MEMORANDUM

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Date: February 6, 2006
To: Daniel Neuman, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
From: Patricia Keating, Chair, Faculty Committee on Educational Technology

Re: WASC Institutional Proposal

The FCET fully endorses the institutional proposal theme “Using Educational Technology to Enhance the Student Academic Experience”. The Committee has been a clear voice over the past four years in recommending strategic directions for the use of technology in instruction and views the accreditation process as an opportunity to focus much needed attention, expertise and resources on this critical area.

Two important resource-related issues surfaced during the committee’s discussion:

1) The capacity for UCLA to accomplish the work of the accreditation review.

The breadth and depth of the work represented by these goals, questions, and outcomes will require significant investment of resources. Having experienced the slow progress using only “volunteerism”, we strongly recommend that staff with the required expertise be dedicated to this purpose who work alongside the UCLA faculty and staff in existing organizations and IT governance committees. The FCET also recommends that a high-level academic administrator be placed in a 3-year appointment to lead the massive effort associated with theme 3.

2) The capacity for UCLA to sustain a change of this magnitude and importance.

Planning may be difficult, but it is the easiest part of the process. Implementation and follow-through is where many large institutions fail. The need for substantially increased resources to accomplish the identified changes will be significant, likely many times what are currently available. The FCET is especially concerned about the need to bring all campus units to the same high level, regardless of their current starting point.

In addition, the FCET has a few text revisions to suggest for the ET theme. A draft containing those changes is attached to this memo.

Having been a strong advocate for a range of educational technology initiatives and strategic directions for the campus over the last four years, the FCET is eager to be part of the work of the accreditation process and welcomes the opportunity to discuss with the WASC oversight committee opportunities for ongoing participation.

Please let us know if you have any questions on this initial response.
The research university of the 21st century must be knowledge based but student oriented, research driven but learner focused. With this theme, we intend to combine and build on our experiences over the past decade with technology in teaching and research to realize our vision of a better-integrated educational technology (ET) at UCLA. UCLA has the leadership and structures in place to articulate a vision, define policy, establish governance, and manage the deployment of ET, and thereby provide a campus-wide technology-enabled education and achieve a research-rich educational experience.

In 2001, UCLA established the Information Technology Planning Board (ITPB), a joint faculty senate administrative committee responsible for strategic planning and policy recommendations for academic and administrative applications. The ITPB developed a campus-wide vision for ET at UCLA with two major components that encompass the educational and research environments: 1) to integrate students into an ET-enhanced, individualized teaching, learning, and research environment, and 2) to use the internet to support centers of scholarly interaction, both to engage students and to enhance external access to UCLA. Because of the importance of technology for education, the Faculty Committee on Educational Technology (FCET) was created to advise the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Campus Information Officer (CIO) and ITPB on the use of technology in instruction.

UCLA has made a significant investment in the use of ET in undergraduate education over the past decade. Examples include classroom equipment and networks, computer labs, course management systems and other support for faculty, the use of blended instruction, and creation of the web-based MyUCLA portal. Consequently, most undergraduate lecture courses now use some online technology and many are significantly web-enhanced. However, UCLA’s highly distributed ET structure has resulted in duplicate services in some areas, insufficient services in other areas, and incompatibilities that limit cross fertilization and interdisciplinary work. Similarly, while we have developed some understanding of the pedagogical value of ET, we lack a broad institutional approach for using ET, faculty-to-student and student-to-student, as a way to advance and transform undergraduate education or to integrate research and teaching.

UCLA intends to use this theme to clarify and strengthen its vision for providing a technology-enabled and research-rich education in the coming decade, and to reposition ET services, funding, and organizational structures to support this vision.

Primary Goals:

1. Create a campus-wide vision and implementation plan that leads faculty and students to conceive of ET as a natural part of their educational environment.
2. Develop scalable services that can be consistently made available for engaging, preparing, and supporting faculty and TA’s use of ET in teaching and evaluating the impact of ET on student learning.

3. Build a research-rich educational environment for students using ET-enabled pedagogy.

Campus Questions:

1. What are the campus goals for transforming instruction in undergraduate education and how can ET be used to support those goals?

2. What ET infrastructure, services, policies, and processes are needed to create and sustain a research-rich educational environment for students and faculty?

3. How can our faculty and TAs meet the growing demands for using technology in a research-rich course?

4. What do we expect undergraduate students to have experienced, know, and be able to do with technology as a research, learning and communication tool?

5. How can we cultivate faculty and student interest in meaningful uses of ET?

6. How will we measure our progress and success with ET?

Anticipated Results:

1. Create an evolving campus-wide vision and implementation plan based on the campus goals for transforming instruction and the role of ET.

2. Install and upgrade equipment necessary for students, faculty and TAs to use a variety of ET tools in all general assignment classrooms.

3. Establish effective services to train and routinely support faculty and TAs, enabling them to redesign and deliver courses that integrate research and the use of ET.

4. Develop and evaluate scalable methodologies to assess learning outcomes, in undergraduate courses and overall, achieved through the use of ET.

5. Define core and discipline-specific ET competency requirements for undergraduate and graduate students.

6. Adapt teaching evaluations and merit/promotion documentation to include evidence of learning improvements derived through the use of ET.