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December 15, 2025

Subject: UCAD Plus Joint Task Force Update

Dear UC Community,

As promised, we are pleased to share the first of our monthly updates about the early work of the [Academic Senate-Administration Joint Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions \(UCAD Plus\)](#).

This important joint effort, which launched in October, marks a significant milestone in the University's work to ensure the strength and resilience of our academic enterprise during a moment of profound uncertainty for UC and universities across the country. As the task force continues its work throughout 2026, we are grateful for the opportunity to engage with the UC community around the ideas and approaches emerging from the task force.

UCAD Plus Workgroups

As we shared in an October 2025 [letter to the faculty community](#) announcing the task force, workgroups have now been established to explore five distinct focus areas in the coming months, building on recommendations from the Senate's [UCAD Interim Report](#). Each workgroup is co-chaired by a faculty leader and senior administrator who have broad experience representing faculty and campuses and includes representation across multiple locations. As of November, each group is meeting regularly and conducting analyses with the support of UCOP and Senate staff. They have all devoted time to reviewing the feedback received from system-review of the interim report and have considered the original charge in light of that copious commentary. These efforts are rooted in a shared vision for systemwide resilience and innovation that leverages the "Power of 10" while respecting unique campus needs.

Below is a short synopsis of what these groups have been working on as they begin their year-long assignments.

1. **Research activities and infrastructure: Addressing both broad and targeted federal budget cuts, grant interruptions and a reduction in indirect costs that have a direct impact on UC's research mission.**

Work Group 1 (WG-1) has met twice, with a third meeting scheduled for the week of December 15. Their first two meetings focused on brainstorming ideas around

the charge and the questions that have been posed, and on discussing the systemwide Senate review of the UCAD interim report. The workgroup has now agreed that the focus should be on managing research operations continuity and support for research personnel in response to a range of possible disruption scenarios, including (1) broad funding disruptions affecting one campus only; (2) discipline-based funding disruptions affecting the entire system; and (3) broad funding disruptions affecting the entire system. Some of the questions posed to the workgroup, such as identifying opportunities for cross-campus collaboration, are seen as suggesting possible responses to these scenarios, and the workgroup is considering them among other possible responses. Among the current next steps is to study campus research funding portfolios, to better understand how risk is distributed throughout the system.

2. Academic personnel evaluations: Assessing how changes in the research funding landscape will impact UC faculty's ability to conduct their research and to progress in their careers. WG-2 had its first meeting on December 3.

They have another meeting coming up before the break and are scheduling other meetings in January. At the initial meeting, the group discussed the charge of the committee (along with the comments received on the UCAD interim report).

Workgroup members decided that both items identified in the charge made sense as topics, and they fleshed out some of the details of what they thought was inside and outside the boundaries of their charge. The group also discussed additional information that should be reviewed. With respect to Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) principles and practices, the sentiment was that there is a lot to learn both from campus practices during COVID and other sources including prior efforts to examine ARO within the system (the ARO workgroup report, for example). WG-2 is reaching out to collect this data to inform future discussions. Also on the ARO front, they want to learn from how the campuses adapted during COVID and build on these case studies as we think through principles and implementation recommendations. They also had preliminary discussions regarding the second element of the charge (providing flexibility and glide paths for adaptation to allow faculty to continue to succeed under sustained disruptions), which they plan to spend more time on in future meetings.

3. Academic program planning, evaluation, and alignment: Assessing financial limitations and seeking ways to ensure program sustainability while maintaining academic quality.

WG-3 has met three times. They have been reviewing the original charge and working to refine and focus it. In the context of considering how to make assessments and set priorities in order to preserve and protect those areas of research and teaching that we most value, they are identifying the principles that could guide the restructuring of academic units. They want to identify the conditions that might lead a campus to consider resizing, restructuring, or reorganizing an academic unit or degree program, and also ask how the working

group members distinguish between responses to short-term disruptions and a longer-term disruption or change that would justify a permanent reorganization. Also relevant will be opportunities to leverage resources with cross-campus collaborations or systemwide support, while we recognize that it is essential to be sensitive to the needs and local priorities of the individual campuses. They plan to inform these discussions with a review of existing policies and procedures, and expect to identify best practices, useful models of structural and organizational change, and innovative degree programs that could serve as examples of successful models.

4. Instructional opportunities and course offerings across modalities:

Preserving course availability and instructional continuity amid both short-term disruptions and longer-term resource pressures.

WG-4 has met three times and has one more meeting scheduled in December. The first two meetings were used to develop a framework for providing recommendations on how campuses should ensure approaches to instruction that are robust in the context of disruption. They developed a four-part framework: (1) leveraging a collective department approach that include how best to share online course materials; (2) Assess impact of disruptions on the teaching mission and determine what data/information would be most useful for campuses to consider; (3) Develop flexible instructional models that are responsive to disruption; and (4) Clarify the role of UC Online in supporting continuity of instruction in the context of disruptions. They have divided into four subgroups to draft a response in these areas. Subgroups working on issues 1 and 3 gave an update in the most recent meeting and subgroups 2 and 4 will provide an update at the next meeting. From there, the material from all of the subgroups will be discussed, modified, reorganized and merged to identify recommendations and best practices.

5. The future of graduate education: Assessing the structure, delivery, and support systems for graduate education across UC.

WG-5 has met three times and has 1-2 meetings per week booked through February and then plan to do one every week or two after that. They have developed some draft principles to guide the discussion including commitments to the centrality of doctoral education, academic integrity and degree quality, equity and inclusion, shared governance and evidence-driven recommendations. They have also tried to focus the group's inquiry so that they are not trying to cover everything that was in the APC report. The two current major task are 1) Developing a data collection instrument for the deans of graduate studies around time-to-degree (TTD) and admissions; and 2) collecting information (also from the deans) about what initiatives they have already begun in response to the APC

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report and other pressures/interests. They plan to also collect data from the divisional Academic Senates as it seems that the Graduate Councils may operate fairly differently around things like TTD on each campus. Finally, the group has been working with institutional research (UCOP and UC Irvine) to determine if there is any benchmark data available (e.g., from the AAU Data Exchange or Council of Graduate Schools).

More information about these focus areas can be found in the UCAD Plus Joint Task Force charge and membership [roster](#).

UC Community Resources

To foster engagement and support open dialogue, the Systemwide Academic Senate has established a simple [webpage](#) where information about the ongoing work of the task force will be posted along with other important documents and resources related to this effort. We encourage you to share this site with anyone in the UC community interested in learning more about this work.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about and engage in this important systemwide effort. We also want to express our deep gratitude to the committee and workgroup members who have generously agreed to contribute their time, expertise, and perspectives to this effort. Together with the greater UC community, we are confident that we can uphold UC's excellence and innovation for generations to come.

We wish you the best for the holiday season and will return with more updates in the New Year.

Sincerely,

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