

# Size and Shape Working Group UC Commission on the Future

## PROPOSED AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

Version 4

December 18, 2009

The question of the future size and shape of the University of California has been identified by the Commission on the Future of UC as one of the areas of inquiry that needs urgent consideration, debate and discussion. This is particularly so in the face of the extremely difficult financial circumstances in which UC has been placed over the last decade and, more critically, in the last year and into the near future, due to its deteriorating state funding base. The Size and Shape Working Group has been asked to make recommendations, by late March 2010, about UC's external associations and internal workings that might better help envision its configuration and goals as a public research university, its relationship with other state educational institutions, and its expected role in the state economy and work force.

The overarching issue that prompts concern about UC's future is the place of education among state priorities. Related to an understanding of the state's commitment to UC is the appropriate vision of the Master Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How does UC continue to meet state needs, given the changing demographics of its future student population? How does UC continue to address and improve its commitment to excellence, access and affordability and to offer undergraduate and graduate students the best educational experience possible? How does UC continue to operate if severe funding constraints remain the order of the day?

The Size and Shape Working Group is composed of some 20 members that include UC faculty, regents, students, administrators, staff and non-UC individuals whose expertise and interests dovetail with University issues. Since the beginning of November 2009, the Working Group has been meeting regularly via video-conference calls, either as a full committee or in sub-committees that deal with the external issues involving the entire California educational system, and internal issues revolving around the ten campuses' relationship with the UC Office of the President and among themselves.

### **I. External Issues** (related to the Master Plan)

**A. The Role of UC within California Higher Education.** Decisions UC makes about programs, enrollments, and entrance requirements affect every other segment of California education – public schools, California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU), and independent colleges and universities. How should decisions about the size and shape of UC be coordinated with decisions made by each of the segments and the state as a whole concerning the size and shape of California K through 12 and higher education?

- How can we reconcile the priorities of UC and the State of California with available resources?
- How can the State's most important needs be prioritized among the educational segments?

- What should be the relationship among the segments of higher education in California (UC, CSU, CCC, and AICCU)? Is there unnecessary duplication? Are there more efficient ways to envision and articulate this relationship?
- How well does UC handle intersegmental issues between educational institutions, such as transfer and articulation? Can greater intersegmental collaboration improve how education is delivered? Are there new directions that UC could or should take in dealing with these issues?

NB: Related factors: demography, budget

**B. The Size of the University in the Future.** UC, as a land grant institution, has a mission to serve the state through teaching, research, and public service. How can UC best meet state needs? If state support for UC continues to diminish, how would aspects of the current mission be altered? Do new aspects need to be introduced? What is the appropriate size and shape of the University going forward?

UC's growth over the past 40 years has been driven largely by the priority placed by the state on providing capacity for ever-growing numbers of high school graduates. Graduate student education has not kept pace with the economic and work-force needs of the State. In addition, graduate student growth has not kept pace with undergraduate student growth. Decreased growth in the high school population, combined with the state's increasing need for specialized graduate and professional education, present both a challenge and an opportunity to re-think the optimal size and mix of academic programs.

- What is the optimum size of the University? What should be the overall number of students? What should be the size of the campuses? Should UC strive for campuses of different sizes? What should be the number of campuses in the UC system?
- How big does UC need to be to meet state needs in terms of UC's mission of teaching, research and public service? Should we continue to provide access to all qualified students?
- Size of the freshmen class compared to high school graduates: Are there alternatives to the present paradigm?
- Proportion of community college transfers: Are there alternatives to the present paradigm?
- Should UC maintain a certain number/proportion of graduate/professional students and a certain distribution of these numbers across the campuses?

NB: Overlap with the "Access and Affordability" workgroup.

## **II. Internal Issues**

Traditionally, the University has grown and achieved excellence by being a single statewide entity with individual campuses that have a high degree of independence in managing their own affairs, especially in determining academic character and direction. As the number and prestige of the campuses have grown, there has been an effort at UC to define what activities belong at the center and what are best decentralized to the campuses. If the trend of declining state support continues, it is important to revisit what can best be accomplished as a single entity, where it is best to provide autonomy to campuses or academic units, and in what new ways can our strength as one system be leveraged to improve overall excellence.

**A. Roles of the Office of the President and of the campuses (as individual units and as part of the UC system).** Where should administrative functions, educational practices, research endeavors and forms of service be uniform across the system and where do we explicitly value campus individuality? UC has ten unique campuses and thus ten models for best practices. How should UC foster the sharing and adoption of best practices?

- What are campus roles and responsibilities?
- What are UCOP roles and responsibilities?
- What are our collaborative responsibilities (combinations of campuses, UCOP, and the system as a whole)?
- How do campuses relate to one another and the system? How might this interaction be enhanced and strengthened?
- Is there a shared identity that is UC, irrespective of campus or discipline? How do we create a common understanding of that identity and foster it?
- Should the current campus funding model be modified to increase the effectiveness of the University?

**B. Breadth / specialization / collaboration in academic programs**

- Which research and teaching programs and where?
- Are there alternative ways for campuses to draw on their strengths through collaboration in other areas?
- Can we think of good models of programs and faculty efforts that benefit the system as a whole?
- How can departments of different sizes benefit from collaboration across campuses?

**III. How can *interdisciplinarity* complement and advance *interinstitutionality* (the interaction and mutual reinforcement of institutions of higher education in California)?**