

Faculty, Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, and Administrative Officers

Dear Colleagues,

The Undergraduate Council is committed to advancing and supporting institutional priorities that promote excellence and innovation in teaching and education. As an increasing amount of undergraduate instruction is now being performed by non-ladder faculty, it is essential that departments, and the university, create mechanisms to ensure undergraduates have access to ladder faculty.

To that end, the Council has discussed student mentoring on multiple occasions this year, in the hopes of articulating a clear vision for the mentoring of undergraduate students on the UCLA campus as a matter of general principle. It is the Council's view that each department serving undergraduate students should enact programs that ensure students have the opportunity to interact with ladder faculty beyond the classroom and "office hours" environments.

In studying this issue, the Council has discovered a number of best practices, such as:

- Schoolwide requirements in the HSSEAS that each faculty member participate in the mentoring of undergraduate students. Undergraduate students are also required to participate in activities offered by faculty members at least once per academic year, or a hold is placed on their registration.
- Proseminars where students are introduced to their field of study and professional and research trajectories within that field.
- Town Hall meetings where undergraduates can interact with ladder faculty members to ask questions about the field and provide feedback about the undergraduate program.
- Panels comprising ladder faculty members who provide an introduction to the field.

The Council does not wish to be prescriptive and require departments to adopt a specific mentoring practice. Indeed, it is the desire of the Council that each department be allowed to innovate and create mentoring programs that best serve the needs of their undergraduate student population—with the expectation that each department will create a program of some kind. In addition to a mentoring program, each unit should also develop an undergraduate student handbook that introduces students to the program, articulates courses of study, and answers frequently asked questions.

By way of this statement, each academic program is hereby notified that the Undergraduate Council expects each department to develop a program/system of undergraduate mentoring that ensures faculty-student contact. Departments should assess the success of these programs by tracking participation and soliciting student feedback. Information on these programs will be supplied to the Council as a part of each academic unit's regular eight-year review. If you need any help or guidance developing or assessing your unit's mentoring program, we encourage you to contact Mitsue Yokota, Director of Curricular Initiatives in the Division of Undergraduate Education, at myokota@college.ucla.edu.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at etacir@ucla.edu, or the Undergraduate Council Analyst, Eric Wells, at ewells@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

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Chair, Undergraduate Council