

UCR 2020: The Path to Preeminence

Excellence in Undergraduate Education Subcommittee

Strategic Planning Report

January 28, 2010

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I. Executive Summary

The foundation of a great university rests on its faculty and its commitment to excellence. UC Riverside is well positioned to create a premier undergraduate experience, while remaining true to our central commitment of excellence, access and diversity. To be successful in this pursuit, we believe renewed personal commitment must be realized from all campus constituencies to create a paradigm shift towards an academic culture that rings of preeminence, yet encourages *Living the Promise* we make as a campus. We espouse the following undergraduate aspirations:

UC Riverside is committed to the proposition that every student accepted into our campus community should expect inspirational instruction and personalized faculty mentorship, accessible academic support programs and student services, opportunities for intellectual engagement, significant experiential learning and career exploration, and the training to become a global citizen and leader of California and the world. In reciprocal partnership, UC Riverside expects every enrolled student to dedicate himself or herself to full engagement in the University to achieve the intellectual, personal, and social development that will ensure success as a student and, after graduation, as a world citizen.

As our subcommittee reviewed the current undergraduate academic experience, we saw both strengths and weaknesses, and determined that strategic investments in educational opportunities for new freshmen and transfer students would “ignite” students to take the challenge of increased performance expectations. We recognize the disadvantages many of our students endure, and believe that faculty involvement and peer mentorship are important factors in student success, as is solid academic advising. Further, we feel students need a capstone experience which challenges them to apply what they learned throughout their undergraduate experience. Finally, we believe it is important that our undergraduate recruitment and admissions process truly mirror our aspirations for our students.

The subcommittee members respectfully submit the following strategic recommendations:

- Provide high-quality, proactive, developmental academic advising for all undergraduate students to meet or exceed best practice standards
- Require mandatory participation in first year learning communities for all incoming freshmen, providing comprehensive academic support to improve student success and persistence
- Require every incoming freshman or transfer student, in his or her first or second quarter on campus, to complete a full-credit “Ignition” seminar taught by a Senate faculty member
- Require every undergraduate student to complete a capstone experience, either in the form of a design project, senior thesis, creative activity, or equivalent
- Develop a more discerning and strategic comprehensive review of applications to make UC Riverside a more selective institution while maintaining our commitment to diversity and access, and expand our use of transfer programs to ensure sufficient preparedness in admitted students

Our recommendations incorporate the concept of a *great start for a strong finish*. We are confident that implementation of these recommendations, and continued progress in other well-conceived educational initiatives, will produce significant improvements to enhance student performance and campus appeal. These in turn will attract highly motivated students and talented faculty; improve retention, time to degree, and career development; and raise students’ satisfaction with their UC Riverside experience; all of which are transformative and critical to the campus’ rise to preeminence.

II. Philosophy

UC Riverside is committed to the proposition that every student accepted into our campus community should expect inspirational instruction and personalized faculty mentorship, accessible academic support programs and student services, opportunities for intellectual engagement, significant experiential learning and career exploration, and the training to become a global citizen and a leader of California and the world. In reciprocal partnership, UC Riverside expects every enrolled student to dedicate himself or herself to full engagement in the University to achieve the intellectual, personal, and social development that will ensure success as a student and, after graduation, as a world citizen.

The foundation of a great university rests on its faculty and is measured by their commitment to education of undergraduate and graduate students. Each AAU institution identified as a peer to UC Riverside prioritizes excellence in undergraduate education and offers to its student body and faculty an array of opportunities for intellectual, personal, and professional development. Over the past decade, UC Riverside has made great strides in improving its educational enterprise and our commitment to preeminence must not shift resources away from the undergraduate experience. In fact, it is our strong belief that no less than a major investment of effort – time, resources and a paradigm shift intensifying the campus’ academic culture – is required to make the desired transformation to preeminence.

Our critical review of UC Riverside’s current undergraduate education program identified both strengths and weaknesses. We are gratified by our campus’ commitment to access and diversity, by our faculty who mentor undergraduate students involved in research, scholarship, civic engagement, and creative activity, and by our efforts to establish effective student success programs such as first year learning communities and supplemental instruction. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the increasing number of students who matriculate ill-prepared to begin their declared majors, the students entering sciences and engineering majors who experience academic difficulty and do not complete degrees in their desired fields, and the general perception that UC Riverside is not selective in its admission practice inferring a UC Riverside education is of lower academic quality than other UC schools.

UC Riverside must invest in its undergraduate educational program on its path to AAU status. Over the next ten years, we propose that UC Riverside strategically advance our Undergraduate Education experience, so as to increasingly:

- Become the premiere choice of schools for talented high school graduates and well-prepared community college transfer students,
- Engage in progressive admissions processes ensuring access and bolstering an already vibrant and diverse intellectual community,
- Support undergraduate students in maximizing their achievement through inspirational instruction, allied resources, and individualized mentorship,
- Provide exciting opportunities for intellectual exploration and career development,
- Offer significant experiential learning options accessible to all undergraduates,

- Encourage students to think as global citizens, recognizing other cultures and their own role in the world, and
- Understand and accept regional responsibility in the call to shape future leaders of California.

Embracing the sentiment and spirit of *Living the Promise*, we support an active partnership between our students, faculty, staff and administration. To achieve preeminence, we recommend each constituency aim to create a culture of academic excellence. We must ask more of our current and prospective students, challenging them with higher expectations that are well defined with learning pathways and measured outcomes. We must ask faculty members to increase their commitment to teaching undergraduate students, and increase their mentorship, advising, and availability. We must ask campus administrators and staff to actively support our students, through continued investment in support resources (such as academic advising, career center, university libraries, learning center, residence halls, first year and transfer student transition programming, student affairs, and undergraduate research,) as well as our faculty, through meaningful recognition of undergraduate teaching and service in the merit and promotion process, educational technology and assistance, and infrastructure to support faculty involvement and participation in the undergraduate experience. When all members of this partnership personally invest themselves to promote excellence in the undergraduate experience, then all constituencies will be *Living the Promise*.

Our recommendations will require financial investment, which we recognize is a significant challenge in this troubled economy. We do not advocate abandoning the goal of access and opportunity for regional students who deserve a chance to succeed at UC Riverside; however, we wish to ensure more of our resources are focused on providing exciting educational opportunities to promote maximal achievement for all our students, as well as the academic programs and instruction which attract motivated students both regionally, statewide, and beyond.

Just as important as the financial redistribution of resources is the refocusing of faculty teaching efforts. In our recommendations, we advocate greater connection between our Senate faculty and our undergraduates through unique “Ignition” seminars for new freshmen and transfer students and closer mentoring of students through research and/or capstone experiences. This will require rearranging teaching assignments for faculty, recognizing that where new assignments are made, some current courses may no longer be available. This, in turn, will require careful analysis of current enrollment in academic programs in addition to individual teaching course loads and assignments in order to optimize instructional effectiveness and maximize undergraduate student learning and interaction with our distinguished faculty.

After much discussion, the subcommittee elected to focus on five areas where there is great need and the opportunity to realize high impact. We elected to invest in both early and late educational initiatives, embracing the concept of a “*great start for a strong finish.*” Our strategic recommendations are derived from what we trust are deeply held values and principles shared across UC Riverside constituencies, as well as the faculty’s statement of “Goals for an Undergraduate Education.”¹ We believe our conclusions and recommendations will reflect and

¹ Appendix A: “Goals of an Undergraduate Education,” *UCR General Catalog, 2009-2010*, p. 47.

complement what will be the outcome of the forthcoming review of the campus' general undergraduate education aspirations.² Our strategic recommendations are focused in five areas:

- Proactive developmental academic advising
- First year learning communities
- Senate faculty involvement in first year Ignition seminars
- Unique, challenging capstone experiences
- Realignment of admissions criteria and recruitment

We are confident that implementation of our recommendations will produce significant improvements to enhance student performance and campus appeal, which in turn will boost the draw for highly motivated students and talented faculty, improve retention and time to degree, and raise students' satisfaction with their UC Riverside experience.

III. Current State of Undergraduate Education

Careful consideration must be placed in support of our community of undergraduates. These students, relative to those attending other universities, tend to be more timid and uncertain of the academic responsibilities required of them. An open environment geared for success and giving individual student attention is of utmost importance and the keystone for student achievement.

Socio-Economic Diversity. UC Riverside is diverse by many measures. Taking the enrollment figures from Fall 2008, undergraduate students comprise over 85% (15,708 / 18,079) of the student population. Of these, thirty-six percent (36%) were from the three underrepresented minority groups: African American, Native American, and Chicano/Latino. Moreover, the cohort of freshmen matriculating that fall had 39.6% who were from underrepresented minority groups, with the single largest minority contingent being Chicano/Latino at 31.2%.³

Further, across all ethnicities, UC Riverside undergraduates are challenged with affordability issues. For example, the campus awards the highest percentage of Pell Grants of any other UC campus or comparable national research university – 43% of the undergraduates, 11 percentage points above the UC system average.⁴ Data for 2007-08 undergraduates shows 73% receiving some sort of financial aid and 57% receiving need based financial aid.⁵ Of the 2008 freshmen cohort, over a quarter come from household incomes of less than \$30K.⁶

Finally, almost half of the first year students (Fall 2008) will be the first generation in their families to obtain a college degree, as they were reared in families where neither parent earned a two- or four-year degree.⁷ Students also come from linguistically diverse households; 46.4%

² WASC Educational Effectiveness Visitation Team Report, December 2009.

³ UCR, 2008, *Profile of new freshman entering in Fall 2006, 2007, and 2008*, UCR Academic Planning.

⁴ UC Accountability Report, May 2008.

⁵ 2008 UCR College Portrait, http://collegeportrait.ucr.edu/pdf/ucr_college_portrait.pdf.

⁶ 2008 UCR College Portrait, http://collegeportrait.ucr.edu/pdf/ucr_college_portrait.pdf.

⁷ UCR, 2008, *Profile of new freshman entering in Fall 2006, 2007, and 2008*, UCR Academic Planning.

(2,051) learned English and another language simultaneously, and 15.7% (694) of students' first language was not English.⁸

Academic Preparedness. While entering freshmen meet UC admissions criteria, many are coming from under-performing and under-resourced high schools that often ill-prepare them for college level expectations, not to mention the actual academic coursework at a research university. UC Riverside's Fall 2008 entering freshmen possessed the highest percentage of students from schools that ranked "far below average" of all UC campuses, at roughly 12%. Another 12% of entering students came from high schools that were "below average." Thus, combined, close to one-quarter of incoming freshmen came from under-performing high schools in California. Of the remainder, 16.1% of students came from high schools ranked as "average," 19% "above average", 28.1% "well above average," and 13.3% from schools with no Academic Performance Index (API) rank.⁹

Over half of the entering first year students do not test into university-level writing or calculus courses and are required to take preparatory work to bring them to the level of performance necessary to succeed at UC.¹⁰ Placement into writing courses is determined by the systemwide Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE), and students who do not receive a passing grade on the exam must pass a preparatory *writing* course before starting the freshman composition sequence required of all UC Riverside students. For many years, 49-52% of UC Riverside's entering freshmen did not fulfill the entry level writing requirement (in comparison to approximately 30% systemwide.) In recent years, the percentage of freshmen requiring preparatory writing has decreased (47% for the Fall 2008 cohort, 45% for Fall 2009). In Fall 2009 the University Writing Program also began a pilot program that mainstreams the top 10% of students held back due to the entry-level writing requirement by placing them directly into an intensive English 1A course (the first course in the required freshman *composition* sequence). As a result, the percentage of UC Riverside freshmen in Fall 2009 requiring a writing course dropped to roughly 40% of the entering class. Nevertheless, this is still considerably higher than the systemwide average.

Mathematics placement is determined by a Math Advisory Examination on campus, given to all students who plan to enter a college or major that requires calculus (CNAS, BCOE, Business, and some Social Science majors such as Economics). Around 70% of these students are not "calculus-ready" and hundreds are diverted to the local community college because the examination shows that they need remedial work in Intermediate Algebra which cannot be given for university credit on a UC campus. The rest of these students are placed into a pre-calculus math course (Math 4, 5, or 8A), which they must pass before taking a calculus course and moving forward in their majors. Although these courses do receive university credit, these courses are considered preparatory because they contain some remedial elements according to UC systemwide guidelines.

Preparatory coursework not only creates extra costs for UC Riverside, but the time devoted to preparatory courses also lengthens students' time to degree, and/or their low academic

⁸ UCR, 2008, *Profile of new freshman entering in Fall 2006, 2007, and 2008*, UCR Academic Planning.

⁹ CA Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, 2007, CPEC, Student Data 2007.

¹⁰ Institutional Research for Undergraduate Education, 2008, Fall 2008 Entering Freshmen Placement Results.

performance attributes to lower retention whether they leave voluntarily or are academically dismissed. In addition, almost 19% (700+ students) of entering freshmen historically find themselves in academic difficulty at the end of their first quarter of study.¹¹

Measuring Success. Typical measurements of academic success are retention and graduation rates. The 2007 (California resident) first year freshman retention rate was 85.5% compared to 92.1% for UC campuses.¹² For the class of 2002 entering (California resident) first time freshmen, UC Riverside's six year graduation rate (i.e., those graduating by the end of the sixth calendar year) was 67.7%, compared to 82.5% across UC campuses.¹³ UC Riverside's retention of entering upper division California Community College (California resident) transfers is 86.1%, compared to 91.9% across UC campuses¹⁴ and four year graduation rate is 81.6% compared to 85.6% across UC campuses for the class of 2004.¹⁵

On the other hand, amidst all the daunting barriers, UC Riverside is succeeding with higher rates than similar universities nationwide, due in large part to the resources and support programs in place for undergraduate students. Research shows that graduation rates drop systematically as the size of an institution's low-income student population increases. The six year graduation rate for doctoral granting institutions with over 40% of students on federal aid was 48%,¹⁶ while at UC Riverside the six year graduation rate for the entire entering class of 2002 (California residents plus non-residents) was 64.7%.¹⁷

Significantly, the *New York Times* notes, "As the nation grows more racially diverse and seeks to improve degree-completion rates across socioeconomic groups...public research institutions are going to have to follow Riverside's lead and learn to help a wider array of students graduate."¹⁸ A *Chronicle of Higher Education* article paints UC Riverside as a campus with the potential to be a model research university that serves to provide access and excellence.¹⁹ The *Princeton Review* names UC Riverside as one of America's Best Value Colleges, lauding the campus for its smaller class sizes, helpful and friendly professors, and strong pre-medical education.²⁰ While these accolades affirm the outstanding work that the campus has accomplished in fostering

¹¹ Institutional Research for Undergraduate Education, 2007, Academic Difficulty for First Quarter Freshmen.

¹² University of California Office of the President, Class of 2007, Persistence rates through year 1, 2, and 4, graduation rates in year 4, 5, and 6, average elapsed years to degree and average enrolled quarters to degree: California resident first-time freshmen, by gender, universitywide and by campus: 1992-2007.

¹³ University of California Office of the President, Class of 2002, Persistence rates through year 1, 2, and 4, graduation rates in year 4, 5, and 6, average elapsed years to degree and average enrolled quarters to degree: California resident first-time freshmen, by gender, universitywide and by campus: 1992-2007.

¹⁴ University of California Office of the President, Class of 2007, Persistence rates through year 1 and 2, graduation rates in year 2, 3, and 4, average elapsed years to degree and averaged enrolled quarters to degree: California resident California community college transfers, by gender, universitywide and by campus: 1992-2007.

¹⁵ University of California Office of the President, Class of 2004, Persistence rates through year 1 and 2, graduation rates in year 2, 3, and 4, average elapsed years to degree and averaged enrolled quarters to degree: California resident California community college transfers, by gender, universitywide and by campus: 1992-2007.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, 2007, Placing College Graduation Rates in Context.

¹⁷ Institutional Planning, http://apb.ucr.edu/inst_plan/retention/allcolleges2.html, Retention and Graduation Rates.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, 1999, Beyond Affirmative Action.

¹⁹ Habel, S. (2007, March 23). In California, a public research university succeeds because its low-income students do. *Chronicle for Higher Education*.

²⁰ UCR Accountability Profile (2009).

student success, additional support is critical in moving UC Riverside's student success benchmarks in alignment with sister campuses across the UC system.

Program Evaluation. Impacts of student support programs attest to the importance of investing in programs and resources that are aimed at improving success at UC Riverside. For example, an analysis of the 2006 and 2007 First Year Learning Communities (FYLC) cohorts showed that participation in a learning community increases participants' first year retention rate by four percentage points on average when compared to those who did not participate.²¹ In addition, the 2007 evaluation of Supplemental Instruction (SI) included a multiple regression analysis controlling for a host of demographic and situational characteristics (high school GPA, SAT scores, income, ethnicity, etc.). Results showed the "impact of participating in SI is roughly one-third (.32) of a grade point. That is, participants with a C+ grade in a given course could expect to have received a B- if they participated in SI sessions."²² Consequently, first year success programs serve an important role in transition support and improving the academic performance of students from the inception of their undergraduate career.

Indeed, UC Riverside is poised for the next step to excellence in undergraduate education. The campus is already a leader in the education of an extremely diverse set of undergraduates with a large range of socio-economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds as well as widely varied levels of preparedness for college. The campus already delivers individualized and group support through many of the programs that bring success to a rich and diverse pool of strong undergraduates who then contribute to the work force in the local region and further add diversity to the domestic graduate student population. However, UC Riverside's undergraduate education also needs improvement if it is to be identified as a preeminent exemplar of excellence. And, based on extensive discussion among the subcommittee members and with key individuals across campus entities, we decided to focus on five strategic recommendations. The next section of this report identifies the specifics of the recommendations that the subcommittee supports based on our findings. Details related to benchmarks and implementation steps are provided.

IV. Strategic Recommendations

Among the biggest challenge our undergraduate students currently face is finding their footing in college. Thus we propose our "great start for a strong finish" concept providing strong support for students through programs based on proactive *academic advising* in the colleges, schools, divisions, and departments; *learning communities* which have been shown to have clear dividends; and the implementation of mandatory *Ignition seminars* to improve the connection between Senate faculty and undergraduates. Further, our students need a framework for tying together and applying lessons learned through their education. Consequently, we propose campuswide provision of a *capstone experience*, which could also serve as a venue for learning outcome assessment at the program level. Finally, the composition of the student body itself needs more attention in order for these proposals to bear fruit. While our current admissions process serves many of our goals and expectations of incoming students, we propose changes to

²¹ Fairris, D., J. Peeples, & T. Beleche, (2007). "Evaluation of the Impact on Participation in First Year Learning Communities on Persistence to Sophomore Year, Fall 2006, Fall 2007.

²² Supplemental Instruction Report, (2007). Undergraduate Education, p.3.

the process of *admissions and recruiting* aimed at producing a diverse, engaged student body more prepared to take advantage of the opportunities available at a preeminent university.

1) Academic Advising

Recommendation: *Provide sufficient high-quality, proactive, developmental academic advising for all undergraduate students to meet the 300:1 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) best practices student-to-advisor ratio.*²³

Discussion: To establish high-quality, developmental academic advising services for all undergraduates UC Riverside needs to build and sustain an infrastructure of well-trained professionals, support staff and management, with suitable space, equipment, and technology with the functionality to support and inform such services, thus providing each undergraduate access to the best practices in academic advising.

Academic Advising. Academic advising is broadly defined as the interaction between students and professional academic advisors, faculty advisors/mentors or peer mentors. They all work in their own capacity to determine students' academic strengths, weaknesses, motivations, and life goals – and assist students in preparing and following an action plan to achieve those goals. *Faculty mentors* help students understand the performance expectations held at a research university; they discuss career options and goals, provide suggestions on appropriate coursework, and offer encouragement to participate in educational enhancement opportunities. *Peer mentors* help to integrate students into the rigors of university study, as well as the more social and personal aspects of the campus. They provide an "I've been there" type of assistance for students who are struggling with life issues impacting their performance. *Professional academic advisors* are experts in student development theory, achievement analysis, and goal attainment. They are knowledgeable about university academic regulations, policies, procedures, and available campus and community resources. They build relationships with their advisees, review student progress and guide students in managing both their academic and personal lives so that they can complete their degrees in a timely manner.

Developmental Academic Advising. *Developmental advising* quickly and accurately determines students' needs and connects them with appropriate resources suited for each individual student's situation. Developmental advising focuses on the interactions between the student and the campus environment, promotes the importance of the *whole* person, and works at that individual student's own personal life stage of development.²⁴ It entails working to develop a relationship with the student using appropriate techniques to determine the sources of the student's personal and academic challenges, validating the student's concerns, informing the student about the relevant policies, procedures, and regulations applicable to their specific situation, and referring the student to available resources both within and outside the university to help support their personal and educational goals.

²³ Habley, W.R. (2004). Advisor load, National Academics Advisors Clearinghouse.

²⁴ King, C. Margaret. (2005) Developmental Academic Advising, NACADA website.

High quality, proactive, developmental academic advising is critical to the success of UC Riverside undergraduates due to the general level of preparedness of our incoming students, the rigorous nature of the curriculum, and the facts that the vast majority of our undergraduates will be the first in their families to graduate from college and many come from low-income families. If UC Riverside students are going to successfully transition into and succeed in a research institution, they must receive timely and adequate support, services, and resources. Student development researcher Vincent Tinto articulates that, “(e)ffective retention programs have come to understand that academic advising is the very core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students.”²⁵ His colleague Richard Light states, “Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience.”²⁶

UC Riverside students, in particular, traditionally require more institutional support to be successful since they do not benefit from parents with post-secondary education experiences. First-generation college students typically have more difficulty navigating the university system and exhibit unrealistic expectations regarding the setting of educational priorities and academic standards, as well as the quantity and quality of work required for adequate academic achievement at research institutions. Low-income students, especially those from under-funded schools, typically require more institutional support to be successful since they often matriculate ill-prepared and lack the resources necessary to compensate for these deficiencies.

It should be strongly noted here that although technological improvements may help advisors improve efficiency, technological advancements and/or software programming cannot replace the one-on-one relationships necessary for high quality, effective, developmental academic advising.

Benchmarks: The current UC Riverside ratio of students to advisor is 600:1. We recommend that by 2013 the campus reaches a 400:1 ratio and by 2016 the campus is successful in reaching the NACADA best practices student to advisor ratio of 300:1.

Implementation Steps: To establish high-quality, developmental academic advising services accessible for all undergraduates, the campus should:

- Create a maximum 300:1 student-to-advisor ratio
- Build and sustain infrastructure with technological, staff, and managerial support; and space that is conducive for confidential discussions
- Provide training and professional development opportunities for academic advisors to share best practices and learn new practices
- Invest in data collection and evaluation, utilizing findings to improve services
- Establish annual recognition awards for outstanding practice in developmental academic advising

²⁵ Tinto, Vincent. (1987). *Increasing student retention*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

²⁶ Light, Richard J. (2001). *Making the most of college*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

2) Learning Communities

Recommendation: *Require mandatory participation in First Year Learning Communities (FYLC) for all incoming freshmen, providing comprehensive academic support to improve student success and persistence.*

Discussion: Learning communities offer an innovative approach for engaging undergraduate students in the classroom and connecting them to the university by purposefully designing a cluster of courses which fosters small group peer learning and faculty connections. Students within each cohort form relationships with each other and create a small community within the large university setting.

UC Riverside FYLC Models. There are various models of clustering FYLCs used nationwide. Currently, the models at UC Riverside range from one quarter to year-long programs, and are centered on themes based on majors within each college. Clusters in some colleges are organized according to mathematics placement and center around mathematics and chemistry courses while others are organized according to writing placement and center around composition sections. Some include advising seminars taught by Senate faculty members who engage students in career discovery exercises and discussions regarding campus resources in concert with an academic advisor-led discussion section on how to navigate and thrive in a research university setting. Some clusters include a librarian subject specialist assigned to provide guidance through the research process. Many include mandatory peer-led supplemental instruction, which provides academic support in the most rigorous first-year courses. Moving through their first year as a small cohort provides for students a ready-made study group with shared interests and experiences, one of the keys to college academic success in many disciplines.

FYLC Impacts. Current UC Riverside learning communities are making positive impacts on retention of first year students. Separate evaluations of Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 FYLCs compared entering freshmen who participated in a learning community to non-participants in the same cohort. These analyses showed that participation in a learning community increased first year retention significantly in comparison to those who did not participate.²⁷ A separate analysis found that, “(p)articipants in FYLC programs and classes consistently reported higher levels of engagement with their coursework, controlling for gender, on-campus residence, high school GPA, transfer units, and enrolled units.”²⁸ Also, participants had more contact with faculty during office hours, reported higher levels of effort and engagement with their coursework, were more aware of and more likely to use academic resources, and were more likely to be engaged with campus activities outside of class. The WASC Capacity Visitation Team Report referred to UC Riverside FYLC programming as one of the most powerful tools the university currently uses to significantly and successfully increase freshman to sophomore retention.²⁹

²⁷ Fairris, Peebles, & Beleche, Evaluation of the Impact of Participation in First Year Learning Communities on Persistence to Sophomore year, Fall 2006, Fall 2007.

²⁸ Hanneman, Robert, *UCR Freshman Academic Experience Survey, 2006-07: First-year learning communities.*
<http://irue.ucr.edu/reports/freshmanacademicexperiencesurvey200607.pdf>

²⁹ *Educational Effectiveness Report, Appendix A.* pg. 8. <http://wasc.ucr.edu/AppendixA7-6-09.pdf>.

Learning community programming in the academic colleges has grown from serving 192 students in 2002 to serving over 1,800 students in Fall 2009, which accounts for roughly 40% of the freshman population. However due to the current budget climate, funding for FYLCs is in danger; in some colleges it may not persist beyond the 2009-2010 academic year. Campus prioritization and investment is vital to secure permanent funding for these programs and grow them to include all freshmen.

Benchmarks: Currently there are approximately 40% of the new freshmen participating in learning communities. By 2013 we recommend that 60% of new freshmen are enrolled, and by 2016, we recommend that 100% of the new freshmen are enrolled in UC Riverside FYLCs.

Implementations Steps: To provide comprehensive support to promote retention and student success by instituting mandatory participation in learning communities for all incoming freshmen, the campus will have to:

- Require participation for all freshmen in a FYLC
- Create and/or sustain permanent staff FTE(s) to support learning communities in each academic college, school and division
- Improve department cooperation where needed by issuing a university statement asserting that learning communities are a priority thus requiring academic departments to help facilitate the timely assignment of sections to learning community clusters
- Ensure resource allocation to fund necessary enhancements to the Student Information System (SIS), and provide appropriate technological infrastructure and functionality
- Invest in data collection and evaluation, using those findings to improve programs

3) Ignition Seminars

Recommendation: *Require every incoming freshman or transfer student, in his or her first or second quarter on campus, to complete a full-credit “Ignition” seminar taught by a Senate faculty member.*

Discussion: UC Riverside students have distinctive needs because of their preparedness and background compared to students at other UC campuses. In order to help these students gain a solid footing, to draw them into the intellectual life of the campus, and to thoroughly expose them to the opportunities that lie before them, we recommend that each incoming student, whether freshman or transfer, join a seminar aimed at “igniting” their college careers. These seminars would be full four-unit courses that satisfy general education requirements or lower-division requirements in a major, and would be a standard part of the teaching responsibilities of Senate faculty. More specifically, the Ignition seminars would:

Introduce students to what it means to learn. The topics of the seminars – chosen by faculty from their own specialties – would be almost incidental to the more important task of turning students on to the life of the mind. What does it mean to read and write carefully, to formulate and solve problems, to think critically, and care about academic integrity? How does one take proper notes in class, study for exams, and plan for the future? The phrase “almost incidental”

does not mean the seminars would not bear full credit toward majors or general education requirements; they would.

Help students to feel personally connected to a scholar and a peer group. The learning of study skills would be enhanced by the presence of a faculty member as exemplar and coach. Of the approximate 5,000 UC Riverside undergraduates surveyed in the 2008 UCUES, 42.4% stated that they “never (5.9%, 290), rarely (18.8%, 627), or occasionally (23.6%, 1149)” had a professor who knew or learned their name.³⁰ Students feel disconnected from faculty and as such, the faculty as a whole need to improve engagement. Ignition seminars provide this opportunity when students first arrive on campus.

Help students to explore possibilities for a major and a career. Faculty teaching the seminars would double as advisors – not just technical advisors about how to fill program requirements, but “life advisors” helping students to figure out what the university as a whole has to offer and where an individual student’s true interests and abilities might lie. Our students – bright but often timid – tend not to ask these questions enough. Whether from fear of parental opinion, from worry about not making enough money, or from lack of self confidence, they do not open enough doors. The seminars could do much to help.

Be a badge of the UC Riverside experience. Other UC campuses do not have such courses, therefore these Ignition seminars could become a beacon that draws motivated and interesting students to our campus in preference to the ‘big machines’ in place at other UCs. The seminars would be good for the university’s public image – a powerful and eloquent reply to the all-too-common complaint from others in society that “professors don’t teach.”

Comparison to Freshmen Discovery and other Seminars. Ignition seminars would be different in important ways from other programs at UC Riverside that might seem comparable, such as college-based peer mentoring, the advising seminars in CNAS, and the recently discontinued Freshmen Discovery Seminars (FDS). *College based peer-mentoring* is fundamentally different because it does not involve faculty. Senate faculty can offer perspective and be role models that peers cannot offer. The advising seminars in CNAS originated as an outgrowth of FDS and now anchor the CNAS Scholars Learning Communities. They generally cover basic survival skills at the university, where to get different types of help on campus, and some guidance in career development. They also include study skills and academic honesty. Unfortunately, as one- or two-credit, stand-alone courses, these seminars have necessarily been divorced from classroom contexts where students might apply the skills they are supposed to be learning. Thus student (and professor) motivation typically has been quite low, and shifting goals led to much confusion as to what is expected of both the faculty and the students in class. The Ignition seminars, as full-fledged courses with actual course content, with built in mentoring, will solve this problem. The FDS, which bore only one unit of credit, enrolled about 1000 students per year between 2002 and 2005, and faculty taught them as “overload” in return for research support. The 2006 evaluation report on the FDS program found problems in recruiting faculty as well as in low

³⁰ University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey, UCUES, (2008).

enrollment from students, for whom a single-credit course was not very useful.³¹ To address these concerns, the Ignition seminars integrate into the undergraduate curriculum through breadth and lower division requirements for the major. Moreover, the seminars integrate into faculty's standard teaching load and course offerings.

Practicality. We do not envision that ignition seminars would incur monetary costs. The investment would be in re-allocation of faculty teaching time, which itself is not great if faculty are encouraged to participate. There are currently about 720 Senate faculty at UC Riverside, and about 5000 new students each year. Thus, if the Ignition seminars were 14 students in average size, the program would require an average of each Senate faculty member to teach one seminar every other year.

Of course, certain allowances for assigning faculty to Ignition seminars would be necessary, particularly for popular departments, such as psychology or political science, that have unusually high numbers of declared majors. These departments would not be responsible for staffing seminars for every student in their major. Instead, faculty from other, lower-enrolled departments would pitch in by teaching some of these students. This kind of "crossing of disciplines" is itself one of the vital goals of the seminars which are designed to open new doors for students. We envision that Deans would need to play a role in finding fair and appropriate ways to distribute teaching assignments across departments.

The faculty at UC Riverside should have the highest expectations of our students. We should expect the students to grow personally through exploration of disciplines and careers, to be intellectually engaged and challenged by scholarly activities, to learn critical thinking skills, to participate in extracurricular activities and experiential learning, and to become responsible citizens of both our region and the world. We believe that these goals will require a revitalized academic culture. UC Riverside has a superb faculty who are recognized for their exceptional research accomplishments. And although there are wonderful examples of faculty who have made investments in undergraduate education as well, we now call upon all our colleagues in the Senate faculty to step up his or her game in teaching our undergraduates and in raising the bar for our expectations of them.

Some faculty, concentrating on their research and graduate teaching, might feel un-acclimated to teaching seminars for first year students. For these colleagues, the campus would set up orientation sessions, perhaps facilitated by UC Riverside's Academy for Distinguished Teaching.

Benchmarks: We recommend that UC Riverside set of goal of enrolling 25% of new students in ignition seminars by 2013, 50% by 2015, and 100% by 2020.

Implementation Steps: To implement these seminars the following elements are needed:

- Create full-credit Ignition seminars (14 students each) taught by Academic Senate faculty members

³¹ *Freshman Discovery Seminar Report, Fall 2002-2005*,
<http://irue.ucr.edu/reports/freshmendiscoveryseminarreport2006.pdf>.

- Require mandatory participation for all incoming freshman and transfers during the first or second quarter on campus
- Reallocate teaching time in order that on average each academic Senate faculty member would teach one Ignition seminar every other year
- Invest in data collection and program evaluation, use findings to improve program

4) Capstone Experience

Recommendation: *Require every undergraduate student to complete a capstone experience, either in the form of a design project, senior thesis, creative activity, or equivalent.*

Discussion: The subcommittee searched for attributes to distinguish UC Riverside undergraduate education from that in other excellent universities, and to increase the competitive advantage of UC Riverside. Our students could greatly benefit from increased exposure to undergraduate research, to creative activity opportunities, or to in-depth experiential learning. This effort should be given institutional commitment by adding the graduation requirement of an undergraduate capstone experience for each undergraduate major at UC Riverside. This *strong finish* will not only enrich and personalize each student's college experience, but will also uniquely identify UC Riverside's offering for undergraduate education and better prepare students for their next stage – be it graduate school or a job.

Undergraduate research and creative activity are key components for developing skills of problem-solving and innovation, for critical analysis and organization of thought. For example, in science fields, the formulation of a hypothesis and the insight to develop the necessary arguments and/or set of experiments to support or reject a given research idea is a necessary aspect of each undergraduate's experience. Depending on discipline, the undergraduate capstone can have many advantages, including:

- Challenging the student to think in an integrative manner often with the management of conflicting constraints and complex issues
- Training the student how to communicate through writing and oral presentation of abstract and specific ideas, and thinking creatively “outside the box”
- Teaching effective team-building, leadership, and the dynamics of individual productivity within a team
- Teaching the student how to investigate and collect data/information from various sources, how to process and analyze such data, and how to derive conclusions, recommendations, and creative insights from such analysis
- Exposing students to real-world experiences, issues and problems, often with open-ended concerns and questions

The experience generated in the undergraduate capstone can be a showcase for job and graduate school applications. The result can lead to presentation or publication in a professional venue or accepted in the campus' *Undergraduate Research Journal*. Such investigation or development of a creative portfolio could lead to further discovery and initiation of novel research and projects,

giving rise to new ideas and potentially new funding opportunities. As such, a capstone experience which incorporates a significant undergraduate research, scholarly, or creative endeavor is a mark of excellence in undergraduate education and gives each of our students an opportunity from which to draw both practical and academic experience and exposure to scholarly and creative pursuit.

The specification of capstone experiences will require the input and discretion of the individual involved parties, namely the specific programs and/or administrative overseeing entities. The subcommittee envisions two basic structures for the capstone. First, as a required senior capstone course in which students are exposed to a specific pedagogical approach and then asked to partake in a non-trivial unstructured design task or project. It is likely that such an approach is overseen carefully by a Senate faculty member and may include a team aspect. Second, through individual effort outside of a formal classroom setting, the undergraduate student develops a senior project which is advised and/or accepted by an individual Senate faculty member or committee. In this setting, the burden of developing and producing the key research idea falls upon the student along with the major advisor and must be agreed upon ahead of completion. Assessment of a completed capstone is the responsibility of the faculty advisor or advising committee. A convenient structure is likely to be the designation of an individual capstone course (potentially one which is already being offered) for which the student receives required credit (in the major) for his or her project, thesis, or portfolio.

Practicality. Implementation may be done through current related courses, such as those already required for all undergraduate majors in engineering and business, and those existing course offerings which could be earmarked for easy refinement/retooling for such credit. For example, elective courses that focus on undergraduate research, scholarship, creative activity, or internship credit (such as many of the 190 series courses) can be revised to fit the requirements of the capstone in each major. Such courses are to be conducted in the upper divisional years and require writing, oral presentation, and for most, supervision by a Senate faculty member. Some of these courses are more integrative than others, and some have more relevance to the practice than others. Consequently, revising one of them to make it integrative of the other branches of knowledge in that major and to require its application to a real world problem or creative activity completes the requirements of the capstone experience. Further, if the existing program requires a major to enroll in one or more of the above courses, then adapting to the requirement of an undergraduate capstone will not add to the cost of operating that major.

Benchmarks: Currently only the Engineering, Business, Women Studies and Art majors have a capstone project or portfolio as a graduation requirement. Last year, in association with the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review, several departments opted to implement a capstone requirement as they developed student learning outcomes and assessment metrics for their majors. With this in mind, we recommend that by 2012, 50% of the majors require a capstone experience as part of graduation requirements, and that in 2016, 100% of the majors require capstones experiences.

Implementation Steps: The campus would need to do the following:

- Require every undergraduate student to successfully complete a capstone experience as a departmental requirement for graduation

- Develop an infrastructure to sustain undergraduate research, scholarship, civic engagement, and creative activity
- Develop tools matching faculty mentors with interested students for undergraduate research, scholarship, civic engagement, and creative activity; in addition, create capacity to track and evaluate participation
- Create a campus-wide work group to address evaluation findings, issues, and program improvements
- Acknowledge faculty mentorship in the merit and promotion process
- Invest in data collection and program evaluation, use findings to improve programs

5) Realignment of Admissions Criteria and Recruitment

Recommendation: *Develop a more discerning and strategic comprehensive review of applications to make UC Riverside a more selective institution while maintaining our commitment to diversity and access, and expand our use of transfer programs to ensure sufficient preparedness in admitted students.*

Discussion: Academic excellence, access, and diversity need not be competing goals, provided the campus develops a clearer sense of what it expects of students, a more careful evaluation of applicants with these collective ambitions in mind, and a renewed vigor in delivering an excellent undergraduate education. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee of the Academic Senate's Riverside Division should work with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to revise the comprehensive review process at UC Riverside, primarily to take more information into account in the admissions process, including but not limited to student leadership and other forms of civic engagement.

We have a great deal of respect and admiration for the undergraduate students of UC Riverside. Our students are talented, creative, and smart. It is important to recognize this fundamental respect and admiration for our students, because we do not wish to overemphasize the negative. For the vast majority of our students, UC Riverside is a campus of choice and they are well on the way to becoming proud Highlander alumni/ae. Their work and preparation are absolutely UC quality. We serve them well. In addition, UC Riverside has always accepted its responsibility to provide access and opportunities for students across the state, but most importantly from our neighboring regions. We view this to be a critical component of our land grant mission and an important element of our goal to preeminence in 2020 – this is already one of our strengths as a campus and we need to embrace this responsibility and promote it.

However, we also have problems at UC Riverside related to the mix of students we admit and our priorities for the delivery of educational services. For example, too many of our students arrive underprepared in math and/or writing skills. Some of these students and others struggle at UC Riverside and do not ultimately reap the benefits of a UC education. Retrospectively, their advisors, teachers, and mentors recognize these students would have been better served by academic work at a two-year college or some other educational opportunity and then transferring to UC Riverside.

On its path to preeminence, UC Riverside must become more discerning in the identification and recruitment of students who are prepared to gain from a campus like ours – committed to academic excellence in a diverse environment. Our recommendations flow from a refined set of expectations of incoming students and our collective commitment to provide an excellent undergraduate education, per the goals for an undergraduate education outlined in the UC Riverside General Catalog.

This subcommittee is guided by the commitment represented in the Master Plan for California higher education, which is to provide access to a UC education for the top students in the state. We have a regional and state-wide responsibility to serve these students who are themselves looking for an institutional partner for success. Looking forward to 2020, we want to recruit students who are prepared to take advantage of the benefits of a UC education: students who are poised to realize their potential as individuals and contributing participants in society, acquire knowledge and skills, and prepare for future responsibilities, including civic engagement and leadership in a diverse California. Our admissions criteria and recruitment process should reflect these expectations more than they currently do.

Comprehensive Review. The current admissions process attempts to represent our campus' commitment to academic excellence, diversity, and access. There are multiple paths to admission at UC Riverside, the most common of these is admission as a freshman, although transferring from a two-year college is an increasingly important route to UC Riverside.

For entering freshmen who are determined UC eligible, the current UC Riverside comprehensive review admissions process (implemented in 2005) revolves around a computed Academic Index Score (AIS), composed of several criteria each of which are assigned weights. The index includes the student's high school grade point average (45.8% of the index), scores on the SAT Reasoning test (19.6%), two SAT Subject tests (6.5% each), the number of UC-qualified high school classes ("a-g courses") taken beyond the minimum requirement (4.1%), having a high GPA and thus being eligible in the local context (13.1%), student being one of the first in his or her family to attend university (2.2%), and coming from a low-income household (2.2%). Incoming students are ranked on this index and admitted to our campus as a function of this index, anticipated student matriculation, and the number of overall spaces available at UC Riverside.

The current model prioritizes academic excellence (e.g., via GPA, test scores, and student effort beyond a minimum set of requirements), while targeting diversity (e.g., via local context eligibility) and providing opportunities for access consistent with our mission (e.g., attention to first-generation university attendance and low-income status). However, this formula misses much, particularly for a university on a path to preeminence. Notably, we do not adequately consider things like student leadership and community engagement.

Without micro-managing the process, we recommend the Senate's Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) reconsider the current comprehensive review model. In part, this formula and our approach to admissions will need to change in response to the UC system's new eligibility construct, Entitlement to Review, which is likely to produce a broader application pool starting with the class admitted for enrollment in Fall 2012.

The responsibility for reconstructing the admissions review process institutionally lies with the UAC. However, we consider it critical that others on campus be engaged with the process of revising our comprehensive review process. We urge UAC to work in concert with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, the College, School and Divisional Associate Deans of Student Academic Affairs, and perhaps other administrative units including the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Specifically, the UAC may usefully consider indicators of leadership, conscientiousness, and introspection. Research by UC Riverside investigators highlights the importance of conscientiousness – valuing the opportunity for learning enough to follow through with assignments and other scholastic expectations – on academic success and persistence.³² As the campus develops a clearer understanding of what we expect of our students, this subcommittee recommends that leadership qualities and a greater capacity for introspection will also complement academic aspirations for our students.

Utilizing indicators of leadership, conscientiousness, and introspection in the admissions process require additional resources. Applications already contain information relevant to these characteristics; however, gleaning it will require a closer read, and more time spent on each application. Applications include indicators of extracurricular activities, leadership, civic engagement, and other life experiences that could meaningfully inform an admissions decision. Several of our sibling campuses retain a large force of readers to score each application they receive. This global approach should be considered alongside alternative techniques for identifying students who are poised for personal growth, academic success, and a fuller realization of their potential for civic engagement and leadership in a diverse California. The transfer path should also mirror our stated interest in leadership, conscientiousness, and introspection.

Further, the process of reconstructing comprehensive review at UC Riverside should be informed by the empirical assessment of current AIS indicators and proposed complements and/or alternative. While we may be guided in part by aspiration (for example, in seeking first-generation collegians or leaders), we must continue to highly value proven empirical indicators of success and persistence, such as the high school GPA.³³

We want to ensure access for all students in the region who meet our campus criteria for admission. This means not only offering admission to these students but providing opportunities for students to gain critical skill levels in mathematics and writing early in their university career or the summer before they matriculate.

Recruitment. Greater discernment in the admissions process must be accompanied by the campus becoming both more attractive to students and more energetic in the recruitment of students most prepared to take advantage of a UC education, especially if we are to uphold an authentic commitment to access and diversity. For too long, our admissions and recruitment

³² Wagerman, Seth A., and David C. Funder. 2007. "Acquaintance Reports of Personality and Academic Achievement: A Case for Conscientiousness." *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(1):221-229, http://newsroom.ucr.edu/news_item.html?action=page&id=1329.

³³ Fairris, D., "Determinants of First Year Retention," Undergraduate Education, 2005 and 2006.

efforts have focused on producing a high yield of student statements of intention to register (SIR), independent of their intentions, ambitions, and likelihood of *Living the Promise* of a UC education. Some numbers help illustrate our current strategy. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions computes a yield rate within strata of incoming freshmen high school GPAs. This yield rate is the percentage of students with SIRs at UC Riverside over a base of the number of students admitted to the campus. For 2009, the yield rate for students with high school GPAs 3.2-3.49 was 23%, while the yield among students with GPAs 3.6-3.89 was 12%. This “quantity” perspective must be informed with a greater interest in recruiting to the excellence we offer and expect of students.

In fact, efforts in this direction are afoot in the Office of Undergraduate Recruitment and the colleges, schools, and divisions. In particular, efforts are underway to target students with high school GPAs in the 3.6-3.9 range. These students have many options, including many options in the UCs. We think that an engaged effort of faculty, staff, and administrators can give UC Riverside a competitive advantage with them.

The campus should expand these college-oriented recruitment efforts. We strongly recommend these recruitment projects represent collaborations between the colleges, school, and divisions and the Admissions and Recruitment offices. This will require all parties to step-up and earnestly join the partnership. In particular, faculty members must be involved in recruitment to a greater extent and they must be willing to do so.

According to the Undergraduate Recruitment Office, students who visit campus are more likely to SIR for UC Riverside, and often appear persuaded by the campus visit, rather than simply self-selecting to the campus event as a function of planning to attend anyway. Consequently, efforts to engage more aggressive recruitment should include on-campus opportunities to see UC Riverside and our strengths.

The Undergraduate Recruitment Office should also evaluate the effects of our efforts using tools like randomized field experiments and careful tracking of recruitment contacts for observational studies of effectiveness, in order to confirm intuitions about recruitment effectiveness and best practices. These self-evaluations should be widely publicized to all stakeholders.

Transfer Opportunities. We also think that the path to preeminence means a stronger partnership and expanded outreach to students from the community college system. We envision an admissions process with criteria that assesses a higher percentage of our applicants as unprepared for matriculation at UC Riverside. We do not want to close the door on these students. Rather, we want to propose for these students the wise path envisioned by the Master Plan. In order to embrace even wider access and greater success, this campus needs to revitalize its admissions procedures – specifically to address issues of under-preparedness through more careful, comprehensive selection and through more prudent use of Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG) hybrid packages which promise admission following successful preparation in community colleges. Specifically, we recommend more aggressively identifying students who do not appear well prepared for UC Riverside as freshman applicants and informing them of the TAG contract (or creating a TAG with them) at the time of their de-selection from freshman

admission. Further, we recommend developing a way to track these students as they build skills in the community college system, eventually recruiting them in to UC Riverside as transfers.

It is important to note that the Fall 2012 entering class of the University of California will face an entirely new construct for admission to the University, wherein the top 9% of the high school graduates and the top 9% of students in local context will be guaranteed admission, amounting to approximately the top 10% of California students. In order to identify the remaining portion of the top 12.5% of students in California, each campus will gain access to the population of students identified as “entitled to review,” a full and comprehensive review per policy set by the systemwide Academic Senate Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools. Consequently, UC Riverside will need to have its revisions to the admissions process completed by November 2011 to implement these policy changes. We recommend policy deliberation in the Academic Senate, colleges, schools and divisions; and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs by the end of Winter Quarter 2010, so that the infrastructure for comprehensive review is in place, at least to pilot, for Fall 2011 (thus by November 2010).

Benchmarks: UAC should begin discussing revisions to the admissions process in time for the 2012 admissions and recruitment season. We further recommend the Academic Senate and administration move to allow for the recruitment and training of readers for piloting comprehensive review during the 2011 admissions cycle. In terms of tracking the success of realigning admissions criteria and recruitment, we encourage the Office of Admissions to target substantial increases in the University’s yield rate in the 3.6-3.89 GPA range of incoming freshmen, by approximately double (to over 20%) by 2020. We also encourage more extensive tracking of faculty involvement in the admissions and recruiting process with an eye toward expanding faculty role in recruiting students over time.

Implementation Steps: Realignment of the Admission Process should begin immediately; the campus will need to:

- Evaluate the Academic Index Score (AIS) components, including predictors of persistence and success; process should be collaborative between the Undergraduate Admissions Committee of the Academic Senate working with the Associate Deans for Student Academic Affairs and the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, Enrollment Management, and Undergraduate Education
- Revise the admissions process and AIS to take more information into account in the admissions process for freshman and transfer students, including but not limited to leadership, civic engagement, conscientiousness, and introspection
- Implement targeted recruitment plans and enhance collaborative recruitment projects between the colleges, schools, divisions, Undergraduate Admissions, and Undergraduate Recruitment
- Evaluate recruitment efforts initiated by Undergraduate Recruitment and widely publicize findings to all stakeholders; use findings to improve efforts
- Expand the Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG) process for community college students

V. Other Recommendations and Endorsements

In our research and subsequent deliberation as a group, we considered a wide array of topics related to our charges, discussing several in detail. We found some areas of interest are currently under extensive study by others. In this section we highlight a few key areas that are not included in our five strategic recommendations but are nonetheless noteworthy recommendations.

General Education. We welcome the new alternative pathway for fulfilling breadth through a concentration-based general education program approved by the Academic Senate last spring (see <http://senate.ucr.edu/committee/?do=info&id=58> for details). Two concentrations on “California” and “Climate Change/Sustainability” are currently being offered for a pilot group of 150 students. This program asks students to take a well-balanced series of courses that provide depth in a specific topic as well as breadth through exposure to different methodologies and disciplinary perspectives. We believe this approach to general education will accomplish more than UC Riverside’s current menu-list of breadth requirements and we support this ongoing pilot project.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment. The subcommittee supports the campus-wide development and utilization of student learning outcomes and assessment metrics for all academic majors inspired by the WASC re-accreditation process. Parallel to our own discussions, the WASC Educational Effectiveness Visitation Team report recommended that the campus develop and utilize student learning outcomes and assessment metrics for our undergraduate general education aspirations as well. The campus accepted this recommendation and its shared leadership began planning the process and timeline by which all constituencies will have an opportunity to offer input in identifying what it is that a UC Riverside graduate should embody and exemplify. From these ideas, the goals, requirements, student learning outcomes, and assessment metrics will be determined and written for general education and for breadth requirements in the colleges, schools, and divisions. These broad student learning outcomes and assessment metrics will complement the major-specific student learning outcomes and assessment metrics developed by each degree program. The members of the subcommittee endorse this process for both the academic departments and the general education component and recognize its importance to the continual improvement and enhancement of teaching and learning for our undergraduate students.

Student Success Programs: Further, other areas in undergraduate education recently underwent various modifications and enhancements, such as Supplemental Instruction, Early Warning, and First Year Success Series programming. We applaud these efforts and the use of corresponding effectiveness evaluations that continue to improve their content and delivery. These programs have clearly shown they make a difference in student success and retention, and the subcommittee strongly endorses continued financial and faculty support of the recommendations presented in the 2006 Student Success Task Force Report.

Honors College. Our subcommittee was asked to consider the establishment of an Honors College but elected to defer our own deliberations since we were aware that a separate committee had been tasked with this responsibility. David Fairris, Vice Provost for

Undergraduate Education, assembled a group of eight faculty and three key staff members to carefully consider how best to deliver an Honors experience on our campus that would also attract top students to UC Riverside. A draft report was made available to our subcommittee that outlined from a broad vantage point a possible structure, with the understanding that specific details and implementation plans remain to be fashioned. Our subcommittee agreed to include their final report along with our own report (see Appendix C). While we endorse many of the conceptual design choices outlined by their proposal, our subcommittee has reservation about moving forward on any plan for an Honors College due to concerns about the purpose, effectiveness, and financial viability of such an endeavor. The ‘Honors’ workgroup unanimously supported the creation of an Honors College with a Dean and committed educators as the best structural configuration to achieve preeminence in 2020. Our subcommittee appreciates the need for designing unique programming opportunities not available on other campuses – however, an evidence-based analysis, founded on experiences at other four-year institutions, should be performed to determine whether the presence of a visible Honors College makes a difference in recruiting top-end students, in order to justify the cost before a commitment is made to implement this vision. We also think it would be important to develop a business plan needed to launch this new college that will include articulating arrangements between a new Honors College and existing colleges, schools and divisions regarding curricula, advising, faculty FTE, and other shared responsibilities.

We also hope that an Honors College would not preclude the possibility that individual schools and colleges establish their own “honors” experiences so as to create the greatest breadth of opportunities for their own majors. Ultimately, it is our firm conviction that we should raise the academic expectations for all UC Riverside students, empowering each student to achieve his or her highest potential.

Evaluating Major Degree Programs. The subcommittee was asked to review the existing mix of undergraduate majors and their educational effectiveness. With the time allotted, we elected not to make a systematic review of each major and minor. We note that there already exists an appropriate vehicle for periodic undergraduate program review via the Committee on Educational Policy. We strongly recommend that this process be used carefully and thoughtfully and that committee’s deliberations and recommendations be supported and enforced by the appropriate university officials (college, school, or divisional deans). We recommend that these reviews carefully consider a series of metrics for assessment which would include but are not limited to: number of applicants/matriculates per major, percent graduating in major, percent entering graduate and professional degree programs, time to degree; and retention rates. In addition, it is important that each major clearly articulate the declared learning outcomes of programs and their own periodic self-assessment. In short, undergraduate majors/programs which do not attract or educate a strong contingent of undergraduate students should be closed or merged with other programs, and affected faculty teaching assignments should be re-distributed to support robust academic programs. Correspondingly, those programs receiving positive reviews should be adequately supported and rewarded, with the possibility of growth provided.

Course Assessment. Our subcommittee recommends that a task force be assembled which will undertake a serious review of the current array of course offerings at UC Riverside and consider where adjustments might be made. Enrollment figures for undergraduate courses in 2008-09

show that multiple specialized upper division courses see low enrollments. Some of these may be required to ensure time-to-degree in majors, but they are an expensive use of faculty time. We recommend that our colleagues carefully assess low-enrollment upper-division courses with a view toward reducing and/or removing such courses in order to free up faculty time for use in larger-enrollment courses and the proposed Ignition seminars. We also feel it is important for the task force to discuss the number of courses/units required to complete a major, recognizing that in some cases, these requirements appear excessive and constricting to students who might benefit from greater flexibility, for example to complete a minor degree in another discipline.

VI. Metrics and Assessment: Closing the Loop

Along with each individual strategic recommendation we include specific benchmarks that are put in place to measure the effectiveness and ultimately the success of each effort. Assessing the implementation of the first four strategic recommendations can be measured by the level of participation (e.g., ratio of advisors to students, percentage of students in FYLC, etc.) occurring annually. Beyond participation, assessment of success of the recommendations is largely contingent on impact studies and evaluation of participants. We acknowledge that in some cases our proposed timelines are aggressive and, for some, financially ambitious; however, we deliberately selected these recommendations as our primary targets because of our conviction that adopting them will have a major impact on undergraduate education.

Beyond each strategic recommendation's individual metrics, we expect that measurable improvements that cut across the strategic recommendations will also appear. General metrics to determine and quantify such effects include, but are not limited to:

- Improving time to degree
- Increasing GPA at graduation (measured after accounting for grade inflation)
- Decreasing number of entering students requiring mathematics and writing preparation
- Increasing percentage of entering students who complete a degree in their discipline of choice (by college, or program)
- Increasing percentage of students continuing on along their career of choice (might be immediate job or graduate/professional school)
- Increasing prestige and visibility of alumni/ae profiles, career success, and impact

In addition, we recommend attention be placed on the statistics in recent UCUES which document student level of satisfaction with their college experience. A clear goal is to address critical issues related to faculty/student connectivity. Within this perspective, our recommendations were designed to create greater connection between our Senate faculty and our undergraduates, while also improving the academic success of our students and strengthening their educational experiences, as well as better preparing them to be good citizens and leaders. We expect that our efforts will be recognized and appreciated by our undergraduates and assessment should be used to document this, including UCUES and more targeted student surveys assessing specific initiatives. We also strongly endorse regular self-assessment exercises which measure program effectiveness of individual educational experiences (e.g., success of FYLC).

In light of our aspirations for excellence in undergraduate education, our specific recommendations attempt to “ignite” a *great start* and inspire our students during their first year at UC Riverside. Our efforts continue to raise the educational expectations throughout the college experience, culminating in a *strong finish* through a meaningful capstone. In addition, based on the recent history of our recruitment and admissions process, we continue to be surprised by some of the statistics we found – including the low average high school GPA and SAT scores, the very low yield of accepted students, and the possible disconnect between college and school expectations and number of matriculates. It is our belief that the implementation of these strategic recommendations (which is detailed next in an *implementation matrix*) will inform prospective applicants of the major commitment UC Riverside is making in providing the highest quality educational experience possible for its students and that will translate into a more attractive destination for regional and statewide college aspirants.

VI. Implementation Matrix for the Excellence in Undergraduate Education, January 2010

Recommendations	Responsibility	Support	Benchmarks/Timeline
1. Academic Advising: Provide sufficient high-quality, proactive, developmental academic advising for all undergraduates to meet the 300:1 NACADA best practices student-to-advisor ratio	College/School/ Division Deans, Assoc Deans		Student-to-Advisor Ratio In 2010: 600:1 By 2013: 400:1 By 2016: 300:1
a. Create a maximum 300:1 student-to-advisor ratio	Assoc Deans	VCFB EVC	
b. Build and sustain infrastructure with technological, staff, and managerial support, and space that is conducive for confidential discussions	Deans and Assoc Deans	Facilities, HR VPUE, C&C Registrar	
c. Provide training and professional development opportunities for academic advisors to share best practices and learn new practices	HR Assoc Deans	VPUE, SA	
d. Invest in data collection and evaluation, utilizing findings to improve services	Deans Assoc Deans	VPUE, C&C Inst Research	
e. Establish annual recognition awards for outstanding practice in developmental academic advising	Assoc Deans		

<p>2. <u>Learning Communities:</u> Require mandatory participation in First Year Learning Communities (FYLC) for all incoming freshmen, providing comprehensive academic support to improve student success and persistence</p>	<p>Deans, VPUE Assoc Deans</p>		<p>Participation Growth In 2010: ~ 40% By 2013: 60% By 2016: 100%</p>
<p>a. Require participation for all freshmen in a FYLC</p>	<p>Acad Senate EVC, Deans</p>	<p>VCFB, VPUE Assoc Deans</p>	
<p>b. Create and/or sustain permanent staff FTE(s) to support the learning communities in each academic college, school and division</p>	<p>EVC, Deans Assoc Deans</p>	<p>HR, VPUE</p>	
<p>c. Improve department cooperation where needed by issuing a university statement asserting that learning communities are a priority, and academic departments shall help facilitate the timely assignment of clustered courses</p>	<p>EVC, Deans</p>	<p>Dept Chairs Assoc Deans</p>	
<p>d. Ensure resource allocation to fund SIS enhancements and provide appropriate technological infrastructure and functionality</p>	<p>EVC, Deans</p>	<p>VPUE, C&C Reg</p>	
<p>e. Invest in data collection and program evaluation, use findings to improve programs</p>	<p>VPUE, Assoc Deans</p>	<p>C&C Inst Research</p>	

3. <u>Ignition seminars</u>: Require every incoming freshman or transfer student, in his/her first or second quarter on campus, to complete a full-credit Ignition seminar taught by a Senate faculty member	Acad Senate EVC, Deans	Assoc Deans Dept Chairs	Participation Growth: In 2010: 0% By 2013: 25% By 2015: 50 % By 2020: 100%
a. Create four-credit Ignition seminars (average of 14 students each) taught by Senate faculty	Acad Senate CEP, EVC Comm/Courses	VPUE UG Council Dept Chairs	
b. Require mandatory participation for all incoming freshman and transfer students during first or second quarter on campus	Acad Senate Exec Councils		
c. Reallocate teaching time in order that on average each Senate faculty member would teach one Ignition seminar every other year	EVC, Deans Dept Chairs		
d. Invest in data collection and program evaluation, use findings to improve program	Dept Chairs Assoc Deans	VPUE, C&C Inst Research	

4. <u>Capstone Experience:</u> Require every undergraduate student to complete a capstone experience, either in the form of a design project, senior thesis, creative activity, or equivalent			Participation Growth: In 2010: 33% In 2012: 50% In 2016: 100%
a. Require every undergraduate student to successfully complete a capstone experience as a departmental requirement for graduation	Acad Senate CEP, Deans, EVC	Exec Councils	
b. Acknowledge faculty mentorship in the merit and promotion process	Acad Senate Deans, EVC		
c. Develop an infrastructure to sustain undergraduate research, scholarship, civic engagement and creative activity	Deans, VPUE Assoc Deans	C&C Dept Chairs	
d. Develop tools matching faculty mentors with interested students for undergraduate research, scholarship, civic engagement, and creative activity; in addition, create capacity to track and evaluate participation	VPUE Assoc Deans	C&C	
e. Invest in data collection and program evaluation, use findings to improve programs	Dept Chairs Assoc Deans	VPUE, C&C Inst Research	
f. Create campus-wide workgroup to address evaluation findings, issues, and program improvements	Assoc Deans VPUE		

<p>5. <u>Realignment of Admissions Criteria and Recruitment:</u> Develop a more discerning and strategic comprehensive review of applications to make UC Riverside a more selective institution, while maintaining our commitment to diversity and access, and expand our use of transfer programs to ensure sufficient preparedness in admitted students</p>	<p>Senate UAC Acad Senate Enrollment Management</p>	<p>VPUE Assoc Deans</p>	
<p>a. Evaluate the Academic Index Score (AIS) components, including predictors of persistence and success</p>	<p>Senate UAC Assoc Deans UG Admissions EnrManagement</p>	<p>VPUE</p>	<p>In time for 2012 recruitment and admissions season</p>
<p>b. Revise the admissions process and AIS to take more information into account in the admissions process for freshman and transfer students, including but not limited to leadership, civic engagement, conscientiousness, and introspection</p>	<p>Senate UAC Acad Senate Enrollment Management</p>	<p>UGAdmissions Assoc Deans</p>	<p>In time for 2012 recruitment and admissions season, pilot comprehensive review in 2011 admissions cycle</p>
<p>c. Implement targeted recruitment plans and enhance collaborative recruitment projects between the colleges, schools, divisions, Undergraduate Admissions, and Undergraduate Recruitment</p>	<p>UG Recruitment Assoc Deans</p>	<p>UGAdmissions</p>	<p>Target substantial increases in yield rate in the 3.6-3.89 GPA range of incoming freshmen; approximately double yield to over 20% by 2020</p>
<p>d. Evaluate recruitment efforts initiated by Undergraduate Recruitment and widely publicize findings to all stakeholders; use findings to improve efforts</p>	<p>UG Recruitment Assoc Deans</p>	<p>UGAdmissions VPUE</p>	<p>On-going, especially track faculty involvement to expand faculty role in recruiting students</p>
<p>e. Expand the Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG) process for community college students</p>	<p>UG Recruitment Assoc Deans</p>	<p>UGAdmissions</p>	<p>Begin immediately</p>

VIII. Appendix

Appendix A: Goals of an Undergraduate Education

The following is an excerpt from the 2009-2010 UC Riverside General Catalog, p. 47:

“The faculty of UC Riverside hereby declare the following set of general educational goals to be pursued through our individual and collective efforts in teaching and guiding the undergraduates of this campus.

A university education must help students realize their potential as individuals and contributing participants in society. This involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as preparation for future responsibilities.

A general education provides a framework that enables one to appreciate and critically examine the significant aspects of civilization. This framework is derived from the study of world history; political and economic systems; the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of the peoples of the Earth; the arts and letters of all cultures; the social and natural sciences; and technology. Such a broad education is the foundation for concentrated studies that enable students to prepare for careers and to strive for an understanding of the world in which they live and about which they must make decisions.

A university education nurtures the critical skills of oral and written communication, including the exercise of these skills in a language other than one’s own. It must teach students to become verbally and quantitatively literate, to analyze and synthesize, and to regard the acquisition of knowledge as a lifetime activity. A university education must promote tolerance of the opinions of others and an understanding of the mutual dependence of human beings on each other and on their natural environment. The student’s university years also provide an opportunity to develop integrity, self-esteem, self-discipline, style, humanness, commitment to the general welfare, sensitivity to the interplay of environment and technology, and confidence that the human drama is worthy of a lengthy future.”

Appendix B: Subcommittee Strategic Planning Process

Our subcommittee was assigned a series of charges for analysis and review. We began our study with several open-ended brainstorming sessions and then designed our initial work plan. In order to operate more efficiently, we divided into two subcommittees – one focused on undergraduate admissions, persistence, majors, and evaluation; the other investigated the delivery of instruction, including the first-year success and academic advising. Subcommittee members also collected operational information on undergraduate programs at peer universities among AAU institutions. We posted outlines of pertinent information on our iLearn site for members to review.

Before developing recommendations, we reviewed a variety of existing reports assessing undergraduate education:

- Data Reports: Enrollment within Majors, Course Enrollments under Fifty (October 2009)
- UC Riverside Educational Effectiveness Report presented to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Reaccreditation Team (July 2009), and corresponding Educational Effectiveness Visitation Team Report (December 2009)
- University of California and UC Riverside Accountability Profile and Report (May 2009)
- UC Riverside College Portrait (October 2008)
- UC Riverside Freshman Academic Experience Survey, 2006-07: First-year learning communities (September 2007)
- UC Riverside Determinants of First-Year Retention, 2005 and 2006
- Final Report of the Task Force on Student Success, UC Riverside (October 2006)
- Evaluation of the Impact of Participation in First Year Learning Communities on Persistence to Sophomore Year, UC Riverside (Fall 2006, Fall 2007)
- Freshman Discovery Seminar Report, UC Riverside (2005)
- Guidelines for Implementation of University (of California) Policy on Undergraduate Admissions (November 2001)
- Final Report of the Task Force on Academic Advising, UC Riverside (June 2009)
- University Honors Re-Envisioning Report (Draft, December 2009; Actual, January 2010)
- University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey, UCUES (2008)
- UC Riverside Undergraduate Recruitment and Communication Strategic Plan, September 2006 through August 2007. 8/30/06 and 12/11/06.
- Data Reports used by the Committee on Preparatory Education

In addition to reviewing these reports, we also had helpful conversations and interviews, with key personnel at UC Riverside, including:

- Susan Allen-Ortega, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Steven Brint, Associate Dean of Student Academic Affairs, College for Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
- Merlyn Campos, Director of Undergraduate Admissions
- Emily Engelschall, Director of Undergraduate Recruitment

- David Fairris, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
- LaRae Lundgren, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Enrollment Management
- Vivian Lee Nyitray, Chair, Undergraduate Admissions Committee of the Academic Senate-Riverside Division; Chair, Department of Religious Studies
- Andy Plumley, Asst. Vice Chancellor, Housing Services Administration
- Chinya “Ravi” Ravishankar, Associate Dean of Student Academic Affairs, Bourns College of Engineering
- Jim Sandoval, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

Appendix C: University Honors Re-envisioning Report

University Honors Re-Envisioning Report January 2010

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education David Fairris recently convened a faculty workgroup to “re-envision” UC Riverside’s Honors Program and its presence on our campus. VP Fairris brought together eight faculty members who represent the campus’ span of scholarly disciplines and who either had been or are currently involved in the University Honors Program through their teaching, mentoring, or administration. Members included David Fairris, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Professor of Economics; Bradley Hyman, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Professor of Biology; Marlene Zuk, Associate Vice Provost Faculty Equity and Diversity and Professor of Biology; David Cwiertny, Assistant Professor of Chemical and Environmental Engineering; Joseph Childers, Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of English; Andrea Godfrey, Assistant Professor of Marketing; Rickerby Hinds, Associate Professor of Theatre; Christopher Chase-Dunn, Director of the University Honors Program and Distinguished Professor of Sociology; and John Fischer, Former Director of the University Honors Program and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. Kathryn Jones, Assistant Director of the Honors Program; Gladis Herrera-Berkowitz, Acting Upper Division Honors Coordinator; and Samantha Wilson, former Honors student and Coordinator of Undergraduate Research in the Community, contributed to the discussion, and Patsy Oppenheim, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, helped facilitate the re-envisioning sessions.

During Fall 2009, the workgroup met three times. The first meeting was organizational. The second meeting was spent brainstorming, with members describing attributes that would create the best Honors experience for top UC Riverside students. They also identified individual qualities desired for those graduating with an Honors Distinction. The large collection of ideas fell into three major categories: Intellectual Growth, Personal Development, and Social Responsibility. At the third meeting, workgroup members discussed various programs and experiences that would facilitate and nurture maturation in these areas. Finally, the workgroup discussed the structure – space, staffing, faculty, and organizational design – that could successfully and efficiently sustain these programs and experiences. A final meeting took place in early January to discuss the path by which we might achieve the workgroup’s vision and to finalize this report.

The workgroup unanimously reached the conclusion that an Honors College, led by a Dean and committed educators, with an identifiable location, would be the best structural configuration to reach our desired goals. Highly reputed, best practice Honors programs may serve as magnets for attracting top students. They also provide high-achieving students a haven wherein very challenging programs are offered with faculty expectations that exceed the capabilities and desires of the average student. When combined with plentiful “ports of entry” for students who later in their academic careers decide to accept the challenges of an Honors program and for new transfer students with the capability and desire to excel in such a program, the Honors experience is properly viewed as part of a portfolio of student success programs which targets needs across

the spectrum of student abilities. An Honors program of this sort at UC Riverside thus addresses the academic aspirations of arguably the most underserved sector of our undergraduate population: highest achieving students.

Structure

The workgroup recommends a University Honors College for the UC Riverside campus. The College should be led by a Dean overseeing a number of instructional lines filled by ladder faculty on a three to five-year (partial FTE) rotation from campus departments and devoted to a population of students representing between 5% and 8% of the undergraduate student body. UC Riverside's Honors College would provide interdisciplinary curricular tracks that would fit into and align with degree-granting college and major requirements with a normative time to degree of four years.* Completion of UC Riverside's Honors curriculum would result in a University Honors distinction attached to the degree granted in the major. Departments would be free, under this plan, to continue offering an Honors designation in the major as well.

The University Honors College Dean would be appointed by the EVC. The Dean, with vision and creativity, would lead a dedicated faculty to create an intellectually challenging and exciting personal experience for our very best students. The workgroup recommends that faculty should be offered partial FTE within the Honors College to promote a sense of allegiance and dedication. To mitigate the instructional loss at the department level, the portion of the appointment in the Honors College would be returned to the faculty member's home department. Appointments within the Honors College would not be permanent, however. Anticipated tenure would be a three to five year commitment for which service to the College would become a significant component of the regular merit and promotion process. Honors faculty would collaborate to develop and deliver contemporary, novel, interdisciplinary curricula that would attract motivated students with potential to become academic and social leaders.

The College would also have an appropriate number of permanent staff lines for administrative support and professional advising, as well as a Scholarship and Prestigious Award Coordinator who would also be available to assist non-Honors students. Ideally, the Honors College would have designated space, large enough for faculty offices, administrative and support staff offices, classrooms, conference room(s), study rooms, and a common lounge that could be used as a venue for events, speakers, presentations, art showings, and other creative endeavors. The Honors College could be located in contiguous space within a shared building, or in a dedicated building. Either way, a space specified as "Honors" would support a sense of community and belonging.

A residential component is strongly recommended. During their first two years at UC Riverside, all Honors students would live in the campus' Honors Residence, which could be an entire hall, a wing, or floors specifically reserved for Honors participants. Housing grants would be awarded to those with need, as determined by campus financial aid standards. Many eligible applicants would likely be recipients of Regents' or Chancellor's scholarships.

* There was some discussion of both a three-year Honors Baccalaureate, especially for students who are poised to finish in three years, and a five-year Masters, joint with a UC Riverside Masters-granting program in, for example, Engineering, Education, or Business Administration. Both are ideas worthy of more serious consideration.

Intellectual Growth

The academic centerpiece of the University Honors College would be an interdisciplinary curriculum founded on a few thematic tracks that are unique in content. The tracks would retain the requirement of college-level general education requirements and major requirements. However, there would be six to eight elective courses taught by Honors College faculty that could also satisfy a combination of general education and upper-division major requirements. These courses would align with the thematic tracks and be reflective of real world issues. In addition, every UC Riverside Honors College student would be required to take a course in “critical thinking,” participate in an experiential learning opportunity (e.g., education abroad, UCDC, or community internship), have an ongoing involvement in the arts, and complete a capstone experience (e.g., thesis or other creative project).

Students would earn a University Honors Distinction in one thematic track while simultaneously receiving a Bachelors Degree in a major of their choice. This model is designed to create critical thinkers who can identify important problems facing the world and mobilize solutions. The themes themselves would represent broad real world issues – such as Energy, Water, Poverty, or Global Sustainability. Addressing them properly requires an interdisciplinary approach in which different disciplines contribute insights. The themes would be reviewed periodically to maintain a contemporary pool of topics as faculty rotate into the Honors College. The curriculum would be delivered by highly engaged faculty who routinely incorporate active learning into their pedagogy. Compensation for developing and implementing this new curriculum would be the opportunity to teach our very best students.

Personal Development

The perspective of UC Riverside freshmen or transfer students is likely to be limited due to their young age, inexperience, or lack of opportunity. Participation in the University Honors College would provide students with the opportunities and individualized guidance to become self-confident contributing citizens, future leaders and team players who are respectful of other people’s ideas and accomplishments. Inquiry and curiosity should flourish within these students while respect for different ideas and ideologies is fostered.

Personal growth is multi-faceted and complex; helping students begin to develop their potential is a bold goal that cannot be willed nor easily taught in seminars or workshops. Rather, the workgroup views this personal journey as being nurtured within the Honors curriculum but also fostered by co-curricular opportunities that are part of the Honors experience and commitment. The workgroup therefore recommends:

- Incorporating a contract system in which students commit to participate in a variety of opportunities that constitute part of the co-curricular requirements of the Honors experience – such as exposure to athletics, the arts, and public lectures.

- Scheduling a regular time for reflection on personal growth and a sharing of these reflections in small discussion groups that include faculty, advisors, and student peers, who provide feedback and encouragement.
- Participating in academic and social events planned by Honors and/or other campus organizations. These include symposia, exhibits, discussions, and seminars, as well as receptions that usually follow these programs. Students would gain confidence by observing how faculty and upper division Honors students communicate during these occasions.
- Developing classes and tracks that embed the foundations of personal growth and reflection within coursework. This goal requires faculty who embrace interactive pedagogy and challenging dialogue.
- Providing developmental advising that is possible only with the skill set of trained professionals. Counselors will team with University Honors College faculty to enrich the students' personal growth and professional development.

Social Responsibility

Today's students are members of a global community and their education should include the development of skills that will serve to enhance the human condition. UC Riverside's Honors College will promote involvement in meaningful public service that moves well beyond a resume line item, and positively impacts the campus, regional, national and global communities.

It is intended that the Honors experience instill social values in students by encouraging civic engagement, with intentional preparation in advance and sincere reflection on what students have contributed and what they have learned through such engagement. Some examples of these opportunities include:

- Serving as peer mentors for learning communities or academic support programs, supplemental instruction leaders, new student orientation leaders, and in leadership positions in campus organizations, thereby insuring that the benefits of the University Honors College are spread more widely on campus.
- Interning or volunteering in a community organization to foster a commitment to community service and a sense of civic pride.
- Developing a course or seminar under the guidance of an Honors College faculty member and then assuming the responsibility for preparing and delivering the course content as a capstone experience.
- Undertaking individual or collaborative research projects in the community under the mentorship of a faculty member as a capstone experience and as a way of applying the expertise gained as an undergraduate Honors student for the good of the community.
- Developing partnerships with local K-12 students, facilitated by the Alpha Center and the Science Mathematics Initiative.

Transition Options

The workgroup discussed several pathways to the attainment of our “blue sky” vision of an Honors College at UC Riverside. Which path the campus chooses will be influenced by a variety of factors, such as budgetary concerns and a desire for strategic investing. The crucial ingredients in the attainment of our vision will not change; it is the order of their adoption that may vary.

A faculty group should be charged with crafting the curriculum and seeking the approval of the Academic Senate for the proposed academic vision. Ideally, this group would be the inaugural faculty to hold appointments in the University Honors College. The faculty group might be selected by issuing a “request for proposals” for themes that would compose the initial thematic tracks in the new Honors experience. These themes might be informally linked to faculty research clusters on campus with the highest visibility nationally and internationally and with the greatest opportunity for external funding.

A focus on the personal and social development of students indicates the need for a dedicated staff with professional skills in the area of developmental advising. Support and administrative staff are needed as well, as is a professional position in charge of student scholarships and awards. Formal plans must be put in place for these hires.

Infrastructure decisions must be made, particularly regarding space for the University Honors College. Ideally, this would include a common area for student gatherings, classrooms, a hall for public lectures, and faculty and staff offices. A dedicated space in student housing, which is larger than the floors that are presently designated for Honors students, must also be attained.

Finally, a Dean must be hired.

One pathway to the attainment of our vision is to start with the hiring of a Dean and then to task this person with overseeing development and execution of the infrastructure, faculty, and staffing plans. This has the advantage of establishing a person who directs the process from the very beginning. Another approach, which has the virtue of budgetary prudence in this tough economic climate, is to utilize the existing space and managerial capacity and begin with the faculty and staffing plans. The Dean and ambitious infrastructure plans could follow, after programs are initiated to achieve the personal, social, and intellectual goals that are the core of our vision of a University Honors College at UC Riverside. Decisions regarding the attractiveness of our vision and the path by which it is attained are left to the Strategic Planning effort currently underway.