

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

PART I Introduction

Background and Purpose

This first University of California Annual Accountability Report is part of the comprehensive framework announced by President Yudof in July 2008 to ensure greater accountability across the UC system. It measures campus and Universitywide performance in meeting core goals that reflect our teaching, research and public service mission, and it will be published annually in May.

The measures or “indicators” that are used in this report cover a wide range of topics, from undergraduate access, affordability and success, through research, budget and financial information, to the extent and impacts of selected UC public services. Because coverage in any one area is necessarily limited, accountability sub-reports will be published periodically to take up specific issues in greater detail.

Together with other progress reports that are routinely produced by the campuses, the Academic Senate, and the systemwide administration, this progress report and its associated sub-reports will be used to understand how well—and at what cost—the University is meeting its goals. They will also

- support strategic planning and inform budgetary decision-making;
- help ensure responsible stewardship of the institution; and
- promote and reflect the University’s commitment to be open and accountable to all Californians.

Audience

As a management tool, this report is written to be used by system leadership, Senate and campus administration, faculty and staff. But it is also intended to be a public document, written for the broad range of University stakeholders, from state legislators and prospective donors to the parents, teachers and counselors who routinely coach, encourage and mentor the next generation of UC undergraduates, and for current and former students worldwide. And it is written for California’s taxpayers who ultimately contribute so much to the maintenance of this institution. All of these groups have a need and a right to know how well UC is performing.

Accordingly, the report is written for a general audience. Those wanting more detail or greater nuance about a particular aspect of the University will turn to the sub-reports or to reports prepared routinely by the campuses.

As these more specialized materials are produced, links to them will be made available from an accountability Web site, making it a one-stop shop for anyone interested in the size, shape and progress of the University of California.

Scope

This report assesses the University’s performance achieving key goals that are distilled from several sources: the California Master Plan for Higher Education, the Board of Regents’

policies and budget priorities, the Academic Senate, the campuses' strategic and academic plans, and the ongoing discussions of the Board of Regents.

It also includes brief profiles of each of UC's 10 campuses. Here, campuses document their specific long-range or strategic objectives and the progress they are making towards achieving them.

The report results from the confluence of several creative streams:

- the campus and Universitywide long-range planning processes that have evolved in coordination as a means of determining Universitywide strategic and budgetary goals;
- efforts to be more open with and accountable to the state and to rebuild trust and strengthen its relationship with the people of California; and
- growing state and national momentum for greater accountability in higher education.

It is intended to contribute to, not substitute for, other accountability efforts in which the University is engaged. For example:

- UC annually reports to the state governor on a variety of measures responding to interest in student and institutional performance and expenditure of public funds.
- Each campus has prepared its own accountability template modeled closely upon the Voluntary System of Accountability.
- The University supports the development of a statewide higher education accountability bill and will be responsive to one, if and when it passes.

Furthermore, the report will continue to evolve with the University's understanding of its own goals and increasing sophistication with the use of accountability measures.

Methodology

The report was compiled at the Office of the President but results from the work of staff at campus and systemwide administrative offices too numerous to mention. It has also benefited enormously from review and input of the University's Academic Senate. We wish to thank the literally hundreds of people who commented on or contributed to this report. Without their expertise, their energy and their continued good will, this report could never have been produced.

Campuses prepared their profiles according to an agreed outline and determined what data to use and how to present it.

Much greater standardization was by necessity applied to the Universitywide indicators that are presented in Part III. There, the report draws upon performance data that are routinely prepared by the campuses and managed at a system level in support of a variety of objectives. Three kinds of data are used:

- longitudinal data that tracks campus trends over time;
- systemwide data that compares the UC campuses collectively to averages for the 34 public and 26 private research universities that constitute the elite American Association of Universities (AAU);

- individual data that allows each UC campus to be compared to one another and to eight research universities—four public (Illinois, Michigan, SUNY-Buffalo, and Virginia) and four private (Harvard, MIT Stanford, and Yale)—that UC historically has used to benchmark faculty salaries.

A number of conventions also were adopted to ensure the report’s accessibility to a general audience as well as its integrity and internal consistency:

1. Indicators are based on data that are publicly available and may be reproduced.
2. Preference is given to indicators that are commonly used nationally or internationally.
3. Indicators are presented graphically rather than in tabular form so their meaning is visually apparent immediately; tabular data will be available on UC’s accountability Web site.
4. Campus data are presented on a common scale in order to standardize data presentation. Although the campuses share common values, they differ in size, scope and complexity depending upon their programmatic mix, their funding structures, their founding date and other factors. A common scale highlights these differences and is a first step toward developing understandings about why these differences exist and what they mean.
5. For consistency, repeated use is made of a small number of standard graph and chart types. Because it can be difficult to figure out exact percentage differences from charts and graph, a Web-based version is being developed that will link directly to the underlying data.
6. Indicators are presented first as trend data for the system as a whole then for each of the 10 campuses. Comparative data follow where these are available.
7. Data that compare UC or its campuses to other research universities are drawn from publicly accessible national data sources, such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). To ensure neutrality in their presentation, comparative data are presented for UC campus and comparison institutions arranged alphabetically.
8. Interpretive text is used only sparingly with the Universitywide indicators in Part III. The indicators are presented in 15 sections, each of which begins with a brief introduction describing the goals for that area as well as their source or rationale. Indicators are introduced with brief descriptive titles. In some cases, additional information is supplied, typically in bulleted form, again in order to provide new or essential context that assists in the data’s comprehension.

A final note to readers

Institutional assessment is an inexact science. Comparable data are difficult to come by for good and legitimate reasons. A graduate student at one institution, for example, may be considered a professional school student at another. In addition, there are no national databases or reporting conventions for certain kinds of data—transfer students or faculty teaching workloads are two examples—so comparative data in these areas do not exist at all.

Even where data are seemingly robust—a University does or does not receive \$550 million in federal research funds in a given year—their interpretation is rarely beyond dispute. Some federal research funds, for example, may be sub-contracted to another university, and thus double-counted in national statistics.

Finally, the report is limited by the data available. We can only report data that are available, but the available data, however valuable, cannot convey the full complexity of what students learn or the value of the University to the state.

For these reasons, the reader is urged to not read too much about the University into any single measure. Rather, use indicators in combination with one another to gain a feel for the University as a whole.