

# Excellence in Undergraduate Education

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## I. Establish a Culture of Excellence at UCLA

A. Administration, Academic Senate, and Student Representatives should work jointly to establish a culture of excellence at UCLA. This context for the educational experience should be facilitated by:

1. Clear, frequent, and joint statements by all concerned regarding expectations for excellence, both in terms of the pedagogy of instructional staff, and the assimilation of information by the student body.
2. A timely response by the administration to requests by faculty and students for resources that facilitate excellence in education.
3. Continuing the Administration's policy of recognizing and rewarding superior performance by undergraduate students and outstanding contributions by the teaching faculty.
4. Maximizing the public dissemination of information concerning special accomplishments by members of the UCLA community that underscore the pursuit of excellence.

## II. Remain Faithful to the UC Charter for Undergraduate Education

### III. Establish Degree Requirements that Balance Breadth and Depth

A. The Major should consist of:

1. A clearly structured series of lecture courses that represent the core curriculum of the major. Overall requirements within this series must ensure both substance and breadth.
2. Variable-topic seminars or small lecture courses that expand upon core ideas, but are flexible enough to address new and timely advances in a field.
3. Courses that allow students to acquire technologies or afford practical applications of core ideas within a major (laboratories, studios, practicum, field work).

4. Mentored courses in which individual undergraduates acquiring technical and methodological skills in the context of a specific research project.

B. The Minor

1. As above

## IV. Emphasize Excellence in the Departmental Administration of a Major

A. Instructional Staff

1. Excellence in research, teaching, and service should be the overriding criteria in hiring ladder faculty.
2. Each department should develop a policy that all ladder faculty include undergraduate courses in their teaching schedule.
3. Required courses for the major should be taught at least once per year, and more frequently as demand requires.
4. Core curriculum in the major should be taught by ladder faculty whenever possible.
5. Each department should develop clear, apriori policies for hiring nonladder faculty to teach undergraduate courses that emphasize excellence in teaching and written inquiry.
6. Instructors should obtain student evaluations for each offering of an undergraduate course.
7. Instructors should obtain additional evaluative feedback from colleagues on a regular basis.
8. Each department should establish policies and procedures for mentoring faculty whose effectiveness in undergraduate courses is consistently substandard.
9. Each department should establish policies and procedures for recognizing excellence in teaching and nominating such individuals for university awards.
10. Each department should develop clear criteria for academic grading.
11. Each department should periodically review the content of their curriculum.

## B. Teaching Assistants

1. Each department should establish procedures for selecting TAs in which teaching effectiveness is a major component of the decision process.
2. The university should establish uniform procedures for acquainting new TAs with their academic and instructional responsibilities.
3. All TAs should be required to complete a formal course of instruction in effective teaching methods and practices.
4. Course instructors should establish a mentoring environment with TAs and provide regular feedback concerning their teaching effectiveness.
5. Student evaluations should be obtained as a regular part of the evaluation of a TA's performance.
6. All TAs should be provided with feedback on their overall teaching effectiveness as part of their annual evaluation by the faculty.
7. Graduate students, who are planning academic careers, should be given the opportunity to organize and teach their own course on a topic appropriate to their expertise and the teaching goals of the department.
8. Each department should establish policies and procedures for recognizing outstanding teaching contributions and nominating such TAs for university-wide awards.
9. The administration should provide adequate funding to maintain a pool of quality TAs, which is consistent with a department's teaching mission and responsibilities.

## C. Academic Counseling

1. Each department or program should provide professional, competent staff who can advise undergraduate students, regardless of whether they are admitted to the major, on the prerequisites and course requirements for the major.
2. Academic counselors also should be capable of providing general information concerning university requirements for a degree, requirements for a minor, limits on number of courses, and resources within the

university that deal with academic issues and successful graduation.

3. Academic counseling offices should provide worksheets, or similar methods of accounting, that summarize progress toward a degree and provide a schedule for completing requirements.
4. Academic counselors should review the progress of each student towards the degree requirements on a regular basis.
5. Academic counselors should provide information on resources for career counseling, campus research programs, and other special programs.
6. Each academic counseling office should have dedicated faculty oversight

## D. Undergraduate Honors/Awards Programs

1. Each department should establish an undergraduate honors program that offers advanced training, research opportunities, and recognition within the framework of a major to individuals of exceptional accomplishment or promise.
2. Each department or program should establish policies and procedures that identify and reward outstanding academic and research accomplishments by undergraduate students.
3. Each department or program should maintain contact with organizations and societies that accord special recognition for meritorious accomplishments. Procedures and policies should be established to nominate appropriate undergraduate candidates and provide the type of documentation that makes an application competitive.

## E. Opportunities for Participation in Research

1. Each department should develop programs and policies that afford the opportunity of undergraduate students to participate in research.
2. Each department should provide a forum in which undergraduate researchers can gather to discuss research problems and issues.

***Approved by the Undergraduate Council:  
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