

March 17, 2025

Professor Kathleen Bawn
Chair, Academic Senate

Dear Chair Bawn,

Thank you for your letter dated March 10, 2025, and the accompanying assessment by the Graduate Council regarding graduate education funding at UCLA. We appreciate your thoughtful examination and the urgency you have highlighted.

We agree that graduate education funding at UCLA faces structural deficits, intensified by recent reductions in federal support, and that the current decentralized model requires substantial reform. As you are aware, we have already established an implementation task force charged with examining potential funding models based on both joint campus and joint UC reports, which were created with substantial input from senate members and leadership. The academic senate's role in budgetary matters is advisory, and these joint reports constitute significant advisory input from the senate. While the implementation task forces discussions should remain confidential at this initial stage, we believe that providing periodic, high-level updates and briefings to Senate leadership would be beneficial, and we will ensure that this occurs to maintain transparency and strengthen collaboration.

We concur with your analysis highlighting the urgency of the funding concerns. We are carefully analyzing the budget to make thoughtful reductions that will minimize negative impacts on UCLA's academic excellence. The academic mission is intrinsically intertwined with UCLA's administration and operations. There are many dependencies between our investments in "non-academic" functions and our ability to deliver exceptional teaching, research and service.

One approach that we are likely to take to increase operational efficiency is increased centralization of currently decentralized functions, such as human resources, IT services, and finance. Historically, when such changes have been proposed, the faculty have been opposed and have advocated for the continuation of decentralized services. Decentralization is cost-ineffective and expensive. If we are committed as a campus community to doing "whatever it takes to protect the academic mission and research enterprise," as you state in your letter, then we must have the support of the faculty to create efficiency in operational realms. Our aim is to enhance the quality of these services at the same time as we are increasing centralization, with the goal of maintaining or improving the quality of support.

Effectively addressing our current budget crisis will require some adjustments to our academic and research missions as well. Our goal remains to thoughtfully distribute any necessary adjustments across the institution, strategically preserving UCLA's excellence in all arenas, including graduate education and research.

We appreciate your partnership in the spirit of shared governance and will need your support to help the faculty understand that trade-offs are necessary and sacrifices are inevitable. We look forward to continuing to discuss these important matters in our upcoming meetings.

Sincerely,

Julio Frenk
Chancellor

Darnell M. Hunt
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Yolanda Gorman, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Chief of Staff,
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
Brian Kite, Dean and Vice Provost, Division of Graduate Education
Emily Le, Principal Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Emily Rose, Assistant Provost and Chief of Staff to the
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