



UC “Promise & Power of 10” Campus Visits Final Report

Robert C. Dynes, President, University of California

Background

When I was named UC President in 2003, I made it clear that my overriding priority would be to sustain the quality of the University. By 2005, it was apparent to me, and I cautioned the Academic Council and various stakeholder groups, that the University’s quality was under siege on two fronts:

- UC faced growing competition for top faculty, students, and staff from peer institutions, particularly private universities with large endowments.
- UC faced mounting pressure to stratify the campuses (and the regions they serve) into “haves” and “have-nots.”

My strong belief at the time was that we should confront these challenges by using our collective strengths as one university with 10 campuses in a more strategic way.

At around the same time, in an effort to bolster’s UC’s transformative impact on California, I convened the “UC 2025” Long-Range Guidance Team of representatives of UC Regents, Chancellors, faculty and staff that was co-chaired by Rory Hume, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Health Affairs, and Bruce Darling, Executive Vice President for University Affairs. My charge to the LRGT was:

- How can UC plan ahead to meet California’s needs in 2025, when the state population is expected to reach 50 million?

After nearly two years of research and deliberation, the LRGT issued its report, *UC 2025: The Power and Promise of Ten*, in November 2006. (www.universityofcalifornia.edu/future/lrgt1106.pdf.) In their cover letter to me, the co-chairs said that the report set forth a vision “based on a future of the University that is cross-disciplinary, nimble, innovative, and responsive to the needs of society. It envisions addressing problems from the vantage point of such need. ... [It] begins to illuminate new strategies that can help guide the University in the current millennium.”

Upon receipt of the report, and with the concurrence of the LRGT and the Regents, I set out to convey the “Power of 10” concept to faculty throughout the system.

A Dialogue

From May 2007 through January 2008, I visited all 10 campuses at the invitation of the Academic Senates and engaged in a dialogue with the UC faculty about how we might realize this vision of “One University with the Power of 10.” While I encountered some skepticism, legions of colleagues told me they were well-aware of the value of the “Power of 10,” they gave me examples of their own experiences related to it, and they said they were eager to find new ways to implement it.

The dialogue produced a wide range of innovative ideas about how the University can harness the intellectual prowess of its 10 world-class campuses to serve the priorities of California, address campus needs, and improve operations. This brief report, which can be read at one sitting, is a compilation of ideas distilled from campus faculty town hall forums and meetings with campus faculty leaders. I have chosen ideas that have, in my view, applicability across the campuses. I present the report to the UC faculty and other stakeholders to demonstrate how our “Power of 10” concept has produced value even beyond what we had hoped at the outset. I do not include details; that is not my purpose here. My hope is that this document will stimulate more ideas and greater enthusiasm.

I wish to thank all of my UC colleagues and all of the UC supporters and constituents who took part in this remarkable enterprise. In particular, I want to acknowledge the contributions of two academic visionaries who were wonderful partners in this venture, John Oakley, past Chair of the UC Academic Senate, and Michael Brown, present Chair of the UC Academic Senate.

10 Areas of Findings and Recommendations

1 Admissions

Faculty across the system believe that the University would serve applicants and campuses far better, and would improve its standing throughout the state, through greater coordination and integration of admissions and enrollment. Suggestions included:

- A more integrated systemwide admissions process deserves consideration. While each campus should ultimately determine its own admissions, better up-front coordination of eligibility and applications would reduce duplication.
- Simultaneous systemwide notification of admissions decisions would eliminate the heart-wrenching lag time that often occurs between a decline from one campus and an acceptance from another. This would also aid campuses that rely more heavily on the “referral pool.”
- Improved online applications procedures, borrowing best practices from online retailing, should alert applicants at once if information in a required field has not been provided.
- Systemwide enrollment management should be a priority, and a systemwide admissions network, in which applicants apply to the entire UC and are assigned to campuses upon admission, should be considered.

2 Standardized Administrative Services

While I encountered much resistance to the concept of centralization of UC administrative services, I found enthusiasm for the systemwide *standardization* of services that would cut costs, increase efficiency, and improve quality without sacrificing campus autonomy. Suggestions included:

- Standardized student records for each campus should be accessible to all campuses and must be suitably protected.
- A systemwide payroll and systemwide UC identification cards would save money, avoid duplication, and reduce confusion and errors.
- Collective buying and debt-bundling have already produced cost savings through lower prices and lower interest rates; these avenues should be pursued vigorously.
- Transparency in system and budget processes will reassure faculty that funds are allocated in a fair and open manner so that there are no “private deals.” This should include labeling of funds generated by undergraduate units, similar to the current labeling of graduate funds.
- Regional multicampus disaster preparedness planning is long overdue.
- To aid student intercampus movement and the awarding of intercampus academic credit, UC should consider standardizing campus academic calendars to semesters or quarters.
- UC students who attend one campus and live near another should have the option of attending summer “bottleneck” courses at the campus nearest to their home.

3 Teaching Excellence and Innovation

Concern about the quality of education surfaced in discussions about ways to strengthen pedagogy and improve the learning experience. Examples included:

- The UCSF Academy of Medical Educators is a national model for rewarding outstanding teachers for innovative curricular and classroom practices. It should be a model within UC for supporting our teaching mission in a more distinctive way.

- The UC-wide Commission on General Education has issued a report that urges a renewed commitment to quality interdisciplinary general education, incentives for faculty who seek to improve it, and a greater emphasis on fostering civic skills and citizenship. The report's findings deserve serious consideration.
- UC's pedagogical distinction is research-focused education: teach students to be creators of knowledge by involving them in its creation. This deserves greater attention and a recognition of faculty who excel at it.

4 Recruitment, Retention, and Graduate Support

At every campus visit, faculty voiced strong concerns that support for graduate programs has become dangerously weak and poses a threat to sustaining faculty quality. Other systemwide disincentives for recruitment and retention of faculty and graduate students included: a shortage of affordable faculty and student housing; lack of diversity; a paucity of quality child care; deteriorating campus infrastructures; underfunding of graduate student FTE; and the taxing of the research enterprise via non-resident graduate student tuition. Suggestions included:

- Restructuring the way the state funds UC's educational responsibilities is urgently needed. It is more expensive to educate graduate students than upper-division students and to educate upper-division students than lower-division students. Such support should be differential. Funding on a flat rate (per student) has led to an emphasis on undergraduate education at the expense of graduate education. We have too large an undergraduate/graduate ratio for a top-ranked research university. We need a whole new algorithm for supporting graduate students.
- One of the biggest hurdles to new housing construction is often pre-construction expenses (e.g., EIR reports). Funds lent from the UC Short-Term Interest Program could cover those expenses, and the loans could be folded into the cost of the project.
- Similarly, creative financing mechanisms could help facilitate co-ownership and equity sharing. While I heard about many difficulties with this mechanism, our housing shortage is near crisis, and the advantages outweigh the problems.
- A UC-wide online diversity training program modeled after existing online training programs would help improve the diversity climate at all campuses and would send a strong message of support to underrepresented faculty, students, and staff.
- A deteriorating campus physical plant signifies a deteriorating quality of life for the faculty and graduate students who spend most of their waking hours there. There is a very strong consensus that campus capital funds must be redirected from the construction of new buildings to the upgrade and maintenance of existing buildings.
- While many campuses have faculty mentoring programs, quality and effectiveness appear to be inconsistent. Given the cost-effectiveness of peer mentoring and the pressing need to nurture new and young faculty, this should be a Senate priority, and it should be recognized in faculty peer review.

5 International Collaboration

A plea for more strategic international alliances, which I have heard from industry leaders throughout the state, was echoed by faculty on the campuses, who believe such alliances will strengthen UC competitiveness, prepare our students better for global opportunities and challenges, and boost recruitment and retention. Suggestions included:

- The planned UC School of Global Health has generated great enthusiasm, especially since it is being developed as a systemwide entity with the full participation of all 10 campuses. It was depicted as a second-generation California Institute for Science and Innovation and described as "a mini-World Health Organization inside UC."
- The Education Abroad Program should be more fully integrated with international research collaborations involving UC faculty and overseas partners.
- International students should have the ability to take classes and interact with faculty at more than one campus.
- The UC-India Partnership and the California-Canada Stem Cell Workgroup are models for linking the "Power of 10" to international partners for global impact in areas of common need.

6 Nurturing Startups

From the UCM campus to the School of Global Health to new campus professional schools, fledgling UC entities should more easily draw upon the “Power of 10” collective wisdom and resources for sustenance through critical growth stages. With regard to UCM, I have seen a systemwide conviction that our new campus must succeed, and I have sensed a growing belief that intercampus support of UCM may generate new modes of intercampus collaboration. Suggestions and examples included:

- UCM faculty are straining under the administrative burden of launching a campus, and inaugural campus planning efforts have been hindered by struggles over limited resources. Retired faculty from throughout the UC system, including former deans and department chairs, could be enlisted, on a volunteer basis and at nominal travel costs, to spend one or two days a week at UCM to assist with administration and mentoring of young faculty. These colleagues also could help guide planning efforts by bringing fresh outside perspectives to resource allocation discussions.
- Unlike more traditional professional schools (medicine, business, law), a proposed UCSC School of the Environment would be an original undertaking. Planning would benefit greatly from “Power of 10” consultations with other campuses that have existing programs in the environmental sciences and related fields.
- “Sunset” reviews of existing MRUs and ORUs have not been carried out because the challenges of closing down existing entities seem too daunting. Given the never-ending need for resources to fund start-ups and emerging priorities, UC literally cannot afford that mindset. The Senate should take a leadership role in making these reviews a priority and carrying out findings expeditiously.

7 Sharing Best Practices

UC faculty need more proactive systemwide mechanisms for identifying and sharing campus “best practices.” Examples and suggestions included:

- UCR has developed a state-of-the-art electronic faculty database for cataloguing and storing information used in academic personnel decisions; other campuses that have struggled with this task have begun to study the UCR model with an eye toward replication.
- Some possible “best practices” that were effective in UC in years past have lapsed over time. The concept of “phased retirement” that would allow senior faculty to reduce their hours and workload instead of retiring outright should be revisited.
- OP should consider assigning a person or unit with responsibility for identifying and disseminating best practices among the campuses and for eliciting and analyzing proposed “best practice” ideas from the campuses.

8 Increasing External Support

The ongoing erosion of state support for UC has driven faculty interest in pursuing other sources of funding more effectively. On younger campuses, faculty were keenly aware that major philanthropic gifts can be a springboard to transformative initiatives and academic ascendancy. And faculty throughout UC were eager to become more competitive in securing federal and foundation grants. Suggestions to exploit the “Power of 10” concept in this area included:

- Intercampus faculty-on-faculty development mentoring could help new (or newly-interested) faculty learn the fundamentals of private fund raising.
- Intercampus “mega-grant” proposals, such as the 5-campus NIH neuroimaging facility proposal, would take maximum advantage of our “Power of 10” size and strength in large-scale national grant competitions.
- A recurring concern was: If we increase our levels of non-state support, the state may respond with “See, you didn’t need all that state money” and shrink support further. We must emphasize to policymakers that private support has and will continue to provide “value-added” that make UC unique, and it should never be considered as a replacement for state support.

9 Bolstering Advocacy

Eroding state support, coupled with a shared sense that the public does not fully understand and appreciate the value of UC, has galvanized many faculty to re-examine their own roles as UC advocates. It is generally believed that we have not effectively “told the UC story,” not just the story of UC’s pre-eminence as a world-class research university, but also the story of this research university’s crucial role in our system of public higher education and its essential contributions to California’s prosperity.

- Prepared “talking points” would help faculty communicate effectively with constituents. These could be tailored to capitalize on faculty’s direct experience with UC excellence/impact in research, education, and public service.
- Many faculty are active and visible in their communities and neighborhoods, so advocacy at a local or grass-roots level would play to those strengths.
- UC faculty who are UC alumni showed a special interest in advocacy efforts. Many of these colleagues graduated from one campus and are teaching at another.
- As faculty become more involved in generating support and advocacy, they must have a greater presence at the table when UC priorities are set, especially when external consultants are hired to help set the priorities.

10 Tackling Urgent State Needs

The best way to demonstrate UC’s value to California is to unleash “the Power of 10” on California’s most pressing problems in a timely and targeted manner. Suggestions and examples included:

- UC should make a public commitment to helping state legislators succeed by offering research and other services. A notable example would be Jackie Speier’s UC-assisted review of gender equity and fair market practices.
- The multicampus Institute of Transportation Studies (UCD, UCB, UCI) is a prototype of a “Power of 10” initiative that forges partnerships with industry and government to find solutions to front-burner state problems.
- The “Cal Teach” Science and Math Teachers Initiative is now recognized as a model of a systemwide initiative aimed at an urgent state need that begins with central coordination but quickly develops campus autonomy.
- California’s ongoing fiscal crises are the result of short-term reactive fiscal policy. UC should consider assembling a team of its top economists and commissioning a “menu of economic options” to present to policymakers and the public in an effort to stabilize state revenue and generate responsible long-term fiscal planning.

Conclusion: “What is the Synergy?”

Near the end of my last town hall forum at UC Davis, a faculty member asked, “What is the synergy behind this ‘Power of 10’? The sum of these 10 campuses should be more than the total of the 10 – maybe it’s more like the ‘Power of 12’ – but how do we generate the synergy to make this happen?”

This is the fundamental point. I believe that our strength comes from the campus differences; IF we build education, research and public service programs that draw on the unique assets of the campuses, and IF we do this together, UC will even more effectively transform California’s outlook, economy, and quality of life in the coming decades.

To build our “Power of 10” synergy, we will of course need adequate resources but also creativity and fortitude. The ideas set forth in this document would not (and should not) be costly to implement, and many would produce cost savings in the long run. What we most need now is determination, intrepid spirit, and collaborative zeal – a mindset faithful to the California dream that will ensure the continued greatness of the University of California and the state. As I prepare to leave the UC presidency and return to full-time faculty status, I urge my faculty colleagues to take up this challenge, and I thank them for engaging in this spirited dialogue.