

Dear Colleagues,

Campus leadership and the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate are reviewing the recent proposal regarding online courses and course credit, submitted by California State Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg. We wish to affirm that the Academic Senate is empowered by the UC Regents to determine academic policy, including decisions related to curriculum and the responsibility to authorize which courses merit the transfer of credit. This will not change. We support a governance structure that ensures the academic freedom of our faculty, free of political influence, as prescribed in the state constitution.

We are reviewing SB-520, the bill that intends to address issues of transfer and time-to-degree by establishing a platform for students to take and complete courses provided by external online providers, but for credit at UC, CSU or Community Colleges. We believe that the assumptions underlying the bill do not apply to UC Berkeley. First, UC Berkeley maintains an excellent time-to-degree; on average, single-major freshmen graduate in eight semesters. Second, at a time when the State has massively cut resources for the University of California, UC Berkeley has increased course availability in many gateway and required classes throughout the campus, literally adding thousands of enrollments in these key courses. Third, UC Berkeley has long offered various online courses, both for-credit and not-for-credit, and has been building the capacity to field more such courses. We believe strongly that technology-assisted teaching offers many valuable opportunities for enhancing the student experience and educational outcomes, but must be deployed in ways that do not degrade the quality of the pedagogy.

The UC Office of the President is also reviewing the legislation. UCOP is authorized to take positions on bills before the state legislature. We are providing UCOP information to support our view that the quality of instruction and our students' educational experience are of paramount importance and must be determined by our campus faculty. This legislative proposal has not been finalized as yet and has not been assigned to committees for hearing.

Sincerely,

Christina Maslach  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

George Breslauer  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Please do not reply directly to this message. Please direct comments and inquiries to [acad\\_sen@berkeley.edu](mailto:acad_sen@berkeley.edu)