December 18, 2009

Henry Powell
Chair, Academic Council

In Re: Report of the Undergraduate Effectiveness Taskforce

Dear Henry,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Report of the Undergraduate Effectiveness Taskforce. Upon receipt, I requested review by the Undergraduate Council (UgC), the WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee, and all Faculty Executive Committees with undergraduate programs. I received responses from the UgC and the College FEC, which are attached. The Executive Board, which speaks for the division, also reviewed the report. All three reviewing bodies identified significant deficiencies with the report, which I’ve outlined below. More details can be found in the attachments. The UCLA Academic Senate cannot endorse the report in its current form. We look forward to reviewing the report once more, after it has been revised. We recommend the following redactions:

- The first recommendation should be revised to read as follows: “Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, and assess majors’ mastery of the learning goals.” The current language, in our view, is too prescriptive.

- Because the current language in the second recommendation, specifically list of examples, is, likewise, too prescriptive, and because “resources” is redundant and refers to the economic recession without explanation, the second recommendation should be revised to read as follows: “The process and methods for properly assessing majors’ achievement of the department’s specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum. The assessment process should build on existing departmental structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department’s instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and assessment process.”

- The third recommendation is, likewise, too prescriptive regarding the Senate review process. Moreover, it is unclear what is referenced by “strategic planning process.” We recommend that it be revised to read as follows: “Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment
processes. Campus administrative leaders should be informed of the results of departmental student learning assessment.”

- The fourth recommendation should be revised as follows: “Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, material, and lessons learned.” This language is sufficient to encapsulate the importance of communication among the various UC campuses.

- The fifth, seventh, and eighth recommendations should be stricken. In their place, recommendation number six should be revised as a statement about public accountability, without reference to aggregation and tracking of alumni. The sixth recommendation should read “Campuses should consider developing methods for communicating assessment of educational effectiveness, and achievements of students, with the public.”

- Although we have no qualms with the ninth recommendation, we recommend that the tenth recommendation be revised and re-positioned as the first recommendation. We prefer the following language: “Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide.” This should be the first recommendation because of the central role of the faculty in this process, which is delegated to the faculty directly from the Regents.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this important report. With the inclusion of the above revisions, the UCLA Academic Senate would welcome an opportunity to review the report again, before it is endorsed.

Sincerely,

Robin L. Garrell
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Cc: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Jaime R. Balboa, CAO, UCLA Academic Senate
December 9, 2009

To: Robin Garrell, Chair
   Academic Senate

From: Joseph B. Watson, Chair
   Undergraduate Council

Re: Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce

I am writing to report that at its November 20, 2009 meeting, Professor Adrienne Lavine presented the Report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce to the Undergraduate Council (UgC). Members thoughtfully discussed and endorsed the Report contingent upon the revisions detailed below with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention. The student vote was 1 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions also contingent upon the emendations:

Executive Summary: Recommendations:

Recommendation 3: Revise the first sentence as follows [see italics]: “Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should consider including a review of the department’s learning assessment process…”

The Council agreed that the final sentence should be stricken from the recommendation, “Campus administrative leaders should incorporate the results of departmental student learning assessment into their strategic planning process.”

Recommendation 6: Revise the first sentence as follows [see italics]: “Campuses should consider publicly communicating through relevant sources evidence of student and campus educational achievements…”

Recommendation 7: This recommendation should be stricken in its entirety.

Recommendation 8: Replace “families, communities, and workplaces” with “society”. References made to “families, communities, and workplaces” throughout the Report should be replaced with “society”.

In closing, although it is acknowledged in the Report that there will be costs associated with implementing the recommendations, it is not articulated clearly from where or whether adequate funding will be provided to campuses. The Council stressed that funding commitments and sources should be articulated in the Report.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me (x 57587; jwatson@mednet.ucla.edu) or Judith Lacertosa, UgC Principal Policy Analyst (x51194; jlacertosa@senate.ucla.edu).

cc: Jaime Balboa, CAO, Academic Senate
   Judith Lacertosa, Principal Policy Analyst, Undergraduate Council
   Dorothy Ayer, Assistant to Senate Leadership & CAO
December 11, 2009

Robin Garrell
Chair of the Academic Senate
UCLA

Dear Robin,

At your request, the College Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) reviewed the report of the Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Taskforce. We invited Professor Adrienne Lavine, member of the taskforce, to present an overview of the report and respond to questions at our November 20, 2009 meeting. After a thorough and engaging discussion, the committee determined it cannot endorse the proposal until and unless specific revisions are made. The outcome of the vote was 6 members in favor of this decision, 0 abstentions, and 1 member voting in opposition (this member favored opposing the proposal outright).

On behalf of the College FEC, I offer the following changes to the report’s executive summary and recommendations that would be required for our committee to support the report.

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<th>Current Recommendation</th>
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<td>1) Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, map goals to the curriculum, and assess majors’ mastery of the learning goals. Learning goals should include skills related to critical thinking, analytical reasoning, written communication, and other discipline-based skills. Departmental assessment processes should be integrated with evaluation processes required by accrediting agencies so that each department has only one assessment program.</td>
<td>2) Each campus should have a learning assessment program in which faculty in every undergraduate major develop discipline-specific learning goals, and assess majors’ mastery of the learning goals. Explanation: The recommendation as written is too prescriptive.</td>
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| 2) The process and methods for properly assessing majors’ achievement of the department’s specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum (i.e., assessment is done periodically on a sample of assignments such as papers, labs, projects, and exam questions that represent specific learning goals). The assessment process should build on existing departmental structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department’s instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and the assessment process. | 3) The process and methods for properly assessing majors’ achievement of the department’s specific learning goals must be embedded in the curriculum. The assessment process should build on existing departmental structures and provide ongoing feedback to improve the department’s instructional program as well as to modify the learning goals and the assessment process. Explanation: The examples are too prescriptive. Further, “resources” is both redundant and seems to
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<td>3) Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should include a review of the department’s learning assessment process, including an evaluation of how the results of the assessment of student learning are used to improve the undergraduate program. Include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment process. Campus administrative leaders should incorporate the results of departmental student learning assessment into their strategic planning process.</td>
<td>4) Academic review of departmental undergraduate programs should include a summary of learning outcomes and assessment processes. Campus administrative leaders should be informed of the results of departmental student learning assessment. Explanation: This recommendation is too prescriptive regarding the Senate review process. Also, it is not clear what “Strategic planning process” refers to. This was unfamiliar to the faculty. Unclear the length of time it will take to meet the charge of the taskforce, it was advised to rephrase the wording to “summary of learning outcomes and assessment” and reporting the results of the learning assessment.</td>
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<td>4) Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, materials, and lessons learned. The Academic Senate, UC Office of the President, and other, system-wide groups should endorse and support both formal and informal information exchange about learning assessment programs.</td>
<td>5) Campus-level development of department-level learning assessment programs should be supported by communication among UC campuses about experiences, materials, and lessons learned. Explanation: The underlined portion seemed an adequate encapsulation of the importance of communication among the UC campuses.</td>
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<td>5) Standardized tests to measure undergraduate learning, if used, must allow measurement of faculty-developed, curriculum-based learning goals, and the results should provide valid information that can be used to improve the department’s instructional program. The learning goals, and the results should provide valid information that can be used to improve the department’s instructional program. The learning goals evaluated by these tests should be appropriate to the major.</td>
<td>Explanation: The College FEC firmly believes the report should not endorse standardized testing even provisionally, since such testing is fundamentally in opposition to the model of program-based assessment being proposed.</td>
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<td>6) Campuses should publicly communicate through relevant sources evidence of student and campus educational achievements, including information on every department’s learning assessment program. The information should be user-friendly and available on the UC Undergraduate Campus Profiles websites which should have links to the departmental assessment programs. Information on the learning goals, the evaluation process, and measurement of majors’ achievement of these goals should be included in the public information about the departmental assessment program.</td>
<td>6) Campuses should consider developing methods for communicating assessments of educational effectiveness, and achievements of students, with the public. Explanation: Recommendation 6, 7, and 8 should be replaced with a general statement about public accountability, without reference to aggregation and tracking alumni.</td>
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8) Because the value of a university education is made manifest in contributions over the graduates’ lifetimes, full assessment of the effectiveness of a UC undergraduate education must include information about what those graduates contribute to their families, communities, and workplaces. UEETF supports the development of a UC exit and alumni survey across campuses.

9) Campus assessment and accountability activities should include the broad array of information on student and campus achievement provided by existing reports, such as the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), the Campus Profiles, and the University’s Accountability Framework. UC should continue to collect information about the overall undergraduate experience to augment information derived from departmentally-based assessments.

40) 1) Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide.

| 1) Given its responsibilities for curriculum and admission matters, the Academic Senate will be a key player in any activity to develop assessment of and accountability for undergraduate education system-wide. |
| Explanation: This should be the first recommendation because of the central role faculty will play in this process. |

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this Senate Action Item for Review. You are welcome to contact me at (310) 206-2278 or knapp@humnet.ucla.edu with questions. Dayna Baker Weintraub, Executive Coordinator, is also available to assist you and she can be reached at (310) 794-5579 or dbweintraub@college.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

Ray Knapp
Chair, College Faculty Executive Committee