Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning

Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Priorities for the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning (OVPTL) are drawn from the second pillar of the UCI Strategic Plan.

Pillar 2 of the UCI Strategic Plan with key elements highlighted:

*Our students are at the very heart of everything we do. As a comprehensive research university, the knowledge we create in all disciplines impacts our students' scholastic, co-curricular, and career development experiences. **Undergraduates learn about and participate in research in their courses and in independent studies.** Graduate students contribute even more broadly by supporting faculty research, conducting their own groundbreaking studies, and mentoring undergraduates. **We will continue to strive to be a sought-after destination for the most talented and ambitious students – reflecting all backgrounds and life experiences – who see that UCI is where they can reach their full potential and do their best work. We will embrace innovations in pedagogy that improve the quality of learning and provide the support necessary to ensure outstanding outcomes for all students.** Their experiences inside and outside the classroom will connect them to the UCI community for life, enrich their minds and spirits, prepare them for productive lives, and empower them to make the strongest possible contributions to our world.*

The OVPTL consists of three divisions that all contribute to these key goals. Common to all three divisions is the implementation and support of High Impact Practices, as defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). These practices focus on educational experiences that have been shown to improve student academic outcomes. Details of High Impact Practices can be found at https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips. The OVPTL is committed to developing programming that provides access for all students to High Impact Practices and supporting the use of High Impact Practices across the entire campus. This overall goal is reflected in the strategic priorities of the individual divisions.

Division of Undergraduate Education

The Division of Undergraduate Education focuses on providing, supporting, and integrating academic programs for students that are independent of traditional disciplines. These programs actively collaborate with all units on campus. The strategic priorities of the Division of Undergraduate Education are based on three focus areas:

1) *Undergraduate Research:* The Division of Undergraduate Education is committed to supporting undergraduate research in all its variety of forms. We fully support the concept that "*As a comprehensive research university, the knowledge we create in all disciplines impacts our students' scholastic, co-curricular, and career development experiences.*", and that students must be actively engaged in this research endeavor. We will continue to build on the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and its connections within DUE and across the campus. In addition, support for undergraduate research is a

consistent thread within DUE programs, and we will continue to leverage connections and expand support for research in many DUE programs, including but not limited to, Study Abroad Center, Capital Internship Programs, Center for Excellence in Writing and Communications, and Student Support Services.

2) *Opportunities for Student Excellence:* The Division of Undergraduate Education is committed to programming that supports and celebrates student excellence. Consistent with the campus plan, a top priority is the Campuswide Honors Program. This program is universally recognized for its unique and high caliber experience for students. We will be exploring a number of aspects of this program and ways to increase its visibility and access to the maximum number of students. In addition, a major focus of the campus is providing opportunities, such as Scholarships, Study Abroad, Internships, to a broader range of students. DUE is directly involved in this efforts.

3) *First Generation Students:* Though DUE is committed to providing an excellent undergraduate experience to all students, by providing a level of focus on the needs of First Generation Students, we find that we are able to better serve all of our students. Providing a top level education includes both support for student's academic efforts and unique educational opportunities, both of which are areas that students are often not familiar with or do not understand the value of. DUE is focused on both improving programming in these areas and expanding student awareness and engagement through a wide range of programs, including but not limited to, Student Transition Services, Learning and Academic Resource Center, Center for Excellence in Writing and Communication, and Scholarship Opportunities Program.

Division of Teaching and Learning

The Division of Teaching and Learning is focused on supporting instructors in delivering the most effective educational experience for the students. The activities range from explicit research projects, evaluation of current practices, support for implementation of new pedagogical approaches, and support for current best practices. The strategic priorities of the Division of Teaching and Learning are based on three focus areas:

1) *Evidence Based Instruction:* A central focus of DTL is encouraging and supporting the adoption of evidence-based, effective teaching practices, in part through the Center for Engaged Instruction. In the next few years, there is a focus on leveraging the large gains in STEM Education Research and expanding lessons learned to a broader set of disciplines. The Center for Engaged Instruction will be a key leader in providing support to all instructors, faculty, post-docs, graduate students, and even undergraduates, in adopting the best, evidence-based practices that are appropriate to their instructional needs.

2) *Innovative Instructional Practices:* A major goal of UCI is to become a leader in researching instructional practices. Experimenting with innovative instructional

approaches and researching and assessing their effectiveness, and disseminating the results, will largely be supported by the new Teaching and Learning Research Center. The roll out of Canvas and the adoption of third party technologies is a major opportunity for careful studies of a range of innovative practices. Additionally, UCI will be rolling out new physical and virtual instructional spaces that offer unique opportunities to study the impact of instructional space on student learning.

3) *Technology Enhanced Instruction:* The continued increase in the use of technology raises a range of pedagogical and administrative issues. The Division of Teaching and Learning will continue to expand support for the development and improvement of high-quality online and hybrid courses, through its Center for Instructional Design. In the next few years, the unit will focus on best practices around technology, which includes issues of quality instruction, access, compliance, and sustainability.

Division of Summer Session

The main function of Summer Session is to support the teaching, research, and public service missions of the University: meeting the needs of students and academic departments where they extend beyond the confines of the traditional three quarters. Students use the summer to: transition smoothly to the university from High School or Community College; get ahead; to catch up; to complete a minor or second major that they otherwise would not have time for; to allow themselves the time to focus on a subject that is challenging to them or simply to try something new; and to study abroad. A key administrative function of Summer Session is its role in the regulation of the overall annual student credit hours so as to meet annual goals and priorities for the campus. The strategic priorities of the Division of Summer Session are based on three focus areas:

1) *Improving student success and retention:* Summer Session attendance is a factor in reducing time-to-degree and in preparing incoming students for academic success. Programs focusing on student success include Freshman Edge (which includes a large cohort of entering international freshmen), the Bridge Program (serving 1st generation/low income students) and Transfer Edge. Leveraging the structure of the new OVPTL will support maximizing this potential.

2) *Expansion of Online Options:* Online courses overcome identified barriers to Summer enrollment such as time conflicts of various kinds (jobs, internships) and space conflicts (going home for the summer, travel). In addition, because we offer more online courses at UCI than other campuses are able to, we attract enrollments from the rest of the system. We are also able to attract ladder-rank faculty to teach online who otherwise would not teach in the Summer. Since faculty teaching is a measure of quality, the online program helps us to improve quality. Online courses developed for Summer Session are taught throughout the year. This priority involves coordination with the Division of Teaching and Learning.

3) *Continued Support for Internationalization of Campus:* The term "internationalizing" is used broadly and addresses the value of becoming a world citizen, or of having a broader world view and understanding of other cultures, as a part of education. There is currently an even stronger focus on this initiative based on the financial value of bringing visiting students to campus, but it is important to remember that the financial incentive is not the core reason to pursue this goal. This goal is intentionally written to keep the focus on the need to address the overall environment/experience of the students, in other words to stay student-centered.