Strategic Planning Steering Committee Meeting
6/15/2020 2-4 pm, Zoom
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Present: **UCR:** Tom Smith, Dylan Rodríguez, Christiane Weirauch, Crystal Petrini, Peter Hayashida, Brian Haynes, John Haberstroh, Chris Lynch, Milly Peña, Yat Sun Poon, Xiaoping Hu, Timothy Lyons, Bruce Link, Xuan Liu, Christian Shelton, Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera, Kathryn Uhrich, Rodolfo Torres, Ken Baerenklau, Julia McLean **AKA Strategy:** Tony Knerr, Belinda Li, John Braunstein

Absent: Julian Gonzalez, Rebekah Richert, Gabriela Canalizo, Eddie Comeaux

Agenda in Brief

2:00 Welcome & Meeting Goals *(Tom Smith)*
2:05 Approval of May 14th Minutes
2:10 Discussion: Addressing racial justice, equity, and diversity *(Tom Smith & Brian Haynes moderating)*
3:20 Discussion of Framework for the UCR Strategic Plan *(Tom Smith & Ken Baerenklau moderating)*
3:50 Next Steps and Final Comments
4:00 Adjournment

Meeting Minutes

Welcome *(Tom Smith)*

Today, we will touch on some important issues, issues that have not been as centered in our plan as they need to be. For the first half of the meeting we will discuss your ideas around addressing racial justice in the UCR Strategic Plan.

In the second half of the meeting, we will hear your feedback on the updated framework document. The strategic plan will go through many iterative drafts with you and campus. Today we are asking if we start writing the strategic plan draft from this framework, does it move us in the right direction?

Approval of May 14th Minutes

Yat Sun Poon shared some comments via email for revisions to the May 14th minutes and those comments have been integrated. With that revision, the minutes are approved.

Discussion: Addressing racial justice, equity, and diversity

As one of the most diverse research universities in the country, we could not move forward with discussions on our strategic planning without pausing to understand where a racial justice agenda belongs in our plan. Are we centering diversity, equity, inclusion in our framework enough? What are some ideas/ways we could make those values more prominent?

As tri-chair on the Black Student Experience working group, Brian Haynes has agreed to help co-facilitate this discussion.

Discussion

Discussion Prompts: How should ongoing national efforts toward racial justice and equity inform UCR's strategic planning? How should the strategic plan reflect UCR's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

(Discussion Point): A campus level commitment is important. It is not just the responsibility of just one school or college to have the infrastructure to support what people decide is needed – it must come from the highest levels and have the highest commitments.

(Discussion Point): RSD Committee members have brought this up throughout committee discussions. What are our guiding principles in this meeting?

(Discussion Point): Housing is a great equalizer for students. Online teaching is not just a pedagogy issue, there is an equity issue behind it. USE has engaged some faculty to discuss the student experience. We spend so much time discussing programming that sometimes we lose sight of the important experience of students interacting with diverse faculty and staff. In our working group, we are putting more emphasis on faculty diversity.

(Discussion Point): TCC Committee also identified the black student area as one that needs improvement and have come out of talks with recommendations.

1. UCR already has a Black Student Experience (BSE) committee; continue and bolster those efforts to create a welcoming culture.
2. Emphasize recruitment of black students and build more of a sense of community on campus.
3. Ensure resources for new instructor training so that they have the skills to teach our first-generation and diverse student population.

(Discussion Point): This Steering Committee meeting and discussion may not be the process or the group to adequately address these issues. The historical moment we're in is letting us know that the issues brought up in the streets and classrooms will not be resolved even with rigorous piecemeal organizational efforts. What I would like to see this group generate is a commitment to rethinking the university itself. I've repeated that there are certain ways in which the paradigm of equity/diversity/inclusion is part of the problem. Those approaches focus on student and faculty retention and recruitment and less on the system. I do not think the process of strategic planning is adequate for the response. Also, we need to take seriously the traction on totally rethinking campus policing and safety.

- o **(Response):** Through this process, how can we try to get at some of those systemic issues? We do not want to approach in a piecemeal fashion but we do want to think about how we could fundamentally address these issues.
- o **(Response):** Let's be humble with this process and realize that this group and the Strategic Plan is not in a position to find answers. There is a possibility for this group to raise meta questions and those who have more expertise can refine. Still, the rigorous formulation of the right questions will take a lot more effort institutionally, perhaps at the UC level instead of UCR level. The issues we are raising should be broader and I want to push back against the tendency to provincialize them to just student issues.

(Discussion Point): This Steering Committee does not see ourselves figuring this all out but responding to these issues does have to be part of everything UCR does, including this. We have to recognize that these issues and inequalities are reproduced over and over again in the context within which we exist. I would like to have programs, policies and more, but right now is a time for me to reflect on the fact that the way I am, as a white male, means that I am at high risk for being ignorant to someone's experience. I've thought about how I can participate and be better myself, but this is a problem for all of us.

(Discussion Point): At UCR, there is periodic flight of black faculty members and the reasons for their flight from UCR are different and complex, but often overlapping. One of the points we need to understand is that the message the people in the street are articulating about the anti-black state violence is an institutional culture. It is not limited to a university or organization.

(Discussion Point): Only about 35% of our staff identify as white. We must ask if the significant inequity between faculty and staff is directly resulting from the institutional equity issues of a predominantly white faculty and a staff that is predominantly of color. Why are staff constantly fighting for power and voice? UCR staff traditionally have not had power. Also, I have heard from many staff that these questions we are discussing today are not being asked at the staff level. The conversations are being had mostly at the faculty level which is problematic.

Discussion Prompt: Is the Strategic Plan going to land in the right spot in connection with diversity, equity, and inclusiveness (DEI)? Should it be more prominently in the plan, perhaps in the mission, vision, and values section? How does UCR as an institution feel about those things? How can UCR ingrain those values in everything it does?

(Discussion Point): This plan must reflect a commitment to DEI in every single part; having a diversity section implies that it is separate from the rest of our efforts. This plan is not going to solve our problems but it cannot remain silent on the issues that face our students, staff, and faculty. We need to acknowledge that these issues will be going on forever and that people will need to address them in a variety of ways.

(Discussion Point): Recently, a friend asked, "Why don't black and brown people join the police force and do it right?" I understood where he was coming from but the problem is the institution of the police not the demographic of the police. When we talk about DEI, we are talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion into what? A broken infrastructure? The first thing we could do is question the DEI mission of the UC system. What is it good at doing and what is it terribly unsuited for? What issues does it produce instead of resolve?

Discussion Prompt: A strategic plan is a touchstone for the institution, something to revisit to check in on goals. In it, we can certainly state a commitment in the mission and values but do we want to do something more? We want to weave these values throughout the document. It is also hard to imagine a strategic plan that wouldn't in some way reflect the current pandemic and racial justice moment.

(Discussion Point): The working groups are looking at who UCR wants to be in five to ten (and more) years out and addressing some of these issues to help us get there. We've done a good job identifying those problems but so did reports from five and ten years ago. We have to do something more. One thing I've observed is the militarization of police officers where it was unnecessary. As a

campus community with a campus police force, we have an opportunity to redefine what police and safety means. For example, police armed in a shooting situation is helpful but having them armed coming into mental health situations is completely inappropriate. It is worth us giving it some consideration as part of this plan.

(Discussion Point): One of the messages we are getting back from our students is, "Enough talk – let's see some action." Let's craft the narrative references in a way that doesn't just redefine existing problems but explains how the institution will change.

Discussion Prompt: How should the plan reflect our commitment to these issues?

(Discussion Point): Each group needs to have a discussion on this at a practical level.

(Discussion Point): An example of having the plan reflect our commitment to these issues is how the SIOF working group addressed the environment. Environmental justice is an important term and the problems we have in our environment do not fall uniformly across the population. We have addressed this, now, in our document.

(Discussion Point): This is a difficult conversation to have but we must all resolve to have these conversations about social injustices and racial inequities. Over the past few days, I've been reviewing a paper that uses skin and hair samples and it looked like a pretty good paper. However, because of what was happening this week, I reviewed it through a more critical lens and realized it was thinking only of European hair. This moment reminded me that I need to always be looking at the bigger picture. I should be thinking critically about these things when I'm organizing a research proposal, I should be citing black scientists, and I should be expanding what I'm learning and expecting of myself, my team and my department.

(Discussion Point): We need concrete outcomes. It is important to have prospective conversations about metrics. There are issues that we already discussed 5-10 years ago. What would it mean to dramatically increase the representation of faculty? What would it mean for African American students to feel like this was a university of choice? We already have better than average representation in certain disciplines. Maybe we start thinking about equity reviews, recruitment in other disciplines, etc. These are the kinds of things that are the implementation piece to this discussion on values. What are the few places where we can plant a flag and have control over it? We know that some of these systemic issues are not going to get fixed at UCR but we still need to make serious progress here.

(Discussion Point): Toxic cultures fester in our community at multiple levels and make it exceedingly difficult for individuals to stand up against it. We talk a lot about separate issues with staff, faculty, and administrators, but the roots of the toxic cultures at UCR cross those boundaries. Regarding the research area of our document, we should address things that build into a systemic issue of racism. Further, UCR must produce things and discoveries that are of value to communities of color and do the work to ensure those discoveries make it into the communities that need them. A value statement in that area starts to embrace an identity of who we are as a campus and how we would begin to think about it from a way that would complement each of the roles involved (staff, faculty, administrators).

(Discussion Point): At what point do we say we are going to fully fund every black graduate student that comes to campus? We know what the problems are, these things are not going away but we are in a position to make a declarative statement and not one that is words but one that is action. When does the rubber hit the road here? That is my question to you all. We could come up with actionable items. Also, what is tragically ironic is that we have acknowledged these issues but why are there no black students taking part in this process. Brian's and Tom experience on BSE, is a start but why can't we have some synergy between our group and theirs?

> **(Response):** There is a challenge in that we are operating under Proposition 209 which disallows what you are suggesting. The Regents, as I read in the paper, are looking at a measure to overturn prop 209. We should think very seriously about what we can build into the strategic plan to make change happen if Proposition 209 is successfully overturned.

> **(Response):** We can come up with even more bold actions. For example, the strategic plan could instruct UCR to do everything in our power to overturn that legislation. We know that URM grad students have a 33-38% graduation rate; we could fix this by giving them more funding to stay in their programs. We could also take student claims against professors more seriously and put more teeth into the reporting process. Then, students might be more likely to report their issues and we can make significant progress toward a healthier culture and community.

(Discussion Point): If this group is not the one best suited to find answers, why don't we involve whoever does need to be involved and make them part of the strategic plan?

> **(Response):** In this group, we have only one person representing the African American faculty and I would like to hear their voices. I propose forming a short-term group that invites all of the black faculty on campus to discuss as they likely have much more to add. We can empathize with the pain but it is a different experience for people who are truly feeling it. Could we invite some of the black faculty to a meeting? Maybe then we can tackle some of the problems that they discuss.

> **(Response):** White faculty should also get together to talk about how they can do better. To the points raised on toxic culture – how can we make it so that the everyone on campus community has the agency to speak up?

> **(Response):** General concern about having separate groups discuss these issues. This is about everyone and is all of our problem to deal with. In my college, I have a small group of black faculty members but I cannot rely on them to tell us what to do. We need to be inclusive and we need to have people to lead on these issues. If one of my black faculty wants to lead that is great but I cannot put that on them.

(Discussion Point): Could we formally address these issues in the strategic plan with enough specifics and descriptive bold gestures so that they are taken seriously and help UCR move forward? We've put a few great ideas on the table today but more conversations like this, with more people, can help us find 5 or 6 transformative actions that UCR can take so that, in a few years, it would be evident that this institution creatively and boldly sought to remedy these issues.

(Discussion Point): There is a tolerance of bullying on our campus that is at the heart of the culture of abuse, privilege, and silence around the indignities. I don't know how to solve that, it is a

multivariate problem that requires many different solutions. One of the most powerful experiences for the leadership of the campus was in 2010 when the chancellor at the time had a small group of students come in and talk about their experience. The treatment they described was heart breaking. We need to hear those truths and reconcile them against the current culture.

(Discussion Point): This is not just an issue for subgroups of our committees, it is our issue to deal with head on and collectively. In our May meeting, I talked about what Georgia State University has been doing and I have asked this committee and my working group what UCR could do. We need to start actively embracing diversity and have the accountability mentioned in previous comments. UCR cares about diversity so we must ask and answer: What have we done in our graduate program recruitment? What have we done in retention? Where have we put our money?

> **(Response):** It is important this plan is clear on where we put our money. If it does not reflect these values or these ideas strongly enough it will be too easy in challenging times to orient resources away from these issues and fail at our goals.

(Discussion Point): There needs to be strategies in the document. If it is difficult to get to the immediate strategy (for example, offering funding to black students), then we need to get at the intermediate strategy (e.g. lobbying to overturn Proposition 209). From admissions to policing, this plan must have bold ideas here and set the bar high.

(Discussion Point): We cannot forget to address ideas of culture, especially related to toxic culture and tolerance of bullying. We are not actively enforcing the kind of environment we claim we want.

(Discussion Point): We work backward from where we would like to be in terms of DEI and racial equity to map out the course of plans and accountability measures that will help us get there and make sure everyone is playing their part.

(Discussion Point): It is important for us to reach out to other groups, reflect on where we feel our campus is falling short, and listen to other people. We cannot rely on any one group to provide us with 5-6 goals to improve racial justice.

Closing comments: This discussion is only starting. Please continue these conversations in the working groups and with our colleagues. Push conversations that we might have been hesitant to have in the past. Open up those dialogues and listen for ways for us to improve. It needs to be part of our plan.

Discussion of Framework for the UCR Strategic Plan

The second part of today's meeting is revisiting the framework and discussing if we are moving in the right direction. Is the strategy we put forward correct? Are we missing anything critically important?

Discussion Prompt: Strategic Goals: Do the four strategic goals reflect the right priorities for UCR? Will focusing on these areas allow UCR to transform itself into the institution it aspires to be? Does the final section "Enabling Our Goals," feel right, now that we've pulled environmental sustainability out of it and focused the section on resources to support the University's strategic goals?

> **(Discussion Point):** The first goal, "A Rigorous, Engaging, and Empowering Learning Environment" is still too generic; how could we be more specific? Also, if we keep this general language, consider reordering it to Empowering, Engaging, and Rigorous.

- UCR has a good undergraduate foundation but we need to do more for graduate. Do we want UCR to become the champion for Hispanic PhD Students? Serve as a national pipeline?
- UCR also has a track record of supporting the first-generation student movement. Could we be a destination university for first generation PhD students? The USE group is having several lively discussions around this idea, but they are still in the exploration mode.
- Whether or not these goals are big/bold enough? Some of our committee things that the AAU goal will be long passed 30 years from now.

(Discussion Point): If the writing of the strategic plan continues to be an engaging process (engaging with campus, working groups, steering committee) then we are on the right track. But the SIOF working group submitted some written feedback. One of the major points was that we do agree it is okay for sustainability to be cross-cutting but that the term itself needs to be clearly defined somewhere in the document, because it can be understood in many ways. Another major point of our feedback is that the current framework addressed only resource sustainability. What about policy sustainability, environmental sustainability, etc. No other major concerns but we did provide a few other suggestions in our written feedback.

(Discussion Point): What is next for this document – USE is eager to write and correct things and we have lots of comments on this document that I'm not sure I could adequately express here today. Should we provide written comments?

> **(Response)** The question right now is *If the ultimate strategic plan looks like this – in this format, would this be okay? Would we end up in a place where you feel like we accomplished our objective?* We can do the wordsmithing later on but we will begin filling out the framework into a first draft over the summer and before we begin we want to know if we are moving in the right direction, as these four goals largely came out of the work that your groups are doing.

(Discussion Point): In the first goal, staff are missing. There is a true and significant impact of staff in the dissemination of knowledge and they need to be included. Especially after a discussion of being inclusive. This was pointed out in the previous meeting but did not make it into the most recent revision.

> **(Responses)** Several in the room echo the importance of including staff in the first goal.

(Discussion Point): If we look at each of the four goals, they describe the other four working groups, but with titles reworked. Are there other cross-cutting themes that should be the goals themselves?

(Discussion Point): What is the relationship between the working group reports and the overall project? It seems like the reports will be incorporated into the overall project but how they differ from the end product?

> **(Response):** Working group reports will be longer and more detailed. The framework should look like the discussions of working groups. We are creating an iterative process that considers what comes out of working groups and all of the feedback received from campus. Once that is all sewn together, we will look for more feedback. With the work of the groups juxtaposed, we ask: does it seem to fit together in such a way that we can clearly see the cross-cutting issues?

Or, in our combination efforts did we miss something? We ask this today about the framework and will ask it again once we have a written draft.

(Discussion Point): This is a good framework, however, there is much more to add. I'd like to create a single page document for the framework with suggestions of what I'd like to see in the drafted document – would that be helpful?

> (Response: Tom Smith) We have incorporated what the working groups have already done and put it into the framework. Last meeting, we received your initial feedback and since then we have adjusted. Today, we would like your feedback on the revised version before we begin working on a full draft over the summer.

> We are asking for your feedback now because we didn't want to get too far along before we started the back and forth. We will continue to reach out over the summer

> We also hope that this framework helps to inform the rest of your writing efforts; perhaps guiding you to where we might need a greater level of detail and strategies developed.

(Discussion Point): The working group reports provide content from which the strategic plan can draw. Not everything in the reports will make it into the Strategic Plan, but the reports will become repositories and become especially important when we talk about implementation.

(Discussion Point): Sustainable Policy didn't come out as important in this draft as it should have. Concrete goals that end up being part of budgetary processes are vital so that our goals are not easily left aside.

Next Steps and Final Comments (Tom Smith)

Today we have presented you with a second version of the framework, a skeleton. This does not yet have all of the parts and we have not presented you with a body yet – I want to make that clear. Our goal now is to take all of the feedback from today, and any other feedback that your groups can give us right now, and put together a rough draft. We'll work throughout July and into August putting more words down and trying to accomplish the goals that have been highlighted.

By August, we will have a draft for the Steering Committee to review. We do not currently have an August Steering Committee meeting scheduled; what do you think of coming back together in August to provide some feedback on the first rough draft? (*General agreement.*) In August, we'll also ask you to tell us how things are going in your working groups and share your thoughts about how your work is connecting to the larger strategic plan. We will try our best to meet the collective vision but, like Crystal did today, please be vocal about important things that didn't make it through revisions - even if you have already told us.

By October, we will have a full draft of the strategic plan ready to share with campus. By the same time, your groups will have your finalized reports. To accomplish these tasks, our efforts must run in parallel. Just as we will reach out to the working groups for ideas, we hope you will look to the drafted strategic plan for ideas and strategies that you'd like to develop further in your reports.

This is an iterative process that requires your help and we will be asking you again and again: Do you see your ideas in the narrative? Does this work for you? Is this likely to motivate people? Might this help set budgetary priorities? And so on.

We have not yet decided when we will bring in other voices from campus. Summer is not the best time to be organizing additional town halls. But, as we move into fall, it will be important for us and the working groups to see how our content plays with faculty, staff, and students.

Fall may be as challenging of a quarter as this past Spring was, and possibly in ways that we can't yet anticipate but we would still like to have a final strategic plan in January.

(Question) Can the working groups have a template for their final report?

(Response) Ultimately it is the working groups' call how they structure their report but yes, we will share a template. We will also share guidance for the August meeting and some next steps for the working group members and non-working group members of the Steering Committee.

Adjournment *(Tom Smith)*

I'd like to close by thanking everyone for their participation in both components of this meeting. In the beginning, we had honest and heartfelt participation in discussion of what we need to do as a campus to address racial justice and how that needs to fit into our planning efforts, even tentatively. The second part of today's meeting provided us with good feedback on the structure of the plan. Both discussions must be married and hopefully we will be successful in putting together all of this feedback into the next draft the committee receives. We look forward to your continued feedback.