

February 6, 2013

RALPH J. HEXTER

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

RE: Joint Report of the 2020 Task Forces

The joint report was forwarded to all Davis Division of the Academic Senate standing committees and Faculty Executive Committees within the schools and colleges for comment. Detailed responses were received from the Committees on Faculty Welfare, CAP Oversight Committee, Graduate Council, Planning and Budget, the Faculty Executive Committees from the College of Biological Sciences, and College of Letters and Science as well as individual faculty members.

While the Davis Division would support carefully planned growth, many responders express uncertainty that the proposed plans and their corresponding goals can be achieved without decreasing institutional quality. For the most part, these concerns echo the issues the 2020 taskforces themselves brought forward and tried to address. There is widespread agreement that investing in the infrastructure necessary to support growth with funds that must be generated by the same growth is a challenging proposition. We are strongly in favor of front-loading the necessary facilities and faculty resources prior to increasing the student population. Thoughtful planning will be essential. Some responses express doubts that the campus is capable of such planning given past experiences with, e.g., the so-called hot spots (courses with wait lists that exceed 10% of the existing capacity), a problem that has persisted for years without seemingly receiving much attention.

A major question to consider is will the costs to support planned growth outweigh the benefits. Any attempt to grow the student population, especially international students, will require additional support services, faculty, and facilities – areas in which the campus is already lacking. This will require more detailed planning. For instance, the modeling assumption that new students will distribute over the different disciplines in the same proportions as the current student population may be too inaccurate for the kind of planning that is needed going forward. If we grow without addressing these issues first, we will be doing a disservice to our current student body, the incoming student population, and the university as a whole.

We understand that increasing out-of-state domestic and international enrollments can help stabilize the revenue base of the campus, but there is wide-spread opposition to reducing the number of California resident students we instruct. A minority of responders specifically recommended that UC Davis pursue scenario M2 or M4 out of this concern.

If a plan to increase the student population is implemented, many of the necessary changes will dramatically affect faculty and students; we, therefore, ask that the Academic Senate be closely consulted throughout the process of implementing any planned growth.

We would like to draw attention to the absence of consideration of graduate education in the report. Graduate education must be integrated into UC Davis' strategic planning, especially since undergraduate education has obvious implications to graduate education, i.e. teaching assistant (TA) resources. We would like to see this report coordinated with the

recommendations made in the Graduate Education Taskforce Report and the International Advisory Committee Report. In addition, the financial implications of increasing the graduate student population should be considered in budget projections, including Non-Resident Student Tuition (NRST) for academic doctoral students.

Facilities are a major facet of university growth with many financial implications. The campus will need to build new classroom space, especially large lecture halls and classrooms that are more suited for group discussion, renovate older classrooms to accommodate modern technology and other needs, and build and renovate modern research space for additional ladder-rank faculty.

Since the report was written, there have been significant changes in the political and economic landscapes surrounding the University. Recent and any future developments call for a modest reevaluation of the motivations, assumptions, and modeling in the report; updated numbers are needed to make informed judgments.

The Davis Division of the Academic Senate would like to offer a few suggestions to help mitigate some of the constraints and concerns our campus is facing:

- One option is to create a database of online courses, offered by fully accredited universities that are accepted for course credit by UC Davis. These online courses can fill prerequisite requirements, and/or can substitute for required and elective UC Davis courses. This database would help reduce demand for facility space, the need to hire additional faculty, and facilitate graduation within four years.
- Other UC campuses have increased the proportion of international students admitted; how do their successes and failures inform the strategies undertaken at UC Davis?
- International recruiting efforts should consist of strong incentives. By offering programs that attract international students, UC Davis can avoid decreasing academic standards for the sake of increasing the international student body. English language proficiency is an essential element in student success and should be addressed by rigorous assessment in the admission process and by providing adequate means so that deficiencies can be addressed sooner rather than later.
- If UC Davis does admit a higher percentage of international students, we might consider capping the percent of international students from any one country.
- National and international master's degree students will likely have a more immediate positive impact than other types of postgraduates.
- While the University will benefit from developing online education, we support the report's skepticism that we will attract full-fee-paying students by predominantly producing online courses. While online courses will reduce the need for facility space, modernizing classrooms and funding online course startups will be costly.
- UC Davis could consider hiring lecturers with potential security of employment (PSOE). This strategy will increase the number of qualified faculty teaching high impact courses without the associated start-up packages and additional research space for new hires.

These lecturer positions would augment our teaching programs and help address the issue of not having enough faculty members to teach high demand courses, which prevents students from graduating in four years. This recommendation does not, however, by itself represent a long-term, viable solution to budget and resource shortfalls.

Finally, we would like to reiterate significant concerns about quality of education and experience for our domestic and international students. English as a second language (ESL) assessment and needs of international students should not be undervalued, nor should their unique advising and integration needs. UC Davis should not abandon its commitment to the State of California Master Plan for Higher Education, and must find ways to support undergraduate and graduate education

We are in agreement with the report that “the campus should develop a strategic vision based on its aspirations, and then let that vision guide whatever actions may be needed to realize our goals” (19). We would like to see a plan for implementing the necessary infrastructure to support future growth, while maintaining UC Davis’ ability to provide all students with a quality education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bruno Nachtergaele', written in black ink.

Bruno Nachtergaele, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor: Mathematics