

## *Essay 1. Academic Strategic Planning*

### *Introduction*

Over the past decade, UCLA has focused on the challenges of sustaining excellence and enhancing competitiveness in the face of the State's changing needs and conditions. The institution's planning processes, which continue to evolve, have been essential to our ability to meet these challenges. In addition, the changing environment invited us to re-assess the alignment of resources with our strategic priorities. In this essay, we demonstrate how UCLA plans its fiscal and physical resources to be certain that they are effectively aligned with our educational and research objectives.

Planning at UCLA is inclusive, iterative, and comprehensive. It embraces all Professional Schools, all Divisions of the College of Letters and Science, and all administrative units directed by Vice Chancellors or Associate Vice Chancellors (see UCLA's [Organizational Chart](#)<sup>1</sup>). UCLA faculty contribute substantially to campus planning, first through departmental planning, then through membership on Faculty Executive Committees that review pending strategic plans with their relevant deans, and lastly through membership on the Academic Senate Council on Planning and Budget, which reviews academic plans and offers feedback and recommendations to the Chancellor. Chancellorial initiatives frequently find their way into institutional planning, and UCLA's planning is also influenced and sometimes mandated by the UC Office of the President and the State.

Assessment, specifically [performance indicators](#)<sup>2</sup>, was one of three themes in the last WASC review. In its [1998 reaccreditation letter](#)<sup>3</sup>, the Commission noted: "With respect to performance indicators, the University has established a strong foundation, and the Commission hopes that the University will continue to develop this theme and lead other institutions in developing useful strategic indicators of excellence." As will be evident in this essay and others, UCLA continues to promote a culture of evidence where performance indicators, data, and analysis inform planning and decision planning.

This essay begins with a focus on the decade following the last WASC review; this period coincided with the tenure of Albert Carnesale as UCLA's eighth Chancellor, from 1997-2006. The essay concludes with a look to the future, as Gene Block—UCLA's ninth Chancellor—begins his term and initiates a planning process designed to advance the campus toward its centennial year in 2019.

### *Academic Planning from 1997-2006*

At the end of his first year of office, Chancellor Carnesale issued the vision paper, [Strategy for a Great University](#)<sup>4</sup> that laid out three broad themes for UCLA: strengthening the foundations; crossing academic boundaries; and focusing on excellence. These stimulated a variety of central and local initiatives over the next eight years. As these internal efforts were underway, UCLA faced two unexpected challenges: the State and the UC Office of the President mandated an increase in undergraduate enrollment, and shortly thereafter, the campus faced dramatic budget cuts. UCLA's response to these challenges serve as case studies of UCLA's planning processes and outcomes.

**1) A Decade of Enrollment Growth.** In Fall 1999, UC President Richard Atkinson increased enrollment targets for each campus to assure that the University could accommodate California's growing population of UC-eligible applicants. UCLA was asked to increase its student body by 4,000 student FTE beyond planned levels by 2010-11, bringing our target to 34,110 student FTE. There can be a difference between student FTE and headcount depending on the average number of units students take; a student FTE is calculated as a student averaging 15 units/quarter. If a student averages 12 units during the academic year, that student will be the equivalent of a 0.8 student FTE.

Enrollment growth brought new resources to the UC, but the additional funds did not fully cover costs of faculty recruitment and set-up, graduate assistants, administrative and library support, and capital needs. Growth also put pressure on the physical environment and infrastructure. Initially, the State hoped to minimize the capital costs of growth by directing campuses to grow their summer programs. Eventually, the State provided workload funding to support UC student enrollments in Summer Session, allowing the campuses to bring Summer Session fees into alignment with regular session fees and establish a financial aid program. These steps encouraged growth in Summer Session enrollments.

UCLA initiated four steps to plan for growth. First, following campuswide consultation, the Chancellor and Executive Vice Chancellor (later called the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, or EVC/Provost) presented a set of principles in a [letter](#)<sup>5</sup> to the campus, with the intent of protecting quality and competitiveness despite external pressures. Second, as an overlay to the annual planning and budget cycle, each dean was invited to submit a proposal for enrollment growth over the 10-year period from 2001-02 to 2010-11. The [enrollment plans](#)<sup>6</sup> were submitted in March 2000. The Administration and the Academic Senate through its Council on Planning and Budget then conducted separate analyses of the plans. Third, a taskforce on Summer Programming was convened to develop summer programming that would attract more students. Fourth, the Chancellor established the [Chancellor's Enrollment Advisory Committee](#)<sup>7</sup> charged with linking short-term enrollment targets to long-term goals and to provide continuity in enrollment planning. Members include enrollment administrators, College and professional school deans, student leaders, and Academic Senate leaders.

After a year of review, the Chancellor [announced](#)<sup>8</sup> enrollment targets for each school. Growth allocations enabled UCLA to move closer to desired enrollment distributions and, in particular, to improve the student-faculty ratio in the College. They also enabled UCLA to respond to special UC initiatives to increase the numbers of engineers, educators, and nurses. At about the same time, the Administrative Vice Chancellor released UCLA's Housing Master [Plan](#)<sup>9</sup>, providing a pathway for UCLA to follow in its quest to become a residential university for lower division students.

In planning for enrollment growth, UCLA set two specific goals related to institutional performance indicators: 1) to increase student workload (average number of units taken over three quarters), and 2) to decrease the time-to-degree for undergraduate students. To meet its target, the College planned to minimize the impact of these numbers by increasing the number of units that undergraduates took per quarter, thereby closing the gap between student FTE and student headcount. The College also increased expectations for student progress and provided new options to help students enroll in more units, including new 1-unit *Fiat Lux* seminars and 5-unit lower-division courses (instead of the traditional 4-unit courses), which met the new General Education requirements (see *Essay 4*). These innovations improved students' educational experiences by offering seminar experiences for freshmen and improved GE courses. These changes had important effects: in 1998-99, a typical lower-division student's enrollment represented 0.923 of a student FTE and by 2005-06 this indicator reached parity (1.0). At the same time, the percent of freshmen graduating within four years increased by 10% (see [workload data](#)<sup>10</sup>).

The campus also expanded its use of [Summer Sessions](#)<sup>11</sup> to accommodate UCLA's enrollment target. Summer enrollments doubled from 1,207 student FTE in 2001 to 2,491 FTE in 2002 and then leveled off at about 2,600 FTE. Growth in summer programs has given students more flexibility, helped improve time-to-degree, and enabled students to pursue opportunities such as education abroad or internships without losing ground. Furthermore, Summer Sessions has become an important part of the campus economy, generating funds that are distributed directly to departments (based on the student credit hours generated).

UCLA made rapid progress toward its assigned enrollment goal. As of Fall 2007, UCLA had nearly reached its [target](#)<sup>12</sup> due to increased headcount (without any diminution in quality due to the extraordinarily high number of applicants UCLA received), decreased time-to-degree and higher unit

loads per quarter, increased summer enrollments, and achieved higher retention rates. In sum, the campus managed to meet new demands related to “Tidal Wave II” and, through creative planning, increased the quality of education and overall competitiveness of the campus.

**2) Maintaining a Competitive Edge in the Face of a State Budget Crisis.** One year after enrollment targets were announced, a sharp downturn in California’s economy led to budget cuts. Between 2002-03 and 2004-05, the State of California reduced UCLA permanent support by \$140 million. Students replaced \$80 million of that amount in increased fees, for a net permanent loss of \$60 million. UCLA also sustained a \$146 million cut in temporary funds, along with a cut of over \$50 million in anticipated new funding. Among other measures, savings were achieved by forgoing cost of living increases. A hiring freeze, primarily for staff, created workload pressures but provided some flexible resources.

Constrained resources motivate planning because they force an institution to set priorities. UCLA’s highest priority was to maintain its overall competitiveness. Since faculty are key to the effectiveness of UCLA’s teaching and research missions, faculty recruitment and retention emerged as the most important factors. In order to protect academic departments and programs as much as possible, administrative units absorbed a disproportionate share of the cuts; for example, Student Affairs sustained a 17% budget cut over this 4-year period.

A leadership retreat in Fall 2002 devoted to the theme of competitiveness generated a number of ideas for increasing efficiency. In follow-up, the Chancellor asked the EVC/Provost to chair a Competitiveness Taskforce, comprising a subset of faculty Academic Senate leaders, deans, and senior administrators. The April 2003 taskforce [report](#)<sup>13</sup> included eight recommendations addressing four themes: increasing resources for the academic core; redirecting resources to optimize competitiveness; enhancing faculty competitiveness, and improving procedures that affect academic priorities. Following extensive consultation, the Chancellor adopted the recommendations and submitted them to an Implementation Committee for operational planning. Although not every recommendation was fully implemented, a number of important and enduring programs and policies emerged:

1. an initiative to increase the number of endowed professorships and graduate fellowships;
2. implementation of a revised mortgage assistance program for new faculty;
3. appointment of a [Campus Space Committee](#)<sup>14</sup> to implement a new space planning process;
4. appointment of a Performance Indicators Committee (that later became the Key Academic Indicators Advisory Committee), charged with identifying data to be used in the annual budget process;
5. creation of a Research Resource Allocation Committee to study how the campus can strengthen support for research (e.g., indirect cost return issues); and
6. implementation of a 3- to 5-year strategic planning cycle in which units would develop strategic plans with annual budget management reviews.

Other improvements to UCLA’s educational and administrative effectiveness emerged indirectly from this process. For example, the Competitiveness Taskforce stimulated improvements in faculty recruitment procedures, especially related to housing issues, childcare, and spousal employment. These issues are vital to the recruitment and retention of all ladder faculty members but particularly to UCLA’s ability to build and maintain a diverse faculty (see *Essay 3* for further discussion).

Chancellor Carnesale’s *Strategy for a Great University* underscored the growing importance of interdisciplinary education and research to UCLA. Enrollment growth and budget cutbacks provided more tangible incentives for professional schools and the College to work together in order to function most efficiently. All of these factors pointed to the weaknesses of the “silo” structure so typical of research universities. Campus leadership, including the deans and the leaders of the Academic Senate,

agreed on the need to establish institution-wide priorities. Implementation of the Competitiveness Taskforce recommendation for strategic planning began in Spring 2005 with three mini-retreats on high-priority, cross-cutting initiatives that emerged from Carnesale's *Strategy*: biosciences, international studies, and the arts. A Fall 2005 retreat of campus leaders focused how the institution could continue to foster interdisciplinary scholarship (see *Essay 7* for further discussion of this issue).

As a compact between the Governor and the UC stabilized the University's budget, Chancellor Carnesale and EVC/Provost Daniel Neuman asked the deans and vice chancellors to submit a three-year (2006-09) strategic plan, with linkages to one or more of the institutional initiatives that had emerged over the past six years. After plans were submitted (and some posted on the EVC/Provost [web](#)<sup>15</sup>), the EVC/Provost, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Budget, and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget held two individual meetings with every dean and vice chancellor: one on budgetary issues and one on the substance of the strategic plan. Copies of the plans also were provided to the Council on Planning and Budget for further analysis and comment. Following a review of all these materials and analyses, the Chancellor responded to their resource requests and commented on their plans. UCLA is now in the third year of its 3-year planning cycle, and will evaluate the next phase during the coming year.

### ***Looking Ahead: Planning for the Next Decade and UCLA's Centennial in 2019***

The 2007-08 academic year marks the half-way point of the 3-year strategic planning cycle described above. This year the institution will focus on central planning activities rather than school-based plans. WASC accreditation provides an opportunity to reflect on the past and focus on future directions. In addition, UCLA will soon begin work on a new Long-Range Development Plan (a State mandate). While this is primarily a capital plan, it must rest on institution-wide academic plans. UCLA also faces a call for long term enrollment planning (through 2020) from the Office of the President. The arrival of Gene Block as Chancellor provides further impetus to set a well-articulated and broadly endorsed course of action, particularly for the four significant challenges UCLA faces: 1) succession planning; 2) graduate student enrollment; 3) effective use of performance indicators; and 4) institutional strategic planning. The remainder of this essay discusses these challenges.

**1) Succession Planning by Recruiting and Retaining Top Faculty and Administrators.** Chancellor Gene Block began his service as UCLA's ninth Chancellor on August 1, 2007. Over the next few years, UCLA anticipates a higher-than-usual number of retirements among deans, vice chancellors and other key administrators, as well as among faculty and staff. The average age of UCLA's senior academic leadership is over 55, with close to 20 years of service, meaning that there will be a considerable loss of institutional memory. Market forces throughout the higher education sector are driving salaries up. Intense competition among top universities means that compensation for new hires will be far higher than current salary rates of those with long-term University experience, creating retention and equity problems as well as budgetary and political pressures.

Faculty recruitment and retention is also highly competitive and increasingly expensive. UCLA competes against top private universities that have more resources and can move quickly. That UCLA was able to retain most of its talented faculty during the recent budget crisis is evidence of its competitive ability. This, however, is an ongoing challenge, and UCLA is increasingly asked to address faculty family needs, such as housing, childcare, schooling for children, and spousal employment. Current procedural requirements call for the UC Office of the President and, under some circumstances, the UC Regents to approve high-level faculty and administrative appointments. This limits UCLA's autonomy and agility. Regardless of systemwide practices, UCLA must become more proactive about succession planning.

UCLA's superbly successful [Campaign UCLA](#)<sup>16</sup> has made a tremendous difference in faculty recruitment and retention, since over \$605 million (out of over \$3 billion raised) was designated for

faculty research and support such as endowed chairs. The goal of the [Ensuring Academic Excellence Campaign](#)<sup>17</sup> now underway is to raise funds for 100 endowed chairs for our best faculty. Such campaigns will be key to UCLA's continued success.

**2) Graduate Student Enrollment Planning and Support.** Competition for graduate students is nearly as fierce as competition for faculty. And, as in the case of faculty, graduate student recruitment is therefore expensive. The major problem UCLA faces in Ph.D. student recruitment is its ability to offer competitive support packages. Elite private universities are able to offer generous multi-year packages, far beyond what UCLA can offer in most of the disciplines. In response, UCLA's *Ensuring Academic Excellence Campaign* seeks to raise \$150 million for fellowships and scholarships.

Because of these costs, UCLA has limited its recruitment of graduate students in some areas in order to ensure that students are adequately supported, given the limited funds available. Seeking to emphasize quality, many departments have restricted admissions. While graduate students constitute about one quarter of UCLA's student body, enrollment in Ph.D. programs is lower, constituting less than 10% of students in the College.

In an attempt to handle this problem, the Executive Dean of the College has set aside \$4.5 million over three years for Ph.D. support; in addition, the Chancellor has increased support through additional allocations to the Graduate Division. In recent years, the UC Office of the President has focused on the importance of graduate education to the State and the UC, recently providing modest supplemental funding for non-resident graduate student support. At UCLA, as the number of graduate students grows, we must consider decreasing the number of undergraduates to avoid becoming (more) over-enrolled. With over 50,000 applications for about 4,500 slots in the freshman class, it is important to rebalance enrollment in a deliberate manner across student levels, departments, and degree programs.

**3) Effective Use of Key Academic (Performance) Indicators.** UCLA is fortunate to have the capacity to produce a wide range of data to guide decision-making and planning. A culture of evidence is apparent from our approach to admissions and enrollment planning to our assessment of graduating students' undergraduate experience. Virtually all of the required data elements that WASC requires are routinely generated and reviewed. Teaching workload data helps monitor faculty contributions to undergraduate instruction; course evaluations, class size data, and survey data provide insights into educational experiences. Through the Graduate Division, UCLA also produces a variety of indicators related to graduate education, including student characteristics (e.g., gender and diversity), time to degree, and post-graduate plans. Data on student, faculty, and staff diversity enable close attention to institutional progress toward its goals. A wide range of financial indicators guide budget planning. Special analyses and reports address a variety of institutional issues, from trends in undergraduate majors to the production of Ph.D's. Simply perusing the UCLA websites will yield a rich variety of data.

Until 2002, UCLA's institutional research group had only two analysts and could do little more than respond to mandated reporting requirements. Today, the [Office of Analysis and Information Management](#)<sup>18</sup> (AIM) has six analysts with greatly increased capacity and productivity. It also reports directly to a Vice Chancellor rather than an Assistant Vice Chancellor. Besides AIM, UCLA has analytic units dedicated to assessment and analysis for Student Affairs ([Student Affairs Information and Research Office](#)<sup>19</sup>), the Graduate Division ([Information Services](#)<sup>20</sup>), and the Division of Undergraduate Education ([Office of Undergraduate Evaluation and Research](#)<sup>21</sup>). The Office of Academic Planning and Budget provides extensive analyses of revenues, expenditures, and budgets for each school, College and division. Some of these analyses, such as those related to enrollment, sponsored research, and faculty renewal, are of direct relevance to academic performance.

Performance data are integral to the Academic Program Review (*Essay 2*), which at UCLA is managed by the Academic Senate mainly through the Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council. Data about student experiences, attitudes, and outcomes are incorporated into the program review

process, as described in that essay. A new and useful tool is the [UCLA College Senior Survey](#)<sup>22</sup>, developed jointly by the Division of Undergraduate Education, the College Faculty Executive Committee, and the Undergraduate Council, in collaboration with Student Affairs and the UCLA Alumni Association. First used in 2005, the survey asks graduating seniors to rate the quality of their educational experiences; results are disaggregated based on student characteristics and major.

The campus has improved performance data collection efforts over the last decade but more remains to be done. By 2005, the ad hoc performance indicators group was finalized as the Key Academic Indicators Advisory Committee. This group engaged faculty experts in educational assessment, Senate leaders, institutional research staff, and administrators in developing and refining a set of “at a glance” performance statistics for UCLA’s schools and the College. The [report](#)<sup>23</sup> of the Advisory Committee led to the current [Key Academic Indicator template](#)<sup>24</sup>. At this time, however, the template exists as a static document and is labor-intensive to update. We need to continue developing methods to increase efficiency and reduce burden. Another important goal is to engage deans more fully in assessment of their schools and programs. Although deans were asked to specify the indicators they would use to measure the effectiveness of their 3-year strategic plans, responses to this request were uneven. We expect this to become a more important component of the next cycle.

**4) Commitment to an Institutional Mission Statement and a Strategic Plan for UCLA.** Each of UCLA’s academic and administrative units has a strategic plan. The Chancellor and EVC/Provost sponsor a set of institutional initiatives. The campus has capital and space plans, enrollment plans, budget plans, educational technology plans (see *Essay 6*), housing plans, development plans, and more—but it does not have an overarching, fully developed strategic plan. The Fall 2007 retreat sponsored by the Chancellor’s Office provided an opportunity to acknowledge the need for such a plan and get to work.

During the first day of the retreat, deans, the vice chancellors, and Academic Senate officers began their work with discussions of institutional aspirations. Participants were asked to focus on UCLA’s goals for the next decade—the period leading to UCLA’s centennial in 2019. Chancellor Block introduced three overarching themes important to UCLA’s future: 1) UCLA’s continued commitment to educational excellence (also see *Essay 2* and *Essay 5*); 2) diversity (see *Essay 3*); and 3) civic engagement. On the second day, the focus shifted from self-reflection to a consideration of the external context affecting UCLA, such as demographic trends and community perceptions of UCLA. The final retreat session was devoted to discussion of implementation issues and next steps.

Retreat participants also received a draft [mission statement](#)<sup>25</sup> for UCLA. This statement, mandated by the UC President’s Office and WASC, was first discussed at a leadership meeting in May 2007. As of this writing, the statement has been reviewed by the deans, and circulated to the vice chancellors and Academic Senate for review and further consideration. This is the first time UCLA has developed a fully articulated statement of its tripartite mission (i.e., education, research, and service), and the WASC self review and attendant reflection were important factors in facilitating the process of creating the statement.

The mission statement, the themes that Chancellor Block presented at the retreat, and progress toward a shared set of aspirations for UCLA provide a strong foundation for institution-wide academic and strategic planning. By the time the WASC team arrives for the site visit in March 2008, UCLA will be in the early stages of developing a comprehensive strategic plan for the upcoming decade.

**Closing Comment.** The creativity, commitment, and collaboration that enabled UCLA to thrive over the past decade, despite unexpected circumstances, demonstrate the institutional capacity to develop and implement a wide variety of plans. Factors that contribute to successful planning at UCLA are shared governance; broad opportunities for participation and input by faculty, students, administrators, and staff; relevant and timely data and information; and, perhaps most important, determination to keep UCLA among the world’s top universities.