



## Notes From the Academic Senate Chair

George Blumenthal

[george.blumenthal@ucop.edu](mailto:george.blumenthal@ucop.edu)

Dear Colleagues,

As my one year term as Chair of the UC Systemwide Academic Senate draws to a close, I thought this might be a propitious opportunity to update you on new events, reflect on the past year, and offer a somewhat more personal view on a few of the events and issues that I found notable. That is why this issue of the *Senate Source* is being sent out on my last day in office.

### Budget

At the beginning of the year, the Academic Council concluded that the highest budgetary priority should be given both to faculty and staff salaries and to graduate education, and we submitted this recommendation to the President. Now, for the second year in a row, the state has approved a UC budget based on the Higher Education Compact. During the coming year, we will see a 1.5% cost of living increase for faculty (actually 2% since it starts in October), but this is woefully inadequate. Faculty salaries remain more than 10% behind our eight comparison institutions, and we face the likely prospect of resuming contributions to our retirement system within the next couple of years. The compact may have "stopped the bleeding" from UC, but the financial injury we have suffered is nowhere near being healed.

### Graduate Education

Graduate education is nearing a state of crisis at UC. Worrisome signs include the declining percentage of graduate students at all campuses, the much lower number of international students enrolled in our programs, the University's comparatively low graduate student financial support, and UC's rising cost, particularly for students from outside California. It is roughly as expensive to hire a half-time graduate student researcher from abroad as it is to hire a postdoctoral fellow. At our joint meeting with the Executive Vice Chancellors and at a number of other meetings of the Council, we discussed specific strategies to address some of the financial binds on graduate education. Options we are considering include restructuring the return to aid formula, waiving nonresident tuition after either one year of study or after advancement to candidacy, waiving fees for TAs, and returning all nonresident tuition to the campuses for support of graduate education. The Senate will continue to work in collaboration with Vice President Larry Hershman's office next year to develop a proposed strategy for greater graduate support, and I am hopeful that some effective changes can be made quite soon. The very different challenge we as faculty of a public research institution face is that of enhancing the public's and the state legislators' perception of graduate education and research. Toward that end, the UC and the CSU Senates joined together this past year in drafting a Concurrent Resolution on Graduate Education, which put in clear terms the economic and cultural benefits provided to the state by graduate education. This occurred even while the UC and CSU system were disputing whether the CSU system could deviate from the Master Plan to offer doctorates in education and in allied health fields. A compromise position that allows the CSU system to offer only a specific type of Ed.D. degree is likely to be approved.



Academic Council members with President Dynes, Regent Ruiz and UC Senior Officers

## How Did Shared Governance Fare in 2004-05?

Beginning what may become a regular end-of-year practice, Academic Senate Chair Blumenthal has drafted and submitted to President Dynes an [Annual Report on Shared Governance](#). The report, which received the endorsement of the Academic Council, establishes the basics of shared governance, and assesses policy issues and Senate procedures and operations at both systemwide and divisional levels in the context of the Senate's interactions with the administration. It is the first such report from a Senate Chair.

### Transfer Issues

The year was also marked by what I saw as milestones in the Senate's efforts to ease and enhance the transfer process for students from California Community Colleges coming to UC. One of these was the Academic Assembly's enactment of the Science General Education Transfer Curriculum (SciGETC), [Senate Regulation 478.2.b](#), which will allow science students to complete their lower division major requirements prior to transfer while deferring two of their general education courses until they have enrolled at UC. Another key transfer initiative is our new policy ([Senate Regulation 477](#)) that streamlines course articulation among all campuses. Implementing these two programs will be a major task for next year, and I have asked UCEP and BOARS to work closely with Academic Affairs to make these two regulations work smoothly, and toward that end they have formed a Joint BOARS/UCEP Implementation Committee. I have also suggested what I see as the next steps the Senate can take in facilitating transfer: 1) clarify the similarities and differences in lower division major curricula across the system, working first at the departmental level; and 2) upgrade [ASSIST](#), our computer database on transferable courses, with the addition of a web-based planner-tracker for students. Because we have traditionally devoted far more attention to freshman admissions issues than to transfer, and because there will likely be ongoing political pressure on transfer issues, it behooves the Senate to remain proactive in this arena.

This year, the [Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates \(ICAS\)](#), which includes representatives from all three segments of public higher education, produced a substantial report entitled [A Transfer Discussion Document](#). This report is noteworthy in that

it provides a purely *faculty* perspective on transfer issues.

### **Freshman Admissions**

The 2004-05 academic year began with the Regents approving a change in our freshman eligibility requirements, namely raising the minimum high school GPA to 3.0, in order to trim the state's eligibility for UC. The Senate will be evaluating the effects of this and earlier eligibility changes during the coming academic year. At the urging of BOARS, the Academic Council also passed the [Resolution on the Failure of the National Merit Scholarship Program to Meet the Requirements of UC's Definition of Academic Merit](#). I am very pleased to report that since this action, the chancellors have all agreed to cease their funding of National Merit Scholarships. In addition, BOARS has made a finding that it is inappropriate for campuses to provide an advantage to individual students based upon the proximity of the student's residence to the campus. BOARS also has issued new guidelines for Admission by Exception, which is the regental policy allowing campuses to admit up to six percent of their students from among those who are not UC eligible. Lastly, Council has sent to BOARS the report of the Task Force on the AP/Honors bump, chaired by Gayle Binion, and I anticipate that they will respond to that report and bring forth to the Senate any recommendations they think advisable.

### **UC Merced**

A truly historic event occurred this year with the formal establishment of a new Senate Division at Merced months before the campus officially opens. Given that the last UC Division was established over 30 years ago, this may well have been a once in a lifetime experience. The Academic Assembly voted to conditionally grant divisional status to UC Merced on May 11, 2005, and on June 22, based upon the unanimous endorsement of the nascent Merced Divisional Council, the Academic Council finalized the action by certifying that there was an acceptable funding plan in place for Senate operations. Through delegation of authority, the Merced proto-division had already taken on most of the duties of the Academic Senate, so with this decision, they became masters of their own fate. I am confident that this fate will include a distinguished, productive, and impressive future for the Merced campus.

### **Board of Regents**

The Faculty Representatives have been very active in working with the UC Board of Regents throughout the year. In an historic decision, the Board agreed, on a trial basis, to have staff representatives serve in an advisory capacity on two regents' committees: Educational Policy and Grounds & Buildings. I am delighted to have helped broker this agreement, and I trust that this will prove to be an important means by which the Regents receive input from throughout the University community.

The Academic Council had visits from five Regents this year, including one of the alumni Regents and both the student Regent and the student Regent-designate. These conversations provided both the Council and the visiting Regent with a real opportunity for a frank exchange of views. This worked extremely well, and the then-vice chair of the board even asked for an early opportunity to return to another Council meeting. Early in the year, based upon conversations with several Regents, I felt it was necessary to provide them with a primer on shared governance at UC, and I am in the process of completing such a document.

### **Shared Governance**

This year sees the inauguration of what may become an end of the year tradition – the first [Academic Senate Chair's Annual Report on Shared Governance](#). I conceived of this report as a way to inform the President, chancellors, and faculty gener-

ally about the state of health of the Senate's interactions with the administration on both the campuses and at the Office of the President, and the Academic Council unanimously endorsed it. Generally speaking but with some exceptions noted in the report, the Senate and the administration seem to be working effectively together at all levels, and there has been significant progress in those areas that appeared troublesome as the year began. I invite you to read the report and to send in your comments.

### **Other Issues of Note**

The Academic Senate has indeed been busy this year, and I'd like to update and remind you of several other issues of note:

► President Dynes has now officially transmitted the Academic Council's recommendation to the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine that they adopt a strict rule requiring open access after six months to all articles published with research that they fund. This proposal has already generated considerable interest within the Institute.

► The Academic Council has recommended to the Provost that she initiate a full review of the Education Abroad program.

► The Academic Senate approved the inception of systemwide courses, a designation which will be used at such locations as UCDC. The Council also gave the go-ahead for the development of the first systemwide minor, which the divisions will have the option to enact.

► The Council adopted the position that funding for those Multi-campus Research Units that do not operate facilities should be re-competed after a fixed number of years so that new ideas for research units can compete for resources with long-established MRUs.

► Earlier this year, the Assembly adopted a resolution favoring the right of faculty members to accept research funding without campus or Senate restrictions on the funding source.

► The Academic Council proposed several revisions to APM 220 intended to clarify the differences between advancement to Professor Step VI and advancement to above scale. This change is intended to lessen the likelihood of disparities in the application of advancement criteria among the campuses.

Including these issues, the Academic Council dealt with about 80 initiatives, proposals, and reports. It really was a busy year!

### **Some Personal Comments**

This has been an extremely interesting and rewarding year for me as Chair of the Academic Senate. I was fortunate to work with an Academic Council having an extraordinary level of engagement and expertise, great mutual respect among the members, and a willingness to let strength of arguments carry the day. The Senate is effective only because of the thousands of faculty throughout the system who participate actively and wisely in shared governance. Thanks to all of you! I would especially like to express my gratitude to the systemwide Senate staff and the Division directors, all of whom have worked so effectively with me this year.

I intend to remain active in University affairs. I will remain as a member of the President's Long Range Guidance Team and will continue to co-chair the Task Force on Planning for Doctoral & Professional Education. In addition, I will be an Academic Assembly representative from UCSC, co-chair of the UC Merced Privilege and Tenure Committee, a member of the President's Council, and a member of the Academic Council Special Committee on the National Labs. Finally, I will chair a new Academic Council Task Force on Senate Membership. This task force will provide some history and attempt to elucidate a set of principles that should govern who is and who is not a member of the Academic Senate. In undertaking these endeavors, I remain firmly convinced of the key role that shared governance plays in the academic health of the University of California.

Fiat Lux,  
George Blumenthal

Link to full listing of  
**UPDATES & EVENTS**

### **THE SENATE SOURCE**

is published five times during the academic year for UC faculty by the University of California Systemwide Senate.

**George Blumenthal**, Chair  
Systemwide Academic Senate

**Brenda Foust**, Lead Editor  
**Betty Marton**, Co-editor