



AGENDA  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL  
Special Meeting, March 24th, 2020  
7:00PM via Zoom

**Call to order**

- Robert calls the meeting to order at 7:10 pm

**Approval of Agenda\***

- Brandon motions to approve the agenda, Kelechi seconds
- By motion of 11-0-0 the motion passes, agenda is approved

**Public Comment**

No Video /Audio:

- 0 comments

Audio and Video:

- Hello councilmembers, thank you for agreeing to hear my comment tonight! My name is Delaney Ivey, and I am a Senior Student Supervisor at Kerckhoff Coffee House. I have been working at Kerckhoff for a year and a half, and I am here to not only share my situation as a customer service worker, but to advocate for all student employees who were given a prorated paid administrative leave per UC Executive Order. I'll start by sharing my experience with lost wages since the start of COVID-19. On Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, I submitted a lost wages intake form immediately after finding out that I had to move home for the entirety of Spring Quarter. I asked for the wages I would have earned, \$2145, and explained my needs in great detail. Last Thursday, I received two calls from a blocked number, which was apparently an employee following up for further details. I got a voicemail, but I have no way to reach them and have heard through the IVP announcements that ECRT isn't picking up the phones. Today, I received an email from ASUCLA about the UC policy. Instead of the two thousand dollars I am losing, I was given only 33.49 hours of pay, which comes out to \$552.59. This is about SIX dollars a day during spring quarter. Keep in mind that I make more than most of my coworkers as a supervisor. Most ASUCLA entry-level positions begin at minimum wage. My coworkers are confused by the policy and distressed knowing that we have no choice but to lose almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  our wages. There is no way to compensate for this except for more funding or more remote job opportunities. Since we work in customer service, we cannot telecommute. Kerckhoff, like many UCLA facilities, is not even open, so we can't risk it and keep working. We are not full-time, so we cannot file for unemployment insurance. Finding work off-campus is near impossible because of the inflexibility of our class schedules, business closures and the stay-at-home order, and the need to provide for loved ones. To accommodate for this tremendous financial hardship student workers are facing, I encourage you to consider the following:

-During your call with admin tomorrow, please urge them to reconsider prorating paid administrative leave for part-time student employees. Please encourage them to meet the *specific* needs that we explained on the intake form and please ask them to communicate with us in an accessible manner.

-Since there will be no events during spring quarter, please consider allocating some of your funding to a student worker emergency relief fund in order to compensate for part or all of our lost wages.

-Please explore the idea of encouraging admin to offer students alternative jobs at the same pay grade that they can fulfill remotely for the duration of this period. From what I'm aware, UC Berkeley is currently working on this.

Thank you so much for your time.

- I found out that the admin is considering switching to a universal pass no record system. I'm not in favor of this system because the last two years I put in so much work to where I feel comfortable with my grades. The idea that grades next quarter would be mandatory pass no record would completely destroy the work I've put in over the last two years. I really hope that USAC does not advocate for this kind of system. I think we should have at least the option to choose the letter grade if it benefits us.
- Hearing concerns of members, we are also in opposition of universal pass/no pass. Pass no pass is a good default but there should be an opt in option. This affects students aiming to go to grad school. We don't want students to be less competitive than peers from other institutions. USAC should advocate for the same programs that UC Berkeley has put into place.
- I just wanted to share my concerns on the universal pass no pass. I understand that aspect of it and support it. Students like myself were counting on these grades to raise their GPA. I counted on spring to boost my GPA, especially cause I've been working so hard to get to departmental honors. I really don't think it would reflect me as a student, I really think students should have that option to have no pass or grades. I really hope that all perspectives are taken seriously, I would really be at a disadvantage.
- I just wanted to talk about the pass/no record option. I understand the universal P/NR is meant to install equity however even with a transcript notation, it puts a lot of students who are considering grad school as a disadvantage. We have no control over other grad schools. If we choose to put in the work, we should have that choice.
- I just also wanted to comment on the P/NR. I'm the only one that pays my rent and bills and because of coronavirus I don't have a job anymore, I haven't been able to focus on school and I feel like it's the equitable choice to take that stress away. I understand that everybody feels like they want it to up their GPA, but it takes more than one quarter to significantly impact one's GPA. I feel like it helps heavily impacted students.
- I would just like to reiterate a few points. I come from one of the most underresourced populations from LA. The vast majority of students stand to lose from the universal P/NR system.
- I just wanted to comment about the P/NR. As a person who wants to go to grad school, the only way to make it equitable is to make it a universally applied system, I just feel like if we are advocating for the most marginalized students throughout the university, I think advocating for P/NR is important.
- I'm pro universal pass, I think it's the most equitable solution.
- Public comment concluded at 7:28 pm

## **Appointments**

### **New Business**

#### **Election Updates**

Navi: We've had several conversations about what elections are going to look like for the upcoming quarter. We do not want to push back elections at all. There were conversations about potentially pushing it to the fall or a couple weeks further into the quarter, we didn't think that was a very good solution. We're talking about how to shift marketing efforts. We voted to extend the social media calendar by two weeks because there is no opportunity for physical campaigning. That means that social media campaigning will now start on Wednesday. So it will start week 2 Wednesday. We're still planning on having our candidate orientation take place on week 1 Thursday over Zoom. Attendance is required for all candidates. So we're trying to keep

everything as is and create substitutes for it. One of our strategies we're planning on implementing for the spring quarter, we still want to drive voter turnout. We're asking for a \$25,000-\$50,000 increase in elections budgets to do electronic gift card giveaways. We think the incentives will be a great way to drive voter turnout. At this point we're looking for a lot more money. That's kind of where we stand as of right now.

Mihika: So since all of the spring quarter events are cancelled, can the amount allocated for advertisement on campus be diverted or refunded to that?

Navi: Next week I can maybe present a better idea of our budget. I would say the amount that we probably have is roughly \$15,000-\$20,000, a lot of the costs you mentioned my finance team was actually applying to funding for that.

Millen: Because it's going to be online, can you go over how you're going to move everything online?

Navi: Right now I can't, I had finals until last week. I think we'll be able to be successful through Zoom. The meet the candidate will be a little more challenging.

Naomi: I was going to ask about on campus presence in terms of flyering and the signage that goes up. Have you guys discussed if that is still going to be able to happen?

Navi: Elections haven't done too much physical signage. From the candidates point of view I can look to re reserve election walk for candidates to put up their sign boards.

Robert: One thing I've been doing with meetings with administration is stressing that engagement is really important. I think we all want more support from admin in ensuring student involvement. With a lot of our referenda fee it's hard to move money around. So I would propose in meeting with Roy or Jessica and figuring out where you would want that money to come from.

Johana: What platforms are you considering using for meet the candidates?

Navi: We're thinking of doing Zoom, trying to explore novel events platforms, some that might be conducive. We don't want to learn an entire new software for one new event. Also going to rely heavily on Instagram or Facebook. One of the ideas that we've had is that the candidate starts the live stream by themselves at their own apartment.

Brandon: Earlier tonight we had a member of the public discuss the financial hardship that student workers are facing. While I understand the need for funding, I'm worried because we have so many members of our communities hurting right now. Have you considered suspending all on campus campaigning?

Navi: We haven't had a conversation about suspending on campus campaigning but we could.

#### Discussion Item: COVID-19 Updates

Johana: Josh so I had my refund deposited but I haven't gotten my housing charged yet but I don't know if there's delays in that.

Josh: Currently everything is delayed. We got hit very hard, about 80% of the hill has moved out and everybody is wanting a refund. And we are processing them. We are in the process of refunding right now.

Naomi: Academic Senate has been meeting to discuss how this will affect us at large and how it will affect academics.

Kim: So in terms of professors, some are not very well versed. Is there anything the Academic Senate is doing to help professors navigate the online modalities.

Naomi: Academic Senate can't necessarily force professors to do certain things and professors have the power to have choices.

Millen: FSC is working on efforts for student workers.

Blandizzi: We are listening and we are working on all of the concerns.

Mick: Staff is spending countless hours remotely to address student concerns.

Robert: Do you have any ideas about how administration might be able to promote elections?

Mick: Probably the idea I have is there might be a way to post or share information but the university doesn't necessarily take part in elections.

Millen: I know that recently it came out that UCLA might be a hospital space for COVID-19 patients. I think students are concerned about their own safety. Are there any precautions being taken?

Mick: There is non stop communication with UCLA Health. We're getting lots of requests from Governor Newsom to house patients. We still don't have 100% knowledge of whose coming back or not coming back. Our student housing would be related to students. The university has partnered with UCLA Health, the university will offer up rooms in the Luskin Conference Center.

Discussion Item: Commencements

- tabled

Discussion Item: SIOC/CRC Budget Reports

- tabled

Discussion Item: USAC Budget/Funding

- tabled

Letter in Support of Pass/No Record\*

Naomi: A few days ago when Robert first called me about this I was completely opposed. I definitely shifted after talking to a lot of the primary organizers at Yale, I think people have talked about it already when we talk about equity and what is an equitable solution. I think it's not only going to impact international students but low income students as well. I can go on about the reasons I'm in support of universal p/nr, the biggest thing is a lot of it is rooted in self-interest. I get what it's like to wanna put your community first. When we talk about students having a choice, a lot of our choices as students are being taken away from us. The same kind of stress and anxiety that has been building up will continue to worsen.

Brandon: Since our discussion a couple days ago, a couple of concerns have come up. I'm increasingly worried that professors will simply change the definition of what a passing grade is, so it could become increasingly difficult. It worries me that if council proposes something, the student body is very angry about it, and there is a mass mobilization about what council has done. Council over the past week has shown students the power of advocacy, and I don't think that we should take that for granted.

Robert: The first thing I wanna say is I'm pretty disheartened by people saying a majority of people felt one way or the other. First of all, the people who have access to take time to take a poll on Facebook do not represent all people. My impression is that we all knew that a large portion of the student body was gonna be concerned about it. I thought we all knew that going into this. The intention of this was to support students.

Lalo: I do wanna echo what Robert and Kelechi said, the folks most affected by this and the ones who would benefit the most are the ones that aren't able to fill out the form.

Brandon: I think we should propose to extend the drop deadline for classes.

Robert: We keep talking about who is going to be impacted but everyone is going to be impacted. Everyone has been impacted but some are more impacted than others. I would argue that the case of P/NR would benefit the mental health of students the most.

Lily: I would benefit from letter grades but I'm not doing what benefits me. We have a mirror image of what is going to happen for the rest of the quarter. One of my professors is recording lectures however the rest of them aren't. Some professors might even fall ill, how does that affect grading then? Doing an opt in system is the verybare min, so where is our equity now?

Kelechi: I think universal pass with an opt in seems like a good solution until you talk about grad school. What about grad school for your disadvantaged peers?

- Jonathan motions to advocate for a universal pass/no record system, Kelechi seconds
- By motion of 7-6-0 the motion passes, USAC votes in favor of a Universal Pass/No Record system

Letter:

To:

Gene Block, Chancellor  
Emily Carter, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost  
Michael Beck, Administrative Vice Chancellor  
Monroe Gorden, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs  
Maria Blandizzi, Dean of Students  
Patricia Turner, Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education  
Michael Meranze, Chair of the Academic Senate  
Shane White, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect of the Academic Senate  
Joseph Bristow, Immediate Past Chair of the Academic Senate  
April de Stefano, Executive Director of the Academic Senate

March 22, 2020

The Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC), the official representative governing body for the 32,000 undergraduates enrolled at UCLA, is writing to express our enormous concern regarding the exacerbation of educational inequities in the upcoming spring quarter term. The USAC is troubled by the potential for educational inequities, which severely limit students' equal opportunity at UCLA, and has therefore brought forth a series of demands to mitigate these concerns.

The UCLA community was made aware by Chancellor Gene Block via BruinPost and UCLA Newsroom's University News update<sup>1</sup> on Tuesday, March 10th that the University would be suspending in-person classes until April 10th, offering exams remotely, and encouraging students to start Spring Break from home.

The UCLA community was then made aware by Executive Vice Chancellor Emily Carter via BruinPost and UCLA Newsroom's University News update<sup>2</sup> on Friday, March 13th, that the University would be extending remote learning through the end of Spring Quarter.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-transitions-to-online-instruction>

<sup>2</sup> <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-transitions-to-online-instruction>

In response to the concerning lack of communication to students and the various associated stressors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, USAC wrote a letter<sup>3</sup> on March 15th to UCLA Administration and the Academic Senate urging flexibility in final examination formatting, distribution, and grading. This letter was derived directly from the experiences of students on campus, of which a significant portion provided testimonies<sup>4</sup> on the hardships they are facing during this unprecedented time. While USAC was

pleased to receive support from UCLA Administration and some faculty members, there was still pushback and noncompliance from other faculty members. The mixed results and nonuniformity of policies were disheartening, but not shocking. While the USAC fully understands the associated possible implications of academic freedom on these past and future demands, it is of utmost importance that all students are given an equitable opportunity for academic success.

This call for equity is growing more pressing day-by-day as new emergency policies are implemented and enforced across Los Angeles County, the State of California<sup>5</sup>, and the United States. In Los Angeles County, residents have been ordered to remain indoors, practice social distancing, and only leave the house to gather essential items (food, medicine, etc.). Additionally, only workers in “essential jobs” are being permitted to travel to work, while the remainder of employed persons have been asked to work from home, or have lost employment altogether.<sup>6</sup>

As students resume classes for spring quarter, they face additional and unprecedented inequities that prevent fair competition in academics. An “opt in” grading route, which would allow students a surface-level “choice” between letter-grading or Pass/No Record (P/NR) grading, discriminates against students who are most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A distinction between a P/NR and a letter grade fosters stigma around “choosing” P/NR. When employers or graduate schools compare students, students who chose the P/NR option could be perceived as less deserving of the position than those who opted into receiving a letter grade. That stigma will inevitably fall on lines of socioeconomic status, ability, race, sexual orientation, and documentation status. Students without internet access, stable housing, or food security will be forced into the “choice” of P/NR because of their unique situation. Alternatively, students who don't have the access, resources, ability to prioritize their academic success during this crisis may feel pressured to display a letter grade that is not representative of their full potential, for fear of the stigma associated with P/NR. Moreover, without a universal P/NR system in place, impacted students will be forced to rely on the professor's leniency if they decide to pursue letter grading. This will further result in impacted students being penalized academically for circumstances beyond their own control.

Here are all the ways students have been, and will continue to be impacted:

- Income insecurity due to the ways the economy is impacting families and primary income providers as businesses close, unemployment increases, and people face unwarranted evictions.
- Income insecurity due to loss of wages and employment from the closing of facilities and alleviation of student worker hours.
- Inability to pay rent and being prevented from breaking leases in Westwood and surrounding neighborhoods.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ypbpc7cCyxkYg5PTCTBhK8tyA-FnOACQ-zP7K11c1CU/edit?usp=sharing>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1011hOKSxKIASqRjvUAe8ZgQLz717NExlWehIgTmjrmM/edit#gid=452306>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/03/19/governor-gavin-newsom-issues-stay-at-home-order/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.lamayor.org/sites/g/files/wph446/f/article/files/SAFER\\_AT\\_HOME\\_ORDER2020.03.19.pdf](https://www.lamayor.org/sites/g/files/wph446/f/article/files/SAFER_AT_HOME_ORDER2020.03.19.pdf)

- For parenting students, the added responsibility of looking over and home-schooling their children to adapt to the new learning environment introduced by this pandemic
- Students with disabilities registered for accommodations through the Center for Accessible Education have been given no instruction as to how accommodations will be applied to the online format.
- Decreased access to basic needs resources (food, toiletries, etc.) given recent merchandise shortages and restaurant closures.
- Recent travel bans impacting students travel to and from home and academic destinations.
- Moving out of current living conditions with little to no support or resources offered.
- Despair regarding the inability to be present on campus and participate in events that define campus life as part of the UCLA experience, especially in Spring quarter. Many student organizations and social circles look forward to and have been preparing for programming all year long, and have been completely distraught and disappointed that their student-led events, which were supposed to take place in the coming months, have been abruptly and indefinitely suspended with no support or consolation.
- Uncertainty regarding duration of quarantine and the mental health risks of social distancing.
- Looming anxiety over the abrupt adjustment to online instruction with the added stressor of the cut-off of known campus resources (i.e. mental health services, academic resources, mentorship, and more).
- Inability to be in an environment where they can focus on their studies due to difficult financial and familial circumstances

We understand that UCLA prides itself on being the number one public institution in the nation and has a longstanding academically rigorous repertoire that we as students are also proud to uphold and further. In a traditional academic setting, students would have the ability to adjust to circumstances and reach out for institutional support. But, as the COVID-19 pandemic worsens, and students continue to face exacerbated institutional barriers to education, it is clear that more needs to be done to account for these inequities that are destined to arise. Additionally, students, faculty, and administration alike have not experienced the full implications of the virus, but in the coming days, hundreds to thousands of additional students will be directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With these community conditions in mind, it is apparent that students will not be at their full capacity to achieve academic success. Marginalized students already face inequities in their education, and these additional barriers placed due to the conditions surrounding COVID-19 have exacerbated the inequities marginalized communities face. For UCLA to support its students, the Undergraduate Students Association Council is using our voice in direct response to student concerns to demand the University's administration, the Academic Senate, academic departments, and individual professors to comply with these recommendations:

- **Implement UNIVERSAL Pass/No Record grading with a mandatory transcript notation and a narrow petition process to “unmask” (or, in other words, reveal) students’ GPAs for students whose GPA specific to Spring Quarter would directly impact their ability to be accepted into a specific and verified program or opportunity. To further the implementation of this policy, the following changes must accompany this action:**
  - **There should be no deadline to submit a petition, so as not to affect underclass students potentially applying to programs in the future;**
  - **Students subject to academic action, including but not limited to Academic Probation, Subject to Dismissal, and falling behind on Expected Cumulative Progress, shall not be 1) placed on these various standings based on academic performance from Winter 2020 and 2) students that were on these standings prior to Winter 2020 will not have Winter 2020 count as one of their quarters given to clear their Academic Action. (the College will not count Winter 2020 as a quarter where students subject to Academic Action can clear their Academic Action)**
  - **Students shall submit evidence of a GPA threshold requirement for such specific and verified programs or opportunities in order to have GPAs unmasked from the UCLA’s P/NR system;**

- Allowing academic requirements (including for majors, minors, and general education) to be fulfilled with a passing grade for the duration of this policy.
- The drop deadline shall be extended to the end of Week 10 of Spring Quarter.
- The mark of “Pass” shall be defined as a score of 60% or higher, and include at least 80% of the entire distribution of a course’s roster as receiving a passing grade.
- All online instruction to be recorded as to account for students who are unable to access scheduled instruction during particular time periods. This is especially true for international students, who may be located in countries which do not allow for the use of the Zoom video platform or are located in time zones where it is impossible to attend class during Pacific Standard Time.<sup>7</sup>
- For all final examinations to not be scheduled during certain time blocks as to allow for students who are unable to access such examinations to participate in courses.
- The extension of “spring break” by one week, resuming instruction on April 5th, thereby making instruction a 9-week term, as has been done at other quarter system institutions.<sup>8</sup>

As we enter Spring Break, we urge the administration to take immediate steps to implement these provisions to allow a smooth transition into Spring Quarter for all students. Though great issues of inequity persist, UCLA administration and all faculty members should support these important steps to equitably address the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Under the current circumstances, it is imperative that UCLA faculty and administration take steps to equitably support students who will be detrimentally affected by COVID-19’s spread throughout the

United States and the world. We urge that all members of our campus leadership show sensitivity to student concerns and immediately take steps to mediate the academic impact of our current challenge. Our council would be more than willing to discuss the implementation of these above steps.

In Solidarity,

***UCLA Undergraduate Students Association Council***

*Robert Blake Watson*, President  
*Kimberly Bonifacio*, Internal Vice President  
*Johana Guerra Martinez*, External Vice President  
*Eduardo “Lalo” Velazquez*, General Representative 1  
*Orion Smedley*, General Representative 2  
*Brandon J. Broukhim*, General Representative 3  
*Naomi Riley*, Academic Affairs Commissioner  
*Kelechi Iheanacho*, Cultural Affairs Commissioner  
*Lily Shaw*, Facilities Commissioner  
*Tara Steinmetz*, Campus Events Commissioner  
*Jonathan Wisner*, Community Service Commissioner  
*Mihika Sridhar*, Student Wellness Commissioner  
*Millen Srivastava*, Financial Supports Commissioner  
*Isabel Orah*, Transfer Student Representative  
*Shahamah Tariq*, International Student Representative

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<sup>7</sup> Zoom video software is banned in the following countries:  
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203806119-Will-Zoom-work-internationally->

<sup>8</sup>

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/mizzou-suspends-in-person-classes-washington-university-extends-spring-break/article\\_169fd357-bd8a-5723-9e5f-ddc3e259e742.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/mizzou-suspends-in-person-classes-washington-university-extends-spring-break/article_169fd357-bd8a-5723-9e5f-ddc3e259e742.html)

- Mihika motions to remove the sub bullet reading “there should be no deadline to submit a petition so as not to affect underclass students potentially applying for programs in the future.”
- Millen motions to remove the petition process from unmasking, Orion seconds
- By a motion of 7-1-5 the motion pass, removed the petition process from unmasking
- Millen motions to strongly advocate for administration to retroactively reconsider grades for winter quarter, Kelechi seconds
- By a motion 13-0-0 the motion passes, including language to strongly encourage administration to allow for students to retroactively change their grade to Pass/No Record for winter 2020

Brandon motions to approve the letter with amendments, Kelechi seconds

- By motion of 10-0-1 the motion passes, amended letter is approved
- Orion motions to remove the part about spring break for a letter, Naomi seconds
- By motion 1-9-0 the motion fails, leaving the provision about the extension to spring break

### **Adjournment**

- Robert adjourns at 12:46am