

A Resolution affirming the Protection of students' right to a supportive academic environment and Urging Student Involvement and Empowerment in driving the mission, vision, and values of the UC and UCLA

Whereas, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) is firmly committed to supporting the academic goals of all students, irrespective of their background or circumstances, and strives to provide the necessary resources and support to ensure every student's success.¹²

Whereas, empowering students to become leaders in their respective fields, communities, and the world is a primary objective of both the University of California Los Angeles and the University of California at large.³

Whereas, the University of California aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences required to address the most pressing challenges of our time, foster innovation, and create positive change.⁴

Whereas, fostering a culture of learning driven by intellectual curiosity, academic excellence, and social responsibility is a fundamental belief of the University of California Los Angeles, emphasizing the importance of innovation and creativity in education.⁵

Whereas, the University of California Los Angeles:

- Recognizes itself as a hub where innovation and creativity thrive.⁶
- Pursues the mission to inspire and empower students to become agents of change in the world, encouraging critical and creative thinking and pushing the boundaries of what is possible.
- Ensures that every student has the opportunity to succeed and amplifies every student's voice, valuing each member of the community and empowering them to thrive.

Whereas, the strategic goals of the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) have acknowledged the need for "curricular innovation, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and engaged learning" across the UC system.⁷

Whereas, UCLA and UCOP understand that maintaining a community and environment of trust, achievement, inclusivity, diversity, safety, dignity, and respect is essential to fulfill their requirements, achieve their mission and vision, and fulfill their fiduciary and social responsibilities.

¹ UCLA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

² UCLA Academic Planning and Budget

³ UCLA Office of the Chancellor; UCLA Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

⁴ UCLA College of Letters and Science

⁵ UC's 2016-2025 Strategic Plan

⁶ UCLA College of Letters and Science Mission Statement

⁷ UC's 2016-2025 Strategic Plan

Whereas, members of the University of California Faculty and the University of California Los Angeles:⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹

- ¹²Have a responsibility to maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all university community members.
- Must treat all students with dignity and respect.
- Shall adhere to the highest ethical and moral standards in all aspects of their work.
- Hold a special responsibility to maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.
- Are responsible for providing regular and constructive feedback to students.
- Must ensure that students have sufficient support to succeed academically.
- Should respond in a timely manner to student inquiries and be accessible to students for consultation outside of class.
- Have a responsibility to provide accurate and timely information to students, offering guidance and support in defining and achieving their academic goals.
- Shall provide students with reasonable opportunities to discuss any concerns regarding grades or evaluations.
- Are responsible for assisting students in developing educational plans and achieving their academic goals.

Whereas, in a rapidly changing world, UCLA, as a public research institution dedicated to furthering knowledge for the betterment of global society, must adapt to the evolving requirements of our time, where innovation, change, and non-traditional approaches are crucial to overcoming environmental degradation, global nuclearization, rising totalitarianism, and increasing class division caused by traditional methods.

Whereas, traditional approaches have contributed to environmental degradation, global nuclearization, rising totalitarianism, and deepening class divisions. Consequently, innovation, change, and unconventional approaches must be embraced to fulfill the purpose and function of our institution.

Whereas, as an institution committed to excellence and diversity in all pursuits, UCLA recognizes that openness and inclusion foster true quality.

Whereas, discovery, creativity, and innovation are fundamental pillars of UCLA, serving as the bedrock for advancing knowledge, addressing pressing societal needs, and fostering a university enriched by diverse perspectives where all individuals can flourish.

Whereas, the Independent Major Program at UCLA offers students a unique opportunity to explore and develop their intellectual interests in ways not possible within traditional majors.

⁸ Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline: UCOP (APM 015)

⁹Policy on Professional Conduct: UCOP (PPM 200-70)

¹⁰ UCLA Policy 220, UCLA Policy 140, UCLA Faculty Code of Conduct (Section 140.21), UCLA Academic Personnel Office. Faculty Handbook., UCLA Policy 405, Section III.A.1

¹¹ UC Academic Senate Manual Part II, Section 310B

¹² Chancellor Gene Block, UCLA Convocation Address 2021

Whereas, the Independent Major Program stands as the sole avenue at UCLA through which motivated and high-achieving students can pursue innovation and thrive as individuals aligned with the mission of the University of California Los Angeles, benefiting from its core values of discovery, creativity, and innovation.

Whereas, innovation, creativity, and discovery often extend beyond the boundaries of existing academic structures, the Independent Major program allows students to engage in educational innovation through non-traditional lines of study, which often prioritize research, hands-on learning, and the exploration of the unknown. It is vital to provide students with the necessary freedom to pursue studies collaboratively with academic sponsors without arbitrary limitations that hinder the achievement of true discovery, innovation, and creativity.

Whereas, the Independent Major program currently provides students with less than 1000 words to comprehend all the intricacies of its goals, processes, procedures, and more. In order to adhere to UCLA and UCOP policies regarding faculty and academic responsibility, the program must establish swift and efficient channels of communication between faculty and potential students, and violations of such policies must be promptly addressed and suitably corrected based on the scale of the violation.¹³

Whereas, the Independent Major program has the potential to significantly empower students and contribute to the achievement of UCLA and UCOP strategic goals. Students pursuing independent majors, like all others at UCLA, should feel supported, safe, empowered, respected, and confident in their ability to achieve their academic goals.

Whereas, the Independent Major program has fallen short of expectations in terms of transparency, conduct, support, and student-stakeholder accountability.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT USAC condemns any limitations that impede students' ability to pursue the mission, vision, and goals of UCLA, particularly within the Independent Major program. This includes independent major policies inconsistent with the university's strategic and economic goals, as well as its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with procedural deficiencies in the program conflicting with the faculty code of conduct and the absence of facilities for connectivity, information sharing, and community building among students pursuing independent majors; For which, provisions for connectivity, information sharing, and community building among students pursuing independent majors must be established.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that USAC supports and calls for increased empowerment of students working to address the pressing social, economic, and environmental crises of the 21st century. Addressing these crises necessitates true innovation and the development of new thought frameworks aligned with the principles of social entrepreneurship.

¹³ UCLA Undergraduate Education, Honors Programs, Independent Majors

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that USAC calls for the involvement of student stakeholders in the Independent Major Program's governance, an inquiry into the challenges faced by current students in the Independent Major Program, with the goal of creating systems to support these students in achieving their goals, and the exclusion of Independent Majors from arbitrary departmental limitations and research-related maximums that hinder students' ability to conduct meaningful research and further the purpose of the University of California. Specifically, we call for students in Independent Majors to have the access to classes and research which might be restricted to students in a particular traditional department-affiliated major.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that USAC stands in support of students impacted by the lack of transparency, accountability, and support within the Independent Major Program.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED that USAC urges the office of the Chancellor, the Office of Student Affairs, and the Office of Undergraduate Education at UCLA to take immediate action in addressing violations of the faculty code of conduct and rectifying the significant discrepancies between the mission, vision, and purpose of our institution and the Independent Major Program.