furthermore, the workload for Undergraduate Council and the Teaching + Learning Commons (especially the Digital Learning Hub, the Engaged Teaching Hub, and the Assessment Hub) would become unsustainable if the numbers increased significantly. A different method of vetting such courses would become necessary.

Nonetheless, our campus is unlikely to create a sufficient number of R courses to be as resilient as we need to be. Not all faculty are interested in remote instruction, particularly given the time investment required to design an R course. Therefore, we need to look how we can streamline the process that allows for emergency remote instruction, marshalling the lessons we learned from the pandemic. These lessons might lead in two directions: more flexibility to deliver quality remote instruction and creating hybrid options in the context of in-person instruction.

4.3 Hybrid

A hybrid course is one in which some course instruction and activities for all students take place in the face-to-face classroom (instructor and students together in one location) and some take place online. Classes of this type generally meet between 25-50% the time online and the remaining time in the classroom.

It is important to distinguish between hybrid courses, as described above (and used in this document), and 'hyflex' courses. These latter strive to offer simultaneous in-person and remote instruction. That is, the courses are structured in a way to allow students to choose whether to attend in-person or remotely. The literature suggests that hyflex courses are difficult to manage and that remote students find engagement difficult (see Kohnke and Moorehouse 2021). Therefore, while one can imagine the utility of such courses (e.g., to accommodate a wider range of students), the workgroup did not pursue this route. We emphasize that the term 'hybrid' is often used as a synonym of 'hyflex'; this usage is common on our campus. Our use of 'hybrid' in this document is not synomous with 'hyflex' and, instead, is similar to modalities sometimes called 'blended' or 'flipped'. We hope that the campus community can embrace this terminological nuance.

The hybrid modality is essentially a few steps away from fully remote. This modality can, therefore, contribute to resilience, as it is easier to convert a hybrid course to a fully remote format than an in-person course. Particularly if the remote portion of the hybrid is asynchronous, then the in-person aspects could simply be converted to synchronous remote sessions or using break-out rooms for active learning.

4.3.1 Ensuring Quality

Ensuring quality in hybrid courses is left up to the instructor similar to in-person modality. Improving consistency in the delivery of hybrid instruction requires educating instructors on best pedagogical practices.

4.3.2 Approval

As long as the remote material does not exceed 50% of the class time, hybrid courses do not require special approval under the Policy on Distance Education Courses. Nonetheless, some of the design features for hybrid courses resemble those associated with R-courses. Thus, pedagogical support would help effectively transition to increased hybrid modalities. Overall, the training will be the same as online: how to encourage engagement, active learning, and how to best organize online content and in-person time.

4.3.3 Delivery

Hybrid courses can be very effective, particularly when the remote and in-person aspects are used to their best advantage. For example, they might replace one day of instruction (e.g., one day a week for a Monday-

Wednesday-Friday course) with asynchronous content. The remaining in-person instruction can then leverage this content into active learning sessions (e.g., group work and the like). Thus, benefits include lectures on demand, more effective face-to-face learning (active learning), and more flexibility for balancing student's competing priorities (work, family, other classes, social).

Through the pandemic, our instructors have learned that considerable content can be delivered remotely. Furthermore, podcast or other asynchronous modes of delivery are probably as effective or more effective than traditional lectures (e.g., an instructor speaking to a camera may be better than an in-person instructor speaking to the whiteboard). Engaging students in group work and other active learning tasks during class helps them leverage the remote material more effectively than passively listening to a lecture. It is interesting that the majority of the Course Development and Instructional Improvement (CDIIP) grants have been to develop hybrid materials.

4.3.4 Faculty Effort/Workload

While requiring slightly less effort than R courses, the workload to develop a hybrid course is initially more significant than in-person courses; faculty must design the course such that the remote and in-person modalities work together. They also must develop assignments and activities that are suitable for a remote environment, paying special attention to engagement and contact with students. Since the requirement for the number of contact hours with students does not change, then course teaching credit should remain the same as in-person courses.

4.3.5 Student Effort

Hybrid courses should be subject to the same Senate policy on credit hours (Regulation 600, B.3) as in-person courses. In a four-unit hybrid course involving twelve hours of effort per week, the course hours (with less than 50% of them remote) could be divided between attending lectures or lab sessions, watching pre-recorded lecture videos, readings, on-line fora, office hours, and assignments.

4.3.6 Role in Resilience

As mentioned above, the hybrid modality contributes to resilience, as it is easier to convert a hybrid course to a fully remote format than an in-person course.

Hybrid courses can also potentially be used to address classroom space issues: lectures could be moved to remote (either synchronous or asynchronous) while active learning is conducted through smaller live sections. However, this may require that some of the departmental instructional spaces be upgraded to facilitate synchronous remote instruction.

4.4 Distinguishing Modalities

Given the several dimensions of remote instruction outlined above, it is important to ensure that there are clear definitions and messaging around modality. We have already noted the ambiguity of the term 'hybrid'. R-courses (and emergency remote courses) also have the possibility of being synchronous or asynchronous. These concepts cross-cut each other in a variety of ways, making for a sometimes confusing landscape.

Messaging to students is of particular importance. We have used an ad-hoc device to signal remote instruction in the schedule of classes (the 'RCLAS' designation under 'Building & Room'). However, this does not distinguish between courses that are asynchronous versus those that are not. It is important that students know whether they will be expected to participate at a designated time. The same holds, to a lesser extent, of hybrid courses – what are the in-person expectations?

Some faculty have suggested a type of hybrid course that is essentially remote, except for the final exams. This mitigates some of the concerns about academic integrity. However, students may enroll under the assumption that these will be fully remote (despite messages to the contrary). It is possible that in the future,

the campus may contract with testing centers to allow off-site exams that serve students who are unable to come to campus – until this is already in place, however, in-person exams should not be allowed for otherwise remote courses.

5 Assessment

In this section we discuss some of the literature on remote instruction, as well as assessments that have been conducted on our campus and elsewhere. Throughout this discussion, it is important to distinguish between emergency remote instruction and R-courses (this distinction is generally labeled 'remote' vs. 'online/digital' learning elsewhere). In much of the pre-pandemic literature on distance learning, the emphasis is on courses that:

- Are specifically designed for distance learning
- Are self-selected by students

Our R-courses meet these two criteria, while emergency remote instruction meets neither. There have been studies that specifically examine the student experience with emergency remote instruction; we discuss some of these below. We also look at a few measures that allow more direct comparisons between R-courses and emergency remote courses.

Additionally, there is a salient scope difference between R-courses and emergency remote courses. As mentioned above, essentially all faculty and students have been engaged in emergency remote instruction over the past two years. On the other hand, only1-2% have had experience with R-courses. While over 50 R-courses have approval, so far, only 26 have been offered (19 in the past 5 years). Furthermore, there are only 9 R-courses that can be matched with an equivalent in-person course. Therefore, unlike the case with emergency remote instruction, there is, necessarily, limited data on R-courses, and even less data that allow direct comparisons with equivalent in-person courses.

5.1 Student Engagement

There is a large literature on the importance of student engagement in learning (Fredricks, et. al. 2004, Jaggars and Xu 2016, and Moore 1989, among others). Because the nature of engagement differs between remote and in-person modalities (and, indeed, within various remote modalities), it is natural to wonder whether this crucial factor might be diminished in remote contexts. The literature discusses the various technological factors that can enhance different dimensions of student engagement (e.g., student-to-student, student-to-instructor, and student-to-material), noting that these are crucial to effective online instruction. In this section we review data from the UC San Diego regarding student engagement in both emergency remote and R-courses.

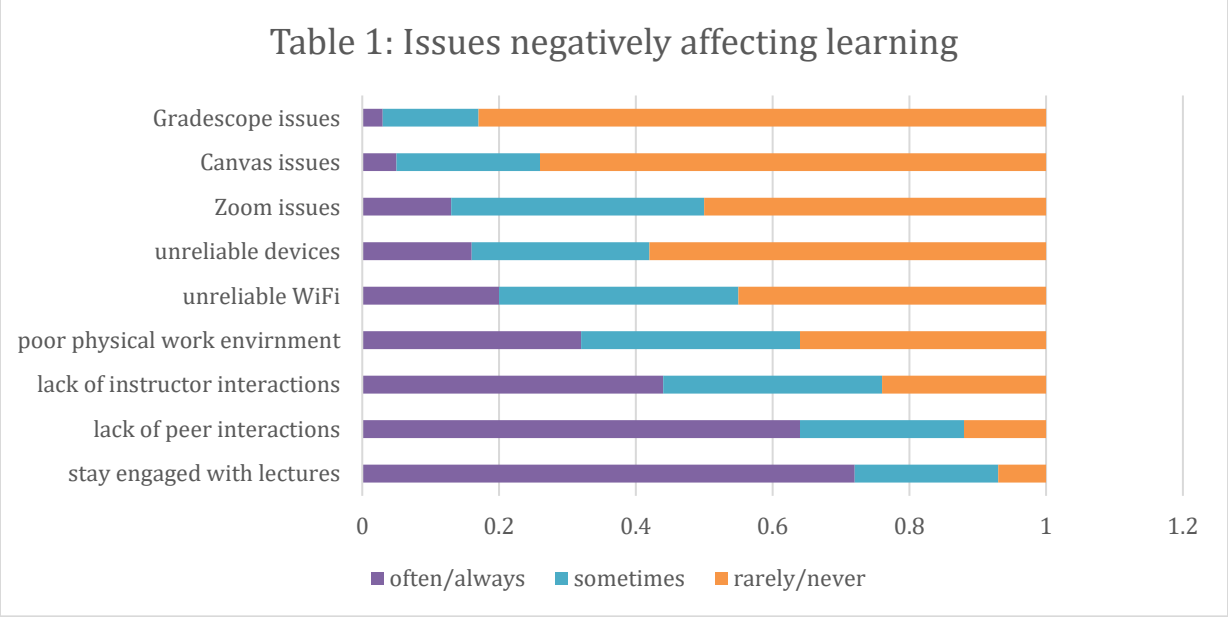
5.1.1 Emergency Remote Instruction

Noting a lack of work on student engagement in emergency remote instruction, Hollister, et. al. (2021) conducted a student survey and analyzed CAPE responses to compare in-person and emergency remote experiences. The survey, conducted in early 2021, asked respondents to compare in-person and emergency remote experiences. The scope of this survey was relatively small (187 complete questionaires) and, therefore, perhaps not representative. The analysis of CAPEs was more extensive. It compared in-person Fall 2019 with emergency remote Fall 2020 in courses matched by course number and instructor (i.e., the matched in-person and remote courses were taught by the same instructor). In total, over 1000 class sections were surveyed.

The survey data presents a mixed picture of emergency remote instruction. Students were evenly divided with respect to overall satisfaction (36% agree, 36% disagree). However, they found the remote modality more challenging in several different ways: more difficult (42% agree vs. 34% disagree), academic

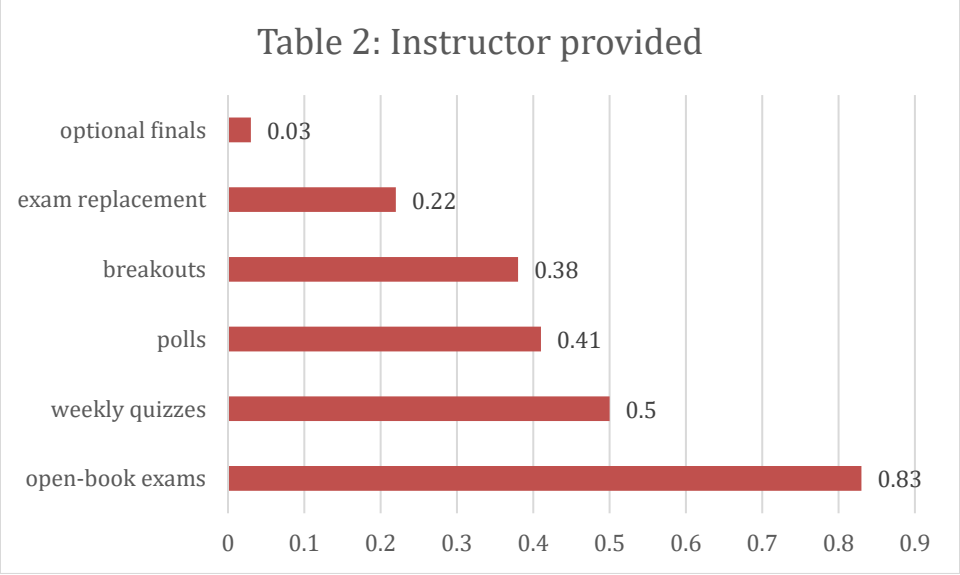
performance (28% improved vs. 34% not improved), time management (34% easier vs. 45% more difficult), and pace (30% easier vs. 54% more difficult). Furthermore, 69% attended lectures less often, 35% often or always skipped class (vs. 11% in-person), and 64% rarely or never turned their cameras on. Interestingly, 52% agreed they were more comfortable asking questions in the online format (perhaps due to Zoom's chat feature).

The survey also asked about issues that negatively impacted learning – Table 1 summarizes several of these:

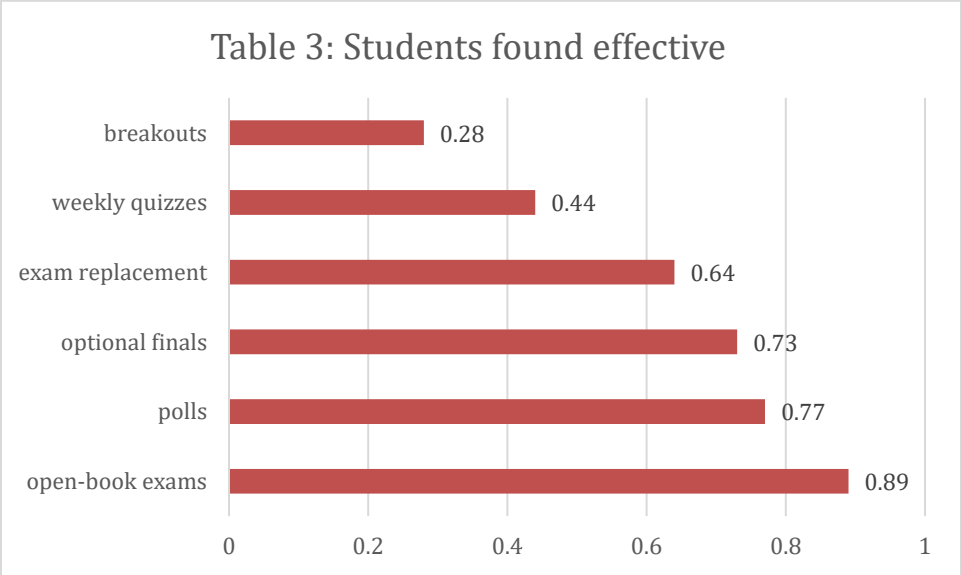


These data clearly show that engagement – with material, peers, and instructors – were the primary liabilities of emergency remote instruction.

There are a number of interventions that online courses can employ to improve engagement and learning – the survey suggests that faculty employed several of these often or always:

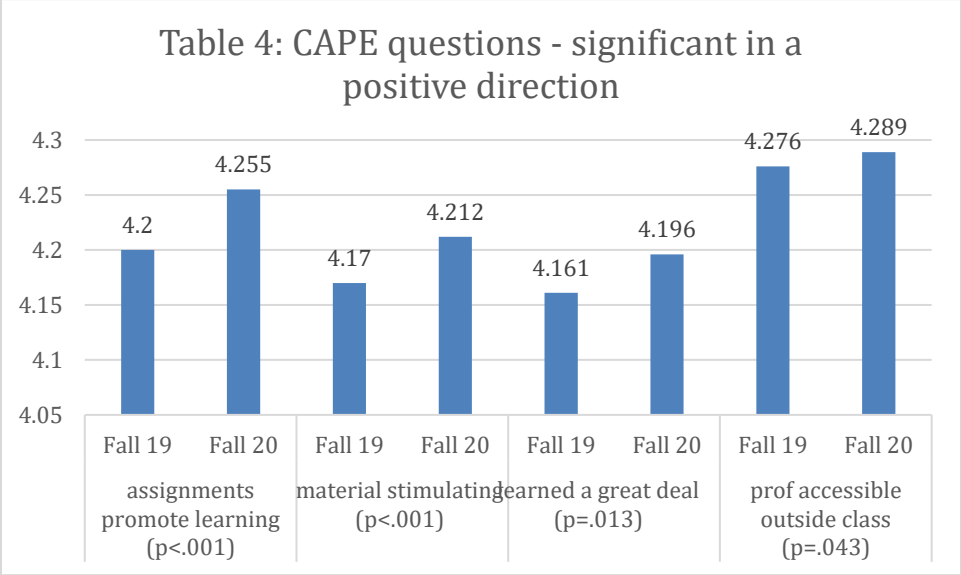


Interestingly, the students surveyed provided a different ranking for which interventions they often or always found effective:



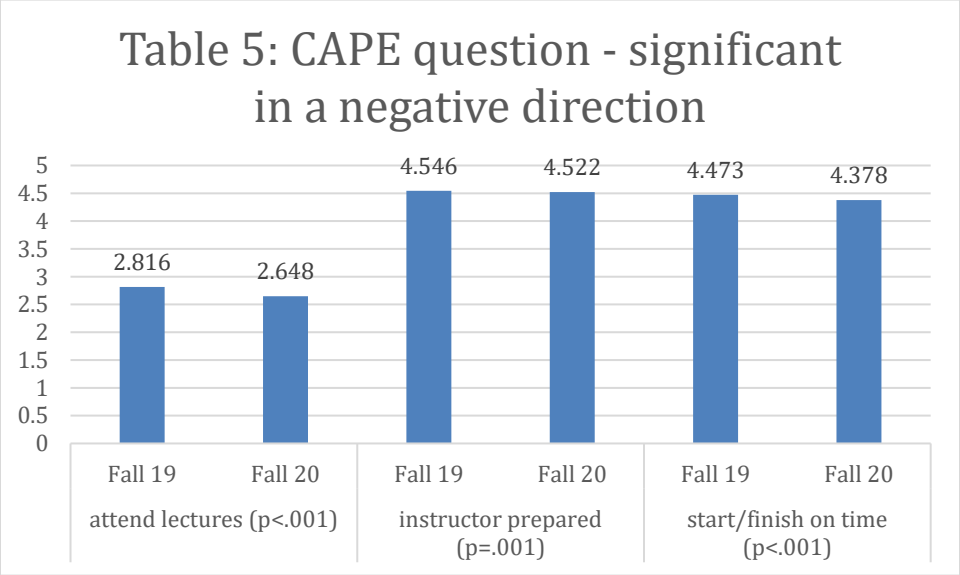
These interventions can be roughly grouped into three categories: those that mitigate the stress of the emergency remote environment (exam replacement and optional finals), those that are designed to promote engagement (breakouts and polls), and inclusive assessment practices (weekly quizzes and open-book exams). The instructors tended to favor those based on pedagogical best practices (inclusive assessments and promoting engagement); the students, on the other hand, appreciated some of these, but also the stress-reducing practices.

The CAPE data presented a more positive picture, although still mixed. Comparing course – matched by course number and instructor – from Fall 2019 and Fall 2020, only eight of the questions yielded statistically significant results (N ranged from about 13,000 to 15,000 for each question). There were significant improvements during emergency remote instruction on four of the CAPE questions:



These data run counter to the survey data, in that they suggest some level of engagement with the material. Instructor availability may actually improve with remote office hours. CAPE data also suggest that students expected better grades – the mean expected GPA was significantly better in Fall 2020 than in Fall 2019 (3.538 vs.3.443, p<.001).

The other three significant results suggest that emergency remote instruction was less positive:



The lower attendance is consistent with the survey data; the other two questions might indicate that instructors sometimes struggled with the emergency remote modality.[1]

The UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) is a bi-annual instrument made available to all UC undergraduates. In 2020, the survey added questions that examined the effects of the pandemic on the student experience and on the remote learning experience. The results are largely in line with the survey discussed above. Limiting the results to UC San Diego (N approximately 4000), we find that:

- 71% felt they learned less in the remote environment (36% much less)
- 80% agree (between somewhat and strongly) that remote learning is harder than learning in-person
- 75% felt that the remote experience would have been better if the transition had been less rushed
- 90% missed access to social and cultural events
- 77% felt that interaction with other students was worse (40% much worse)
- 57% felt that interaction with instructors was worse (16% much worse)
- 50% felt the level of intellectual engagement was worse (14% much worse)
- 74% had worse feelings of loneliness (37% much worse)

These data, again, speak to challenges in maintaining engagement in the emergency remote environment, and should be interpreted through that lens. Our students and faculty not only had to pivot to remote instructions, often with little warning or preparation, but they also had to juggle complicated family, health (including mental health), and financial challenges. In this environment, our only other option was to halt instruction. Therefore, the question here is how we learn from this so we can do better if such a situation arises again. Increased access to tools, support, and training can have a significant impact here.

5.1.2 R-Courses

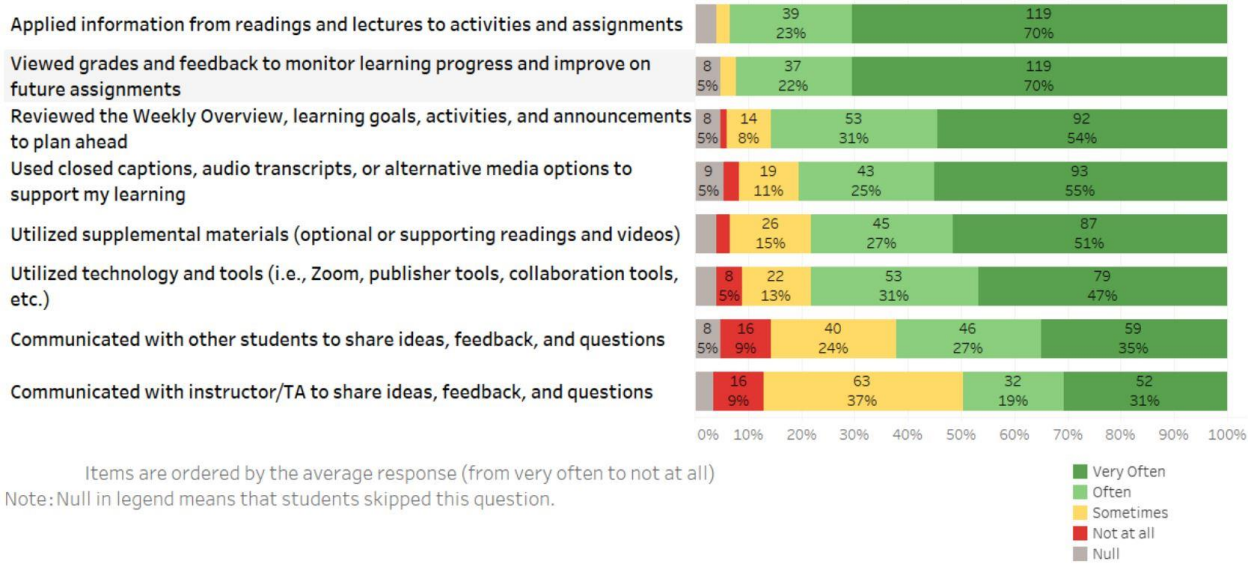
Given the documented engagement challenges associated with emergency remote instruction, we should ask whether these liabilities also exist in R-courses. Again, R-courses are intentionally designed for the remote modality, with attention to engaging students at the design phase. Because there have been relatively few R-courses offered at UC San Diego and there are few opportunities for direct comparison, the data on student

[1] We do not know whether the 'start/end on time' responses may have been confounded by asynchronous instruction.

engagement in R-courses is limited. Nevertheless, there have been some results; this section summarizes them.

The Education Research + Assessment Hub of the Teaching + Learning Commons developed an End of Term survey for UC San Diego R-courses. It was piloted in Fall 2020 (MMW121R and HILD20R, N=43) and revised in Fall 2021 (MMW121R and MUS126R/ETHN178R, N=166). As summarized in Table 6 (Fall 2021), this survey explicitly looks at student engagement:

Table 6: R-Course End of Term Survey Results



Because the End of Term Survey was only administered in R-courses, we do not have direct comparisons for engagement in-person instruction, the often to very often ratings on these questions appear to be quite high. In particular we see that about 90% of students communicate with instructors and other students to share ideas, feedback, and questions. The data also show high levels of engagement with content (78-93% often/very often). The survey is intended as an instrument to promote continued improvement in course design. Some action items that have emerged include increasing video announcements, adding grading criteria to assignments, and including open discussions. Of course, we would love to provide this level of analysis and feedback for all courses – remote and in-person.

Although direct comparison between R-courses and in-person instruction is not possible, we can use UCUES data to compare R-course engagement with general engagement. In addition, we can build a three-way comparison: R-courses (based on End of Term Survey), in-person instruction (based on 2018 UCUES data), and emergency remote instruction (based on 2020 UCUES data). The following compares these modalities with respect to peer engagement and faculty interactions:

Table 7: End of Term vs. UCUES

R-Courses (End of Term)	Often/very often	Never
Communicated with instructor/TA to share Ideas, feedback, questions	50%	9%

	In-person (2018 UCUES)		**Emergency Remote (2020 CUES)**	
	Somewhat often/ often/very often	never	Somewhat often/ often/very often	never
Sought help from instructor/tutor	43%	8%	40%	15%

Communicated with instructor outside of class	33%	14%	27%	21%

These data suggest that R-courses can result in levels of engagement that are better than both in-person and emergency remote instruction. It is not clear that this is due to modality, however; rather, the level of design detail and scrutiny associated with R-courses may simply result in better quality.

5.2 Student Achievement

Without clear measures of student learning outcomes, it is difficult to measure student achievement. We can look at indicators like grades and DFW rates, but these will not necessarily control for different degrees of rigor, instructor differences, and the like.

As mentioned above, the CAPE results showed that the difference in expected GPA was significantly higher in Fall 2020 (3.443 (F19) vs. 3.538 (F20)). Actual grade data confirm that GPAs increased in this same period: the average GPA in Fall 2019 was 3.16; in Fall 2020 it was 3.44. Average GPAs increased in almost all majors and first-time first-year students saw the greatest increase (3.09 vs.3.41). Although this increase could be due to students performing better in the remote environment, it seems more likely to be the result of instructors adopting more liberal grading practices.

To assess the student achievement in R-courses versus similar face-to-face courses, the Education Research + Assessment Hub compared seven paired courses: These are the only ones with both in-person and R-course offerings and with enrollments of more than 30 students. The results are summarized in Table 8, where positive values show higher percentages in R-courses:

Table 8: in-person versus R-course – student performance

In-person (N)	RCourse (N)	Delta -%DFW	Delta - %A	Delta – average grade
5265	92	9%	-8%	-0.63
428	262	-3%	0%	-0.04
82	178	3%	7%	0.02
2990	3775	-1%	7%	0.13
75	162	2%	21%	0.13
133	182	1%	6%	0.16
1616	935	-3%	29%	0.46

With respect to DFW rates, the in-person and R-courses are close, with the exception of one class (9% increase in the R-course). The percentage differential for number of students achieving A grades is more variable; here – again with the same exception – R-course students do better. This correlates with a general increase in average grade for these same courses. Again, it is hard to know how to interpret these data – these data do not control for instructor or whether they are during the pandemic. The somewhat better performance in R-courses might be due to a variety of factors, including more intentional design, a difference in rigor, and different performance of different groups of students, among others.

While the student grade data do not show any clear problems with remote instruction, it is difficult to draw any deeper conclusions from what is available.

5.3 Academic Integrity

The has been considerable concern over the increased rate of academic integrity allegations since the onset of the pandemic. In particular, traditional, high-stakes assessments have been difficult to proctor in the remote format. Some courses have adopted alternative assessments (e.g., open-book or take-home exams),

while others have made use of digital proctoring services. Nonetheless, the campus saw a two-fold increase in academic integrity violation allegations in the pandemic period. Some of this has been fueled by the availability of online 'tutoring' services, such as Chegg, that allows students to seek online solutions to exam questions. In a presentation to the Senate's Representative Assembly, the director of the Academic Integrity Office detailed ways that online services can facilitate cheating, leading to considerable concern among faculty.

As in other areas, however, it is important to distinguish emergency remote instruction from R-courses and see what the data tell us. Because R-courses are intentionally designed for remote delivery, their methods of assessment may actually mitigate against integrity violations.

5.3.1 Emergency Remote

As mentioned above, the campus saw a 100% increase in total academic integrity violation allegations since the start of the pandemic. Looking at data from the past six years, the pre-pandemic average was 0.9%, while the post pandemic average was 1.8%. First-year students and international students were most likely to receive an allegation.

However, the increases were not evenly distributed across departments. Some departments – e.g., Mathematics, Data Science, and ECE – saw sharp increases. On the other hand, many departments actually saw decreases during the same period. Table 9 show a sample:

Table 9: Academic integrity allegations over the past six years

	Pre-pandemic	Post-pandemic	% delta
Grand Total	0.25%	0.58%	0.32
Mathematics	0.11%	1.55%	1.43%
Data Science	0.74%	2.01%	1.27%
ECE	0.24%	1.19%	0.95%
Nanoengineering	0.42%	1.30%	0.88%
Chem & Biochem	0.09%	0.77%	0.68%
Revelle Humanities	0.16%	0.83%	0.66%
CSE	1.22%	1.44%	0.22%
Chemical Engineering	0.38%	0.20%	-0.18%
Muir College Writing Program	0.43%	0.37%	-0.06%
Warren College Writing Program	0.78%	0.32%	-0.45%

The large numbers of students enrolled in the departments with large increases appear to be driving the overall campus increase. It does appear to be true that the emergency remote format helped facilitate cheating in many departments.

5.3.2 R-Courses

While there is evidence for increased academic integrity allegations under the emergency remote modality, the same is not true for R-courses. Again, we need to be careful because of the low number of R-courses and relatively low enrollments. However, with the exception of two courses (CAT125R and SIO16R, there have been no allegations of academic integrity violations. There were 12 total allegations in CAT125R, with 8 of them in one quarter (Winter 2021). All 4 allegations in SIO16R were in Spring 2021. In both cases, the 2018-2021 rate of allegations was greater than in the corresponding in-person course (0.39% vs. 0.09% for CAT125/R, 2.19% vs. 0% for SIO16/R). However, this may be due to the exceptional quarters (both during the pandemic) and the small sample size in R-courses.

During the same period, there were 15 other R-courses offered – none of them had any academic integrity allegations. While we do not have course-to-course comparisons, their departments do show allegations in in-person/emergency remote courses during the same period:[2]

Table 10: Departments with R-course offerings between 2018 and 2021

	Pre-pandemic	Post-pandemic	R-course
Chemical Engineering	0.38%	0.20%	0%
Education Studies	0.11%	0.09%	0%
Global Health	0.49%	0%	0%
History	0.26%	0.18%	0%
Nanoengineering	0.42%	1.30%	0%
Political Science	0.10%	0.83%	0%
CSE	1.22%	0.09%	0%
Rady	0.19%	0.30%	0%
SIO	0.16%	0.20%	2.19%
CAT	0.18%	0.20%	0.39%

With the exceptions of CAT125R and SIO16R, we see that R-courses tend to have significantly fewer integrity allegations than their departmental averages. Again, this is likely due to the design of assessments that explicitly take the remote modality into account. R-courses are designed with the support of the Teaching + Learning Commons and intentionally look at ways to discourage or prevent academic integrity violations. In the case of emergency remote, there was often no time to adjust to the modality in a way that prevented cheating.

5.4 Summary of Assessment Data

These studies and surveys provide evidence that emergency remote instruction and R-courses should not be conflated. An accident of nomenclature may lead to the assumption that both are 'remote' and, therefore, equivalent. However, the data in this section clearly indicate that the engagement and academic integrity challenges found with emergency remote are absent in R-courses.

6 Towards a Strategic Approach

As the previous sections suggest, our campus finds itself in an awkward position with respect to remote instruction. For most, the experience of the pandemic has formed a range of impressions around its value, feasibility, and challenges. For very few, the R-course process has shown the value of well-designed remote learning. It is inevitable that faculty and students will tend to conflate these modalities. One type of conflation may have to do with the increase of R-course proposals in the last year. It is possible that some faculty would like to continue teaching remotely and realize that the R-course process is the only long-term strategy. Consequently, the Undergraduate Council's discussions have emphasized the need for a more clearly articulated plan. In this section we address several of the council's concerns and discuss how the campus might develop a more strategic approach to remote instruction.

If we can successfully articulate a strategy around remote education, then it may be easier to streamline the approval process for R-courses. Currently, Undergraduate Council spends a good deal of time discussing the motivation for R-course proposals. If this aspect were folded into a more comprehensive planning strategy, then the evaluation of the courses would be on academic grounds only. This might result in R-course approvals being folded into the approval of all courses, under the charge of Undergraduate Council's course subcommittee.

[2] The pre- and post-pandemic columns include any R-courses (which will be few in number). We can assume that pre-pandemic courses are nearly all in-person and post-pandemic primarily remote. The R-courses were offered over both periods.

6.1 An In-Person Campus

Before the pandemic, it was unthinkable that our university would be anything other than a primarily in-person campus. However, Winter 2022 revealed a new way of thinking among students and faculty. After a month of remote instruction in response to the Omicron COVID variant, the Senate allowed faculty the option to continue in an emergency remote modality for the remainder of the quarter. Some faculty polled students as to their preference and found that a significant number of students preferred remote modality. The reasons varied, but many found they could avoid returning to campus if their classes were remote. High rents in the local housing market, travel difficulties, and other factors drove this preference. Faculty then found themselves in a difficult position – either continue with remote instruction in order to accommodate students or make a potentially unpopular decision to return to in-person instruction. The campus has received multiple complaints in both directions: many parents are angry about continued remote instruction, while some students feel that remote accommodations should be required on demand.

We hope that as the pandemic subsides, we can reaffirm that UC San Diego remains a predominantly in-person campus. While this workgroup will make recommendations to facilitate increased remote instruction, this will not change the fundamental nature of the institution. While there should be more remote options in the future, there cannot be an expectation of parallel remote and in-person options. While we understand the challenges that students face with respect to housing, we cannot solve those through modality decisions. That said, remote courses can be a powerful tool in addressing other challenges, including course bottlenecks, difficult schedules, and increased ability to accommodate both faculty and student work-life balance issues.

6.2 Quality

We have seen evidence that emergency remote and R-courses are different in terms of quality of instruction. One point that tends to go unnoticed, however, is that in-person instruction varies widely in terms of quality. Rather than focus on whether an R-course can deliver the same level of instruction as in-person courses, we suggest that we should expect quality instruction in all courses, regardless of modality. Many of the design features that feed the Quality Matters rubric for R-courses apply equally to in-person instruction. Attention to course learning objectives, student engagement, assessment, and inclusive pedagogy should be the focus of all course design. It is an accident of history that we require these for R-courses, but not for in-person courses. Given the high level of preparation and consultation required of R-courses, the question of their quality becomes a red herring. A more relevant question is how to ensure quality in all modalities.

Similarly, data on academic integrity suggests that well-designed courses lead to reduced cheating. It may be that the careful planning that goes into R-course design and assessments is behind the low level of allegations in this modality. Here we see a contrast with both in-person and emergency remote instruction, where the same care is not always taken to ensure integrity.

6.3 Justification

A recurring question around R-course approvals comes from their justification. The Undergraduate Council often struggles to understand why a particular course is proposed in remote modality. Indeed, there is a lack of clear guidance as to what constitutes a legitimate reason for offering a course remotely.

6.3.1 Faculty preference

It is possible that some faculty propose R-courses due to a preference for remote instruction. Again, Undergraduate Council has wondered whether this has driven some of the increase in proposals, as faculty now realize that remote instruction is a possibility. Perhaps some faculty would like the flexibility to work remotely (even outside the San Diego area). However, it is unlikely that many faculty would be willing to go through the labor-intensive design phase simply for convenience. It is also not a good use of the institution's resources to invest in the approvals and design of remote courses unless these are meant to be

offered regularly. Furthermore, policy on faculty residency will not allow faculty to live outside the area and teach remotely. Finally, EPC's Fundamental Principle, referenced above, requires the same faculty workload for in-person and remote courses. Putting this together, it is unlikely that remote instruction represents a way for faculty to be less engaged in teaching.

Nonetheless, it is legitimate to ask what motivates remote modality, beyond the preference of the instructor.

6.3.2 Accessibility and Equity

A primary reason for remote instruction is to increase accessibility. Sometimes this is framed as a way to accommodate a more diverse student population – including those who have commitments and situations that make an in-person experience challenging. However, unless we move to fully-remote degrees, expanded remote offerings will not supplant the need to attend in-person. Instead, we concentrate on ways that remote courses can facilitate access in the context of an in-person experience.

Over the past decade, our campus has looked at how to increase the number of students who finish their degrees in a timely manner. Currently about 75% of first-year students finish in four years, while 61% of transfer students finish in two years. Time-to-degree is important for a few reasons: affordable learning and throughput. Students who complete their degrees faster pay less for their education and accumulate less debt. The faster we can move students to their degrees, the more room there is for new students. This last point has been a focus of both the State government and the Office of the President. As a system, the University of California is under pressure to increase the number of California residents with UC degrees. Our campus has seen over a decade of increased enrollments – we are now at a point where we cannot continue to grow. However, if we increase throughput, we can grant more degrees without increasing the student population. Time-to-degree is, therefore, an important tool for accessibility, which, in turn, creates a more inclusive and equitable university.

Remote instruction can play a role in efforts to improve time-to-degree if we concentrate on bottleneck and gateway courses. These courses tend to be large courses that are required for graduation and are often pre-requisites for other requirements. They also routinely have long wait lists. When students cannot access these courses, their academic paths are impacted, potentially leading to longer time to degree. We can address this by offering some of these courses remotely. In some cases, classroom space is a limiting factor – remote courses do not require classrooms. In other cases, instructor availability limits the number of sections. To the extent that remote options provide instructors with greater flexibility, remote courses may allow for increased offerings. Remote courses can also play a role in degree completion and cross-campus enrollments.

In addition, gateway courses tend to exacerbate opportunity gaps – gaps in retention, graduation, and DFW rates that appear when students are disaggregated along demographic lines. Fox, et. al. (2021) notes the role that well-designed remote instruction can have in addressing these gaps:

> Leveraging digital learning components, such as interactive and individualized course materials, leadership, and faculty across institutions opens the door to creative, effective strategies for improving student outcomes in gateway courses. With the adoption of adaptive courseware and accompanying data analysis, several colleges and universities reveal that digital learning is a promising tool for improving student success — and ultimately closing equity gaps — in high-enrollment, introductory courses. (Fox, et. al 2021, p. 5).

In this way, remote instruction can participate in Academic Affair's collective impact approach to addressing opportunity gaps. Under such a strategic use of remote courses, a student might, for example, take 1-3 remote courses per year as part of their regular courseload. We do not believe that such a use of remote courses would fundamentally alter our institution's predominantly in-person focus and experience.

6.4 Departmental Planning

At present, individual faculty decide whether to enter R-course planning and are the ones to submit their proposed courses to the Senate. While department chairs need to sign off on these requests, there is likely variable department involvement in R-course proposals. The workgroup agrees with Undergraduate Council that these proposals should come from departments and programs, rather than from individual faculty. Ideally there should be evidence that the decision to propose a remote course is made at the departmental level – e.g., through a curriculum committee and as part of the strategic curriculum planning process. This will help ensure that the justification for the remote modality is solid, the course fits into the department's overall curricular strategy, and the course will be offered regularly in remote modality. Ideally, each program would review their whole curriculum on a periodic basis and make decisions about which courses they feel are appropriate as remote courses, submitting them as a slate of proposals to the relevant council to review. This would streamline decision making as well as ensure strategic alignment between the faculty, Senate, and administrative and support resources.

6.5 Streamlining the Process

While there is concern that R-courses are proposed without a larger strategic plan, there have also been complaints that the R-course approval process is onerous. Indeed, R-courses are held to a higher standard than that of in-person courses. However, rather than lowering the R-course standards, we suggest that the campus explore ways to improve the design of all courses. Clearly, this is a long-term project, but we emphasize that quality instruction should be a standard across our curricula.

If the number of R-course proposals continues to increase, there will be bandwidth issues both in the Teaching + Learning Commons and the Undergraduate Council. Increased resources for instructional design support will be necessary.

If we can ensure that R-course proposals are in line with an intentional plan, then Undergraduate Council can shift their focus to the academic aspects of the proposals, which they already do with in-person courses. If so, it might be possible to shift the R-course approvals to the course subcommittee (currently they are discussed in the full committee). Therefore, strategic departmental planning becomes a prerequisite for streamlining the approval process.

There also may be an opportunity to encourage more diversity in the submodalities (e.g., synchronous versus asynchronous). Synchronous R-courses would still undergo the quality assurance associated with the Quality Matters rubric, but would not need the extended work on video segments. It is possible that these courses could be designed in a more streamlined manner.

A further concern has to do with the eCourse process. Some of the delay is due to outmoded enterprise systems, which will be addressed in the next few years. However, better guidance to departments might reduce the number of proposals returned for updated information.

Overall, the workgroup agrees that much more can be done with remote instruction, but there needs to be more strategic planning around the proposals and a more streamlined approval process.

7 Summer Courses

In Summer 2020, almost all courses were offered through emergency remote instruction. Summer Session saw a 31% surge in enrollments. Summer 2021, also remote, continued with increased enrollments, although a bit below that of 2020. Table 11 shows the increase in summer session enrollment over the past four years.

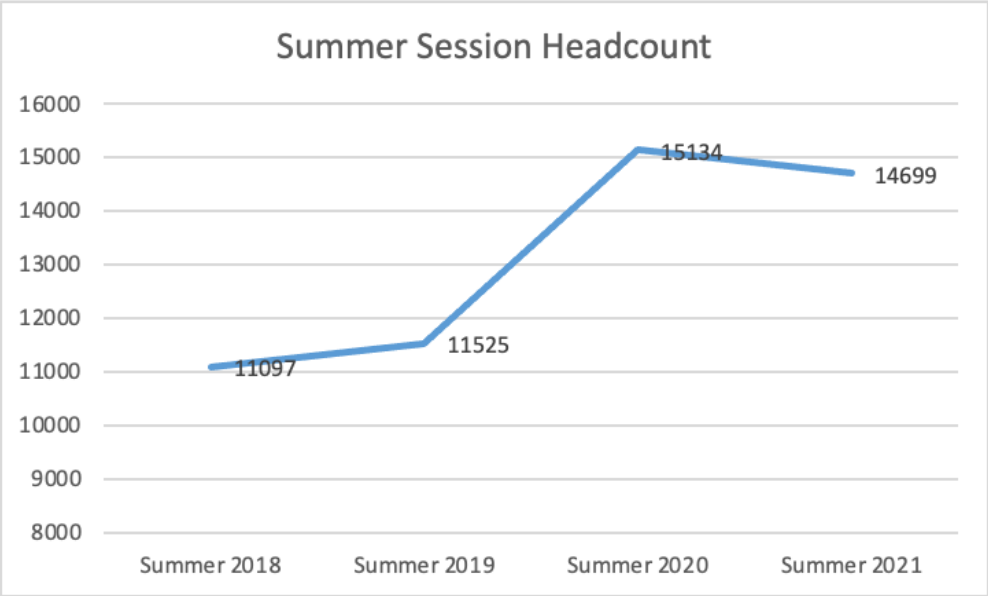


Table 11: Summer Session Enrollment (2018-2021)

We suspect that the remote options allow UC San Diego students to engage with Summer Session while returning home. They also make for greater flexibility: students may be able to juggle work and other commitments with summer classes. Finally, students who in previous summers may have attended another UC or a community college near their homes, have been able to take UC San Diego courses, eliminating the need to worry about articulations and credit transfer. The fact that Summer 2020 saw a decrease in enrollments at UC Irvine, a campus with significant pre-pandemic remote offerings, suggests that students are opting for their home campus remote courses. That is, there was no longer a need to make use of UC Irvine's remote instruction. This raises the following question: How can we continue to offer significant remote options in the summer – either through increased R-courses or by selectively waiving the Senate Policy on Distance Education Courses for summers only?

This workgroup proposed that remote instruction be permitted in Summer 2022. The Educational Policy Committee and the Senate Council approved this proposal but emphasized that this is a one-time exception. In absence of an emergency, future Summer Sessions would require a combination of in-person and R-course instruction (potentially leading to a significant decrease in Summer Bridge participation, see below).

Nonetheless, we believe there is an opportunity to explore a modality that falls between full R-course status and emergency remote instruction. Summer may be a good time to do this, as the benefits – particularly in terms of equity – make increased remote offerings attractive. Over 98% of the students who took summer classes were matriculated UC San Diego students, and over half of these students were seniors. This means that Summer Session is an important tool for our students to meet time-to-degree and completion goals. A total of 1,200 unique sessions were offered each summer.

Our historically underserved student populations are more likely to have significant commitments in respect to summer work (to support themselves, their educations, and potentially their families), care for family members (younger siblings not in school, etc.), and a variety of other community-concerned projects, which would preclude them from being on location at UC San Diego.

In these cases, the students do have access to summer classes, and have for many years, particularly from institutions other than UC San Diego. However, often these students are taking courses from community colleges that allow them to be closer to home and/or online and must go through a cumbersome and time-intensive process (for them and for us) of transferring those summer credits back to us. Because of financial or familial constraints or obligations, the students attend classes that are outside of our quality control, and

not because the students choose to do so, but because they have no other choice, especially as they strive towards timely degree completion and transition to the next steps. For many, this next step is the step towards social mobility.

Summer Bridge serves as a case in point. Summer Bridge is specifically designed to serve students who are historically under-represented, first generation, and from low socio-economic backgrounds. During the pandemic, we discovered that by way of remote instruction we could better ensure a strong start to more of our historically underserved students.; in 2019, prior to the pandemic, we served an historically high number of Summer Bridge students, with a count of 289. In 2020, having to deliver fully online due to the pandemic, we were able to serve even more, 426 students. In 2021, allowing both online and in-person options, we increased that number to 720 (150 in-person, 570 remote, by their own choosing). With excellent professors and staff practitioners, we served more students than ever before, and the results have been more than encouraging. Students are now thriving in both modalities. This year, we hope to serve 900 students. In the future, we would like to be able to offer the experience to all students from these populations. But we will only be able to do so, and ensure their strong start and persistence at UC San Diego, if we are offering these opportunities in a way that these students can take advantage of. In short, we can offer these students quality-controlled UC San Diego courses and allow them to engage and find belonging with the university, but only if we offer them in both in-person and remote formats.

The last two years of remote summer offerings have also allowed our instructors to combine teaching more easily with research and other commitments, such as remote fieldwork. This has made it possible for departments to significantly reduce the waitlist for summer courses, which accounts for up to an additional 26% over current enrollments.

The increase in Summer Session enrollments in 2020 did not significantly change the demographics of Summer Session students. In Table 12 we see that the percentage of under-represented students remained about the same over the four years, including the two remote years. There is a decrease in the percentages of first-generation and Pell-eligible students, which may or may not be significant.

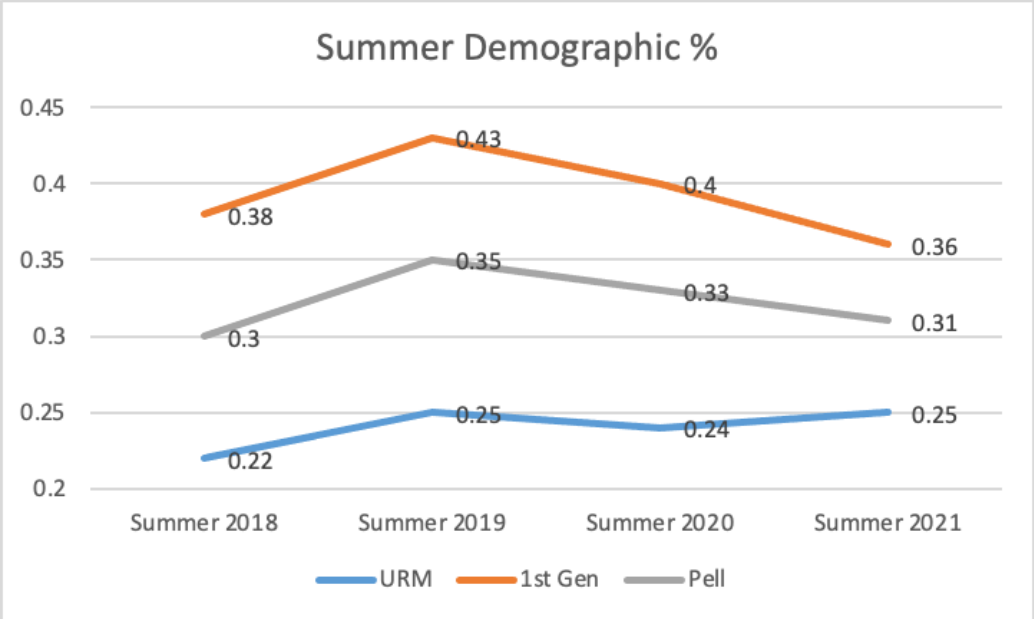


Table 12: Demographic of Summer Students (2018-2021)

Table 13 compares the percentages of under-represented and first-generation students attending UC San Diego during Summer Session to the percentages during the prior Fall Quarter. The figure shows that Summer Session percentages track closely with the previous Fall percentages. The percentages of Pell-

eligible students tended to be smaller in summer than in the previous fall, which may have to do with financial pressures.

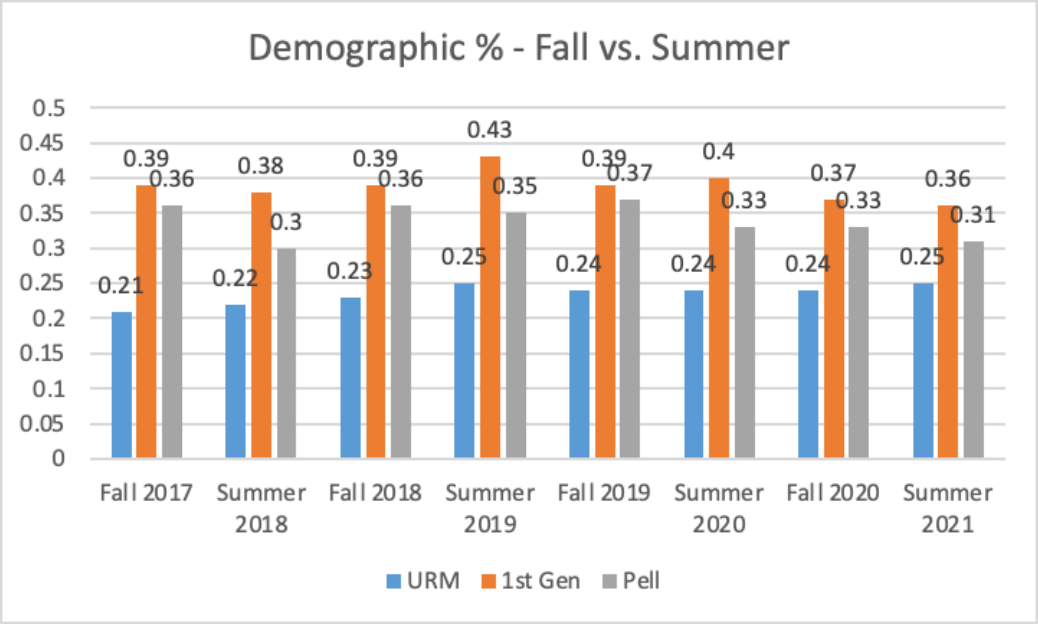


Table 13: Demographic of Summer Students in Comparison to Prior Fall Quarter

While we have seen a significant increase in interest in summer (and accompanying positive impact on students), the workgroup has a diversity of views on how to promote sufficient remote instruction to maintain the momentum of the past two years. One view is that a streamlined R-course approval process may allow for increased remote offerings in summer, particularly in some of the more crucial areas (e.g., Summer Bridge). Another view is skeptical that departments or faculty would be willing to go through the effort associated with the R-course approval process if they only planned on offering these courses over the summer. This is compounded by the fact that most summer courses are taught by unit-18 or other temporary instructors, meaning that someone other than the summer instructor would need to apply for the R-course approval and develop the course.

Under either approach - increased summer R-Ccourses or a summer exception to Senate Policy on Distance Education Courses – it will be important to be strategic in Summer Session course offerings. Departments can be encouraged to create remote options for bottleneck, gateway, Summer Bridge, and courses that lend themselves to a remote modalities.

The workgroup is in agreement that unless a solution is found for summer, we will lose the momentum of the last 2 years and revert to a situation where our students have to turn to other universities for summer enrollments. There are a number of ways the Seante might approach this and we look forward to on-going conversations.

7.1.1 Ensuring Quality

If the policy is modified to allow for non-R-course remote instruction, it will be important that Summer Session take steps to ensure quality remote instruction. That is, despite the lack of quality control afforded by the R-course approval process, we do not want to replace in-person instruction with sub-standard remote instruction. Of course, it is also the case that in-person instruction has always been of variable quality. Summer Session does review CAPE scores for some Summer Session. Perhaps there could be an expedited review of remote Summer Session courses - at least to ensure that some of the better practices are employed. Another option would be to employ more synchronous R-courses over the summer; this would require that the courses go through the R-course approval process, however.

The Commons supports instructors and Instructional Assistants (IAs) in course design and effective teaching in all modalities (in-person, hybrid and online). Instructional support is available through individual consultations, workshops and web resources. Each summer, the Commons offers a variety of workshops for summer instructors and facilitates a Summer Teaching Community which includes live and asynchronous support from peers and Commons staff. Due to the pandemic, many resources and trainings were developed to support remote synchronous and asynchronous teaching during the previous remote summer sessions. These included the remote teaching strategies found at keepteaching.ucsd.edu, Welcome Packet for IAs and Remote Teaching Checklist.

One resource that proved incredibly valuable in supporting remote teaching was a Canvas template course designed by the Digital Learning Hub and tailored for UC San Diego instructors. The template provides a sample course structure, module layout, resources available to students, and the integrated tools that are available within every standard Canvas course. In conjunction with the Canvas template course, instructors are encouraged to use the Learner-Centered Syllabus template to help guide students through the course, set an inclusive, collaborative tone inviting them to participate, and provide key information they need to succeed in the course.

All of these resources will be available to support Summer 2022 remote and online instruction. The Commons will hold additional live webinars and workshops prior to each summer session which highlight these resources and provide examples of well-designed digital pedagogies. Summer instructors and IAs will be strongly encouraged to attend these sessions and join a Summer Teaching Community of Practice to share strategies.

Furthermore, as discussed above, the Education Research and Assessment Hub has developed an End of Course Survey for online courses which is embedded at the end of all R-courses (with the instructor's approval). The survey gathers student feedback on the course design and learning experience, the frequency and usefulness of the course components and tools, and the extent that various course elements supported learning. The Education Research and Assessment Hub analyzes the survey results with student enrollment and performance data and provides a report which is used to improve the online learning experience and subsequent iterations of the course. If embedded in the summer remote offering, this survey could provide valuable feedback on the student experience.

The Teaching + Learning Commons is prepared to work with EPC and the Senate to evaluate all aspects of Summer Session 2022 in order to facilitate a longer-term discussion about the future of remote instruction over summer terms.

7.1.2 Approval

It is not practical to develop R-courses to meet the demand for remote summer offerings. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Academic Senate consider a standing exception to the Policy on Distance Education Courses for Summer Session only. This would result in a mix of remote and in-person courses, potentially accommodating the demand for remote summer offerings.

7.1.3 Role in Resilience

While increased summer enrollments have not correlated with increased percentages of under-represented, first-generation, or Pell-eligible students, these groups continue to be represented at a rate similar to the academic year. Thus, increased enrollments translate to increased opportunities for students in these categories to take advantage of Summer Session, potentially leading to improved time-to-degree. Given that we see opportunity gaps in four-year graduation rates between these students and total UC San Diego undergraduates, remote Summer Session options may provide a way to help close these gaps.

8 Remote Degrees

Online programs could enable UC San Diego to broaden our geographic reach and serve a more diverse community of students. It has potential to support our diversity and inclusion goals, enhance accessibility to and allow us to increase revenue. Nonetheless, the campus has been slow to offer remote degrees. Currently, only one fully-online master's degree has been approved (Data Science); several others are in the pipeline. At this time, no undergraduate degree programs have been considered.

On the graduate side, we encourage the exploration of new options for students and programs where remote offerings make sense. This is particularly true for programs aimed at professionals, who may be seeking part-time options that they can combine with work and family life. These programs need to be adequately supported and staffed, and the student experience should, in every possible way, be equivalent to the experience of an on-campus student; this includes access to tutoring, support programs, etc.

Undergraduate degrees pose a bigger challenge in that both major and general education requirements would have to be offered remotely. Given the wide variety of general education curricula, through the undergraduate colleges, this may not be feasible at this time. UC Irvine recently approved a remote Business degree. Crucially, this degree is limited to transfer students who have completed their general education requirements elsewhere (through the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum – IGETC). This suggests that remote undergraduate degrees – if offered – might similarly begin by targeting transfers students. If we extend degrees to first-time first-year students, we would have to define their general education curriculum, perhaps outside of the college system (or by establishing a remote college). These options seem premature at this point and should instead be revisited when we have more experience with our graduate offerings and supporting a larger set of online courses.

Barriers to developing fully online programs include concerns about maintaining UC San Diego's academic teaching and research excellence, as well as identifying which entity on campus would be the most appropriate to support an online degree program. To investigate the feasibility and readiness for UC San Diego to expand its online programs, EdPlus, the central digital learning and teaching unit of Arizona State University (ASU), was commissioned to determine the status of UC San Diego's readiness to deliver online programs. A team looked at our resources and infrastructure; identified strengths and areas for building strength, evaluated our immersion and Extension approaches to online management and delivery; and identified best practices for growing our online presence while maintaining educational quality. In their report, "University of California San Diego Online Readiness Assessment," EdPlus conducted a detailed online maturity analysis in nine different areas rating from 1 (little to no university capacity to execute) to 4 (strong university capacity to execute including online and to scale). Table 14 shows a summary of their analysis.

Table 14: Average Ratings for Nine Analysis Domains

Domain	Inquiry focus	Average rating of capability to execute
Vision and business model	• Existence of an online strategy that clearly aligns with the larger university mission and processes • Extent that governance process ensures consistency across online programs and mirrors processes at the university at large	1.8
Enterprise Technical Architecture	• Extent to which the following features are effective and sufficiently scalable to support a large online learner community, delivery and management of content, and/or quality outcomes: – University technology systems – LMS and learning technology tools – Information and data gathering tools and processes • Full-time employee investment needed to achieve the desired scale	3.0
Marketing	• Extent to which marketing, student outreach, and recruitment resources and processes are effective and sufficiently scalable to attract and manage a large pipeline of online learners • Definition, targeting, tracking, and measuring of learner profiles • Use of technology throughout the nurturing process	1.1
Enrollment management	• Existence of a clear, data-driven, technology-enhanced approach to engage with learners from program discovery through admissions • Existence of a dedicated team focused on nurturing students	1.7
Admissions	• Extent that admissions processes are optimized for online learner needs	1.9
Financial aid	• Existence, extent, and availability of financial aid for online learners • Existence of a dedicated team to support learners with financial planning	1.7
Program management, design and instruction	• Extent of availability, effectiveness, and scalability of these features to support growth of high-quality online instruction: – Faculty openness – Faculty training, support, and incentives – Instructional design and media production resources and processes	2.6
Student support	• Extent to which student support resources and processes are effective and sufficiently scalable to ensure student persistence to graduation	1.7
Retention coaching	• Extent to which student retention resources and processes are effective and sufficiently scalable to ensure student persistence to graduation	2.1

Overall, the ASU consultants indicated that we would need to develop several areas before launching online undergraduate degree programs. They praised our academic excellence, clear commitment to innovation, and diversity and inclusion initiatives that are focused on enhancing education access and the student experience. However, they found barriers in creating and operationalizing an online learning system in an environment that is extremely focused on in-person instruction. They provided observations and recommendations for how to change the culture of teaching; how to ensure that technology enhanced education maintains excellence; and how to build systems across different administrative and academic units.

The UC Academic Senate paneled an Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force in 2019. Its 2020 report considered three models:

Option 1 (UC-Quality On-campus Degree) would prohibit fully remote undergraduate degree programs and require at least one-third of all major units and also one-third of total units to be earned in non-remote courses

Option 2 (UC-Quality Remote Degree) would support the formation of entirely remote degree programs, but require that programs meet all ordinary expectations for a UC degree

Option 3 (Instruction-Only Remote Degree) would allow fully remote degree programs that satisfy the same coursework expectations as UC's face-to-face programs, but may not guarantee equivalent out of classroom opportunities

The difference between options 2 and 3 come down to the co-curricular experiences. Under option 2, students may still be in residence and participate in the academic experiences offered on campus, but complete coursework in a remote modality. Option 3 allows for the possibility that students do not come to campus at all. The Academic Council discussed these options, but did not come to a consensus. This is clearly an on-going discussion, but the report may serve as a launching mechanism to facilitate conversations about the institution's development of future online degree programs, which will likely provoke discussion among campus stakeholders.

The development of remote degrees will require the creation of curricula with enough R courses to support the entire degree program. For undergraduate programs, this may also require remote general education curricula. Therefore, discussion of fully online undergraduate degrees will require sufficient numbers of R-courses to support them. The workgroup feels that we should defer this discussion, while monitoring the remote master's degrees and the R-course process. We should also begin to look at the infrastructure recommendations in the EdPlus report.

9 Recommendations

The Workgroup on Distance Education for Academic Excellence and Resilience makes its recommendation consistent with the following values (presented earlier in the document):

- ***We should work to maintain and improve quality of instruction:*** Measures related to course content and delivery, regardless of modality, should lead to improvement in the student's learning experience, as measured objectively through assessments of learning outcomes.

- ***We should expand accessibility of educational opportunities:*** Our measures should enhance the pool of aspiring students, thereby creating equitable opportunities for a more diverse group of learners.

9.1 General Recommendations

In the service of improving quality of instruction and increasing accessibility, we recommend the campus do the following:

(i) Encourage best practices in course design and delivery for both in-person and remote courses. The Teaching + Learning Commons already provides these resources for faculty; the Undergraduate Council's course subcommittee is best equipped to provide oversight.

(ii) Encourage more hybrid ('flipped') courses. This is an established best practice and provides increased accessibility and resiliency. Because the Course Development and Instructional Improvement Program (CDIIP) already funds such projects, the campus might look at ways to expand this support or accelerate efforts.

(iii) Increase the inventory of well-designed R-courses. This might require additional resources for the Commons. Faculty should be encouraged to think in terms of both asynchronous and synchronous R-courses.

(iv) Monitor the success of online Masters degrees with an eye towards the possibility of future online undergraduate degrees. Consider the results of the campus' Online Readiness Assessment. The campus may need a separate workgroup to study this.

9.2 Policy Recommendations

The workgroup discussed a number of policy questions and makes the following recommendations:

(v) The Policy on Distance Education Courses should remain with EPC, but Senate Council should be the body that decides whether it might be suspended under emergency circumstances. This is the current practice; the workgroup feels that this is the right balance between oversight and flexibility. Because in-person and R-courses are otherwise subject to the same policies (e.g., credit hours, faculty workload, etc.), the workgroup makes no new recommendations in this area.

(vi) The Senate should consider modifying the Policy on Distance Education Courses to require that R-course proposals come from academic units and not from individual faculty members. The proposals should make clear how the proposed R-course fits in with a larger academic plan (e.g., to avoid bottlenecks, reduce over-large courses, provide greater scheduling access, accommodate the needs of diverse learners, and improve student success and time to degree). This should lessen the burden on graduate and undergraduate council in reviewing such proposals and ensure that the sometimes significant resources needed to create an R-course are invested wisely. Finally, the requirement that R-courses employ the Quality Matters rubric should be clarified to ensure that both synchronous and asynchronous sub-modalities are supported.

(vii) The Senate should consider ways to strategically increase remote options during Summer Session.

(viii) In-person and R-courses with identical numbering (e.g., CAT 125 vs. CAT 125R) should automatically satisfy the same requirements (general education, minor, and major) and serve as pre- co-requisites for the same courses. No extra petitions should be required to use an R-course to satisfy a requirement.

(ix) Courses that are otherwise entirely remote (both R-courses and emergency remote instruction) must have remote exams, unless there are provisions to accommodate students not in the San Diego area (e.g., through testing centers). Optional in-person exams or activities should be allowed, but remote students should not be disadvantaged.

9.3 Process Recommendations

Finally, the workgroup makes the following recommendations around process:

(x) The Teaching + Learning Commons provides a valuable resource for course design – both for in-person and R-courses; they should be appropriately resources to help the campus increase well-designed courses and also increase the number of R-courses.

(xi) Once the justification for R-courses is handled at the departmental level, Undergraduate Council should consider moving R-course approval to the course subcommittee.

(xii) The administration should work with the Office of the Registrar to identify and remedy causes for delays in the eCourse approval process.

(xiii) The schedule of classes should have the ability to distinguish between in-person, remote, hybrid, synchronous, and asynchronous instruction. Class modalities should be transparently coded so that it is clear when students are expected to attend in-person or synchronously. This lack of transparency has been the source of much frustration.

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11 Appendix A – Workgroup Charge

January 22, 2021

Subject: Senate-Administration Workgroup on Distance Learning for Academic Excellence and Resilience Charge

During Summer 2020, a Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies and Strategies and the Administration's Educational Continuity Task Force were convened to make short- and long-term recommendations arising from the impacts of COVID-19 on campus teaching. To build on the efforts of these two task forces, and in light of the campus' experience in dealing with COVID-19, a Senate/Administration Workgroup on Distance Learning for Academic Excellence and Resilience is being convened.

The Senate-Administration Workgroup on Distance Learning is charged with reviewing the following:

- Actions the UC system, divisional Senate, and UC San Diego have taken to support distance learning and remote instruction, along with efforts to uphold academic excellence and organizational continuity.
- Data from university and system-wide surveys about students' and faculty experiences in the remote learning environment.
- Effective practices by which divisions/schools and academic or administrative have identified or addressed the needs of remote learners and instructors.
- Information and ideas from other UC campuses, peer institutions, and research about the impacts of distance education on institutional resilience and the productivity, wellbeing, and success of distance learners.
- Findings and recommendations from the Senate Task Force on Remote Learning Long-Term Policies & Strategies and the Educational Continuity Task Force.

Based on the above, this workgroup is charged to:

- Develop recommendations for how UC San Diego should position itself to minimize the impact of future disruptions to the educational mission, be they pandemics, earthquakes, wildfires, etc.
- In particular, examine how remote and online teaching programs and tools should be developed in anticipation of future disruptions.
- Consider and make recommendations on the role of remote (R) classes as vehicles for (a) delivering a high-quality education and (b) providing campus resilience.

- Provide guidance on the role, if any, that fully-online undergraduate degree programs should play in the educational mission of UC San Diego.
- Examine and report on how remote and online instruction could be used to provide faculty and students with personal flexibility in order to accommodate campus and personal research with a focus onEDI priorities.

This workgroup will convene at the beginning of Winter Quarter 2021. We would appreciate the workgroup's final
report submitted to the EVC Office and Senate leadership by April 30, 2021.

With best regards,

Digitally signed by Steven Constable
Date: 2021.01.26 08:56:23 -08'00'

Steven Constable

Steven Constable Academic Senate Chair

Elizabeth H Simmons

Elizabeth H. Simmons Executive Vice Chancellor

CC: Dean Antony Chair Cook
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Continetti Vice Chancellor Petitt
Director Rodriguez Chair Russell
Vice Chancellor Satterlund Chair Teranes

12 Appendix B – EPC Policy on Distance Education Courses

ACADEMIC SENATE: SAN DIEGO DIVISION

UC San Diego Policy on Distance Education Courses

All courses offered at UC San Diego should meet the same high standards in terms of the educational experience they offer to students, regardless of the mode of instruction. Hallmarks of these standards include:

- Active engagement of a qualified instructor who has significant expertise in the subject of the course;
- Frequent instructor guided activity to support student learning;
- A means for students to periodically assess their progress towards achievement of course learning goals.

Courses that meet these standards and employ (primarily or exclusively) technologically-mediated formats may be offered at UC San Diego via Distance Education courses (sometimes also referred to as remote or online courses).

DEFINITION

Distance Education refers to a mode of instruction in which some or all students are separated from the instructor. A Distance Education course must support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously (live but remote) or asynchronously (on demand and remote). Many technologies can be used to deliver Distance Education, including the internet, recorded videos, online audio/video conferencing, online discussion forums, and online Learning Management Systems. Distance Education courses can employ several mechanisms of instruction, including online lectures, online discussion sections, online office hours, and online discussion forums, each of which can be synchronous, asynchronous or a combination of both. 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).

I. STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

Distance Education courses must meet the following standards:

1. Instructors and Instructional Assistants of Distance Education courses must have the required expertise and qualifications to offer courses that utilize teaching strategies and technologies for distance education. Departments and programs offering Distance Education courses are responsible for ensuring the Instructor's and the Instructional Assistant's qualifications.
2. Departments offering Distance Education courses must have processes in place to verify that each registered student is the same student who participates in and completes the course and receives academic credit. Examples of processes that can achieve this goal include:
    a. A secure log-in and password
    b. Proctored examinations
    c. New or other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identity
3. Instructors must apply strict procedures to ensure that credibility and integrity are maintained at the highest level. Instructors must have a plan to monitor student progress and evaluate student learning outcomes through graded activities mediated through technology.

4. All campus policies and regulations for courses and instruction (registration deadlines, academic integrity, etc.) that apply to conventional courses also apply to distance education courses. As with in-person courses, distance education courses must accommodate students with disabilities.
5. Any synchronous interaction (for example in lectures, discussion sections, office hours, or any other setting) must meet the following minimum set of standards:
    a. Students must be able to both see and hear the instructor and view the instruction materials (for example, physical or electronic whiteboard, computer slides, experimental setups, etc.) with sufficient fidelity that no significant information is lost. Courses made available to students in off-campus sites may only be taught in facilities capable of sustaining a synchronous, two-way video and audio connection between UC San Diego and off-campus sites.
    b. Students must have appropriate and effective ways of asking questions.
    c. Student should be able to hear questions asked by other students and the instructor's answers.
    d. When a class has some students remote and some students in-person, all students must have equal opportunity to participate in classroom discussions, and all students must have equal access to office hours.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

1. Distance Education courses must bear the letter R (for Remote) at the end of the course code.
    a. For a course that is already offered at UCSD in a conventional (non-distance) format, a new course proposal must be submitted for the Distance Education version (e.g. to offer BILD 1 using Distance Education, Biology would have to propose a new course, BILD 1R).
    b. Course approval forms should include a statement under the "Other Catalog Information" section regarding the course delivery format, e.g. "This course is a Distance Education course".
2. Departments must notify students of any additional fees associated with the verification of student identity.
3. Departments and programs are required to submit a proposal to the Academic Senate (Undergraduate Council for undergraduate courses, or Graduate Council for graduate courses) for approval to offer a Distance Education course.
4. Prior to Senate review, proposers are required to consult with the Teaching + Learning Commons to ensure a Distance Education course meets the quality assurance standards set forth by the Quality Matters Rubric (https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/rubric-standards/higher-ed-rubric).

III. GUIDELINES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE PROPOSALS

Distance Education course proposals submitted to the Undergraduate or Graduate Councils must include the following:

1. Draft course approval form.
2. Responses to the supplementary questions listed below.
3. A letter from the Teaching + Learning Commons addressing: a. The current stage of course development; and b. If the course design meets the Quality Matters Rubric standards and accessibility requirements (or the path forward to meet these standards).
4. A letter from the provost, department chair or program director. The letter should address how the proposed R course fits into the curriculum and include plans for incorporating distance education into the unit's degree program(s).

5. For undergraduate courses developed for UC's Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI), a copy of the ILTI proposal. Courses must be approved through ILTI prior to submission to the Undergraduate Council.

Supplementary Questions (to be answered as part of the course proposal):

(In the following, IA refers to Instructional Assistant)

1. What is the justification for offering the course in a distance education format?
    a. Why is a distance education format the right medium for this particular course?
    b. If both an in-person and distance education version of a course will be offered, what is the justification for offering the course in both formats? How will students be advised in regards to the differences between the modalities and which version to take?
    c. How will the modality improve student learning and access?
    d. How does the proposed course fit into the curriculum?
2. How will the course content be delivered (e.g. Learning Management System, online textbook/videos, video hosting platforms, lecture formats, etc.)?
3. What technologies/tools will be used for student-instructor interaction, student-IA interaction, student-student interaction, and instructor-IA interactions? Indicate: a. the frequency of these interactions; b. whether the interactions are required or optional; and c. whether the interactions are asynchronous or synchronous.
4. How will students be evaluated (e.g. quizzes, written assignments, problems sets, final exam, final paper, final presentation)? Describe the frequency of the evaluations and the type of feedback students receive.
5. Describe how student identity will be verified, especially for high stake assessments like midterms and final exams. How will academic integrity be handled?
6. If the course employs IAs, describe how the IAs will interact with the students and provide the student/IA ratio. Describe how the IAs will be trained, and how the IAs will interact with instructors.
7. If the course requires assignments that necessitate the use of technological tools that students may not readily have access to (e.g. submission of response videos or group-based video projects), what are the plans to ensure that students have access to the equipment needed (e.g. renting or borrowing equipment from Educational Technology Services)?

Approved by the Educational Policy Committee on July 3, 2019; effective November 1, 2019; updated June 15, 2021. This policy supersedes the CEP Policy on Remote and Distance Instruction (enacted July 13, 2011).

DIGITAL LEARNING

Quality Online Course Checklist

The Digital Learning Hub in the Teaching + Learning Commons at UC San Diego is a subscribing member of Quality Matters, a nationally recognized evidence-based review board for online courses. The rubric below has been adapted for UC San Diego from the Quality Matters Standards and provides instructors and instructional designers with a well-tested guide to ensure quality of online courses.

Despite its detail, there is no single prescribed mechanism for satisfying the criteria listed below. Instructors should feel free to take whichever approach seems most productive/logical to them.

Interested in reviewing your course? Download our Quality Course Checklist handout (docx)

Collapse All

1. Course Orientation

The course includes an orientation	
❑ Describe how to navigate the course space	• Where to find critical information • Where to find critical information *(e.g., syllabus, grade book, calendar, policies, etc.)* • Where to find obtain, sign-up for, use, and/or seek support for the tech tools needed for class • How to contact UCSD student support services • How to communicate with the instructor & IAs *(e.g., email addresses, canvas inbox, etc.)*

❑ Indicate how to begin working on course tasks	• Communicate where to go and what learning activity to do first
Includes an opportunity for instructor and student introductions *(video intros recommended)*	
❑ Instructors' self-introductions are professional, but also “humanizing”	• Include your name, title, photo (or other visual representation), a field of expertise • Include a hobby or a piece of "colorful" information • Demonstrate receptivity by encouraging student questions/concerns
❑ Students have the opportunity to introduce and share information about themselves	• Asynchronous or synchronous discussions are typical
Students have been acquainted with the course expectations	
❑ Describe what students should expect from the course	• Prior knowledge/competencies needed and prerequisite course required for successful course completion • Importance of course content to student’s programs of study and/or general knowledgebase • Identification of common “pain points” and potential solutions/reassurances of support • Description of a typical week’s activities *(e.g., synchronous/asynchronous, group activities, reading, multimedia)*

❑ Describe what students should expect from the instructor	• Timelines for assessment feedback, responses to emails, and other forms of class communication *(e.g., announcements, forum participation, etc.)* • Instructors and IAs/TAs have developed a student engagement/communication plan • Course's grading policies are clearly presented and explained (*e.g., grade weights, late policy, etc.)*
❑ Describe the instructor's expectations for students	• Appropriately/professionally communicate with the instructor and fellow students • Timely submission of assignments • Requests of absence or late submissions made before, not after, classes/ due dates • Academic integrity policies are followed

2. Learning Outcomes & Competencies

Clearly delineated and measurable	
❑ Course-level outcomes are clearly delineated and measurable	• Are easy for students to find and review *(i.e., positioned prominently)* • Are stated clearly and written from the student's perspective. Avoid technical jargon. • Measurable *(i.e., progress toward these learning outcomes can be measured with specificity).*

❑ Module/Week-level outcomes, or competencies, are clearly delineated and measurable	• Are easy for students to find and review *(i.e., positioned prominently)* • Are stated clearly and written from the student's perspective - avoid technical jargon • Measurable *(i.e., progress toward these learning outcomes can be measured with specificity)* • Module/week-level outcomes are consistent with and help students meet, course level outcomes

Relationships between assessments and learning outcomes are clearly articulated

❑ Describe how (and why) assessments, instructional materials, and interactions enable students to master learning outcomes

Leveled appropriately to the target population

❑ Learning outcomes measure cognitive skills to a degree appropriate to students' programs of study or levels of experience (*e.g., introductory, developmental, mastery)*	• As appropriate, module-level outcomes exhibit cognitive leveling, increasing in complexity throughout the term.

3. Assessments, Grading & Feedback

Measures, with specificity, student mastery of learning outcomes and competencies

❑ Students will demonstrate their mastering course/module level outcomes through the successful completion of course assessments.

Sequenced, varied, and leveled appropriately for the target population

❑ Assessments are sequenced logically and progressively, allowing students to develop skills before demonstrating mastery *(e.g., feedback is received on section drafts before the full paper is submitted)*	• An assessment schedule should be presented early in the course, allowing students to complete work in a timely and thoughtful manner
❑ A variety of assessment types are employed, allowing students to demonstrate progress and mastery in multiple ways (*e.g., quizzes, case studies, discussions, group presentations, research papers, etc)*	• It may not be possible to measure the mastery of all outcomes with the same assessment type. Choose types of assignments/activities that will assist you in gauging student progress towards *all* goals • Strive to craft assessments that can accommodate diverse students
❑ Assessments are rigorous enough to allow students to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes at degrees appropriate to students' programs of study or levels of experience	

Specific evaluative criteria are provided

❑ Prior to each assessment, students are provided with the criteria that will be used to evaluate their performance *(e.g., rubrics, checklists, or other evaluative tools)*	• Evaluative criteria need to help students understand the instructor's assessments and participation expectations • Assessment descriptions explain the relationship between evaluative criteria and a student's final course grade

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to track their performance

❑ The grade book is structured logically, allowing students to accurately calculate their current grades

❑ Students can expect to receive regular, timely, and actionable feedback	• Feedback is timely, allowing students the space to incorporate suggestions into future assignments • Feedback is "actionable", highlighting areas that need improvement and suggesting remedial steps

4. Instructional Materials & Learning Activities

Actively promotes the achievement of learning outcomes

❑ Instructional materials provide students with the contextual information, procedural tools, and the skill demonstrations needed to complete assessments successfully, and by extension, demonstrate their mastery of learning outcomes

❑ The relationships between instructional materials and learning outcomes are clearly articulated

Sequenced, varied, and represents up-to-date trends in their discipline

❑ Instructional materials are sequenced logically and progressively, allowing students to integrate new information into prior schemas	• When possible, content should be "chunked" into shorter units. This segmentation gives students time to assimilate new information without overwhelming their short-term memories
❑ Instructional materials come in various formats (*e.g., textbooks, videos, podcasts, articles, etc)*	• Varying the forms of employed media helps maximize student attention and support the preferences of individual students
❑ Instructional materials are up-to-date, and where appropriate, represent up-to-date trends in their discipline (*e.g., current research, clinical recommendations, theoretical frameworks, analytical techniques, etc)*	

Actively promotes the achievement of learning outcomes

❑ Learning activities employ various interactive strategies to promote outcome mastery by providing students with opportunities to actively and directly engage with course content	• Students are invited to “engage by doing” *(e.g., discovering, processing, or applying information)*, and to take increasing levels of responsibility for their own learning • Activities can come in a variety of formats *(e.g., presentations, group work, case studies, discussions, debates, role-play, etc)*

Employs multiple forms of interaction to enhance active learning

❑ Students have the opportunity to actively interact with the course content, with other students, and with the instructor

5. Usability, Accessibility & Academic Integrity

Course organization maximizes usability, readability, navigation, engagement, and multimedia ease of use

❏ Contact the Digital Learning Hub to schedule a short Usability Checkup

Course supports the needs of diverse students by providing alternatives to access content

❏ Contact the Digital Learning Hub to schedule a short Accessibility Checkup (*e.g., Image descriptions, video captioning, document headers)*

Course is configured to actively promote academic integrity

❏ Contact the Digital Learning Hub to schedule a short Academic Integrity Checkup (*e.g., plagiarism tools, exam proctoring, canvas quiz setup, academic integrity pledges, etc)*

❏ Contact the Academic Integrity Office for additional support

6. Student Support

Students are encouraged to utilize support services

❏ For each external tech tool used, students are provided with tool-specific support contact information (*e.g., support contact information for publisher tools, Zoom, Canvas, etc)*

❑ The syllabus includes an accommodation statement	Sample Language: • *"Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter (paper or electronic) issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/) Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department in advance of any exams or assignments."*
❑ Students are made aware of UCSD support services	• Basic Needs: The Hub • Technical Support: IT Service Desk • Mental Health and Wellbeing: CAPS • Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs: student success resources • Teaching + Learning Commons: services for students • UC San Diego Libraries: services and resources • TritonLink: find student services and support

7. UC San Diego Configuration

Additional UC San Diego configurations
❑ If you would like to make the course available to students across the UC system, notify the Digital Learning Hub approximately a quarter in advance
❑ An "Are you ready for online learning?" tool is available to students when the course is published - contact the Digital Learning Hub for more about this tool
❑ When appropriate, remember to make sure the end-of-course survey has been configured and will be distributed to students

Collapse All

Create An Online Course
R Course
Open Courses
Quality Course Checklist

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14 Appendix D - Glossary

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES

Last Updated: March 25, 2021

This glossary describes some of the most commonly used terms in teaching modalities; however, before proceeding it is essential to distinguish between face-to-face, remote, and fully online education. Though all three methodologies share much in common, face-2-face instruction occurs in-person while remote and fully online instruction delivers learning digitally. It is not always possible to employ learning activities interchangeably between on-ground and online classrooms. Remote is delivered remotely without being intentionally designed for the online classrooms. On the other hand, “fully online” courses make most or all of the course content is designed intentionally for digital delivery.

At UC San Diego, courses are considered Distance Education if (for some or all students) ≤50% of student-instructor instructional time is designed to occur face-to-face.

Glossary of Terms

Asynchronous

Asynchronous learning does not take place at the same time. In this context, students engage with course content (e.g., assessments, pre-recorded lectures) at times that best fit their schedules.

Distance Education

In the distance education classroom, instructors and students use software platforms (e.g., LMSs, video chats, discussion forums, blogs, email, etc.) to facilitate learning activities. At UC San Diego, courses are considered Distance Education if (for some or all students) ≤50% of student-instructor instructional time is designed to occur face-to-face. Distance Education courses must be approved by the Academic Senate and require an equivalent amount of rigor and effort as face-to-face courses. Once approved, the course code is appended with an **"R"** to indicate the remote/online modality of delivery. *~See Remote & Fully Online Instruction*

R-Course Requirements

1. Submission of an R-Proposal to the Academic Senate
   - R-Proposal Information
2. A required consultation with the Teaching + Learning Commons to ensure that the proposed Distance Education course meets the standards outlined by the Quality Matters Rubric.
   - Generally, courses given the r-designation more often align with the "fully online," than the "remote," definition. *~See Remote Instruction & Fully Online Instruction definitions*

Face-to-Face (Classroom Based) Education

In the face-to-face classroom, instructors and students meet in the same physical location, participating simultaneously in learning activities.

Flipped Instruction

Flipped is an organizational approach to instructional content, balancing didactic and active learning modalities. Students review information-rich materials (e.g., lectures, reading, etc.) in advance, and use class time for active application of concepts and creative engagement with the subject matter. Flipped instruction commonly employs a hybrid (blended) approach, providing information-rich materials to learners online.

Fully Online Instruction

Fully Online is a mode of instruction in which most or all of the course content is designed intentionally for digital delivery. An online course encompasses the thoughtful design of instruction, assignments, engagements, and interactions that promote successful learning in a fully online environment.

Hybrid (Blended) Instruction

In the hybrid classroom, learning activities are split between online and face-to-face environments. Importantly, hybrid instructors consciously tailor learning activities to the appropriate context.

Hy-Flex

A variety of hybrid instruction, and perhaps the most challenging methodology to employ, hy-flex classrooms meet simultaneously in both online and physical environments. Remote students watch a live-stream of the physical class, participating through facilitators, chat, and audio.

There are three significant points to consider when adopting the hy-flex methodology:

1. As with the hybrid model, instructors consciously tailor learning activities to the appropriate context. Hy-flex's simultaneous nature can therefore double the required preparation time.
2. Communication between students attending remotely and the instructor is often not as rich as the interactions between physical participants.
3. Streaming face-to-face classrooms can require significant technological resources. Without proper planning and monitoring, online learners often have trouble seeing, hearing, and participating fully in class.

LMS

LMSs or Learning Management Systems are centralized software platforms that facilitate online learning activities. LMSs generally include software for creating and editing course content, communication tools, assessment tools, student data tracking, and other course management features. Both face-to-face and Distance Education courses often use aspects provided by LMSs; however, for the effective facilitation of learning in Distance Education, a carefully considered full use of all LMSs features is required. Canvas is the supported LMS for credit-bearing courses at UC San Diego.

Remote Instruction

Remote is a mode of instruction in which course content is delivered remotely without being intentionally designed for fully online classrooms.

Quality Matters Standards

Quality Matters (QM) is a nationally-recognized, faculty-driven peer-review process used to ensure the quality of online and blended course design. The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric is a set of standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses.

These standards were developed and revised based on research and established standards in the fields of instructional design and online learning. At UC San Diego, we strive to meet Quality Matters standards for our "R" designated fully online and remote courses.

Synchronous

Synchronous learning takes place at the same time. Faculty and students participate simultaneously in learning activities in face-to-face classrooms or via a video conferencing platform such as Zoom.