

Academic Planning at the University of California Office of the President

The Academic Planning unit at the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) was first established in 2008 in the Office of Academic Planning, Programs, and Coordination with a mission to “conduct strategic planning, analysis, and assessment...and advance and promote policy development and implementation.” In 2013, the unit was merged with Institutional Research when the new Institutional Research and Academic Planning (IRAP) department was created. A goal from that merger was to improve both of these UCOP functions by identifying how institutional research could guide and inform academic planning and the constituents the unit supports.

In general terms, Academic Planning supports the identification of the University’s short-, medium-, and long-term goals and objectives and the alignment of these goals and objectives with the University of California’s (UC) mission¹ in connection to the needs and interests of key stakeholder groups, such as the UC Regents and campus academic and administrative leadership. Academic Planning’s work on these goals and objectives is multifaceted, involving different dimensions of academic planning.²

Strategic academic planning

Strategic planning is the deliberate, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what the institution is, what it does, and why it does it. At UC, these decision and actions take place within the context of our shared governance system, the structures and

¹ <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-mission>

DIMENSIONS OF PLANNING

The Academic Planning unit is engaged in five broad dimensions of planning:

- Strategic academic planning
- Educational effectiveness planning
- Institutional effectiveness planning
- Strategic enrollment planning
- State and national academic planning

processes by which the University’s administration and the University Senate collaborate with one another based on equity, accountability, and shared ownership. The [Academic Planning Council \(APC\)](#), a joint Senate and Administration committee that addresses planning issues and considers policies related to the University’s academic mission, guides much of Academic Planning’s work. The APC might task Academic Planning with, for example, development of long-range enrollment plans, studies of the future of graduate education, or analyses of educational quality indicators.

Connected in part to its role in staffing the APC, Academic Planning is often responsible for developing, reviewing, evaluating, and implementing policies related to the academic mission. Academic Planning has had a key role in developing and implementing policies related to Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs, international activities, and the system-wide academic calendar, among other policies.

Educational effectiveness planning

The University of California’s fundamental missions are teaching, research and public service, and IRAP’s Academic Planning function focuses on the teaching aspect of

² Definitions for these dimensions of planning are borrowed, in part, from the Society for College and University Planning (<https://www.scup.org>).

our mission through educational effectiveness planning. Given that IRAP is a step removed from teaching at the campuses, the Academic Planning unit plays a strong collaborating role with campuses. Academic Planning collaborates with campus Vice Provosts and Deans for Undergraduate Education, the Directors of campus Teaching & Learning Centers, UC Extension Deans, Summer Session Directors, campus Assessment Coordinators and Accreditation Liaison Officers. Academic Planning also attends meetings organized by the Senate's University Committee on Educational Policy and Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs. In these collaborations, Academic Planning can bring to bear not only its internal expertise but, as a result of being integrated with Institutional Research, institutional research tools, quantitative analysis and results, such as results from the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey and UC Information Center.

Collaborations with these groups are fluid in that roles and responsibilities are not fixed; educational effectiveness planning with these groups can take myriad forms. Academic Planning might partner with the Vice Provosts and Deans for Undergraduate Education to share systemwide research findings on student outcomes and organize a teaching-centered conference on best practices; support the UC Extension Deans in legislative reports that describe program effectiveness and innovation; be paired with a University Committee on Educational Policy subcommittee examining course evaluation and teaching effectiveness; or address student success and equity gaps with campus Teaching & Learning Centers. Across all cases, IRAP's Academic Planning unit advances UC's teaching mission by using systematic inquiry to examine the effectiveness of our efforts in supporting student learning, development, and success.

Institutional effectiveness planning

Defined as the effort to organize evaluation, assessment, and improvement initiatives so that the institution can determine how well it is fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals, at the core of institutional effectiveness planning is evaluative activity.

For Academic Planning, the [Compendium: University Review Processes for Academic Programs, Academic Units, & Research Units](#) guides most evaluation activity. The Compendium contains system-level processes for creating and modifying academic degree programs and all other academic and research units. It is the primary guide for evaluating, in particular, proposals to establish new graduate degree programs and to establish new schools and colleges, all of which require system-level review. The Compendium also guides the Five-Year Planning Perspectives, the process by which campuses list their anticipated plans to establish, transfer, consolidate, disestablish, or discontinue degree programs, schools, colleges, and other academic units. From these lists, trends on the academic program pipeline are developed to evaluate long-range planning goals.

Institutional effectiveness planning also includes accreditation matters. Each UC campus is accredited by the [WASC Senior College and University Commission \(WSCUC\)](#), and Academic Planning serves as liaison to WSCUC on behalf of the system as a whole while coordinating with campus accreditation officers. In this role, Academic Planning convenes campus accreditation officers, responds to proposed changes in accrediting policies and practices, addresses questions or concerns by leveraging input from all UC campuses, and advances the University's interests through its relationship with WSCUC.

Finally, Academic Planning contributes to IRAP's annual [UC Accountability Report](#),

identifying critical institutional research measures and survey responses that measure UC's performance and progress in the teaching and learning area.

Strategic enrollment planning

IRAP's Academic Planning unit facilitates the development and identification of goals related to student enrollment. Historically these goals have been based in ensuring implementation of the goals inherent in the California Master Plan for Higher Education but also the enrollment goals of the UC Regents and the UC President. Enrollment planning requires collaboration between campus leadership, UCOP leadership, the UC Academic Senate, the UC Regents, and California state government officials, as well as with the other education segments in California.

Academic Planning manages the Admissions and Enrollment Working Group, comprised of members of the President's Executive Office, Provost's Immediate Office, Budget Analysis and Planning, and Student Affairs (Admissions and Financial Aid) and participates in monthly enrollment meetings with UC campuses. Academic Planning provides analysis that informs UC's enrollment goals, such as enrollment forecasting, and facilitates the collection of short-, mid-, and long-term enrollment plans from campuses.

For short-term planning, every year Academic Planning partners with Budget Analysis and Planning to collect new student enrollment targets from the campuses and then summarizes campus submissions and develops enrollment models, leads the review process for proposed new undergraduate targets in combination with funding formulas, and contributes to plans aimed at diversifying the student body.

Academic Planning and Budget Analysis and Planning also annually collect mid-term enrollment plans spanning the next four years of enrollment aspirations. In addition,

the unit supports planning for UC's 2030 enrollment and degree goals while promoting expansive excellence for California's growing diverse and qualified population of students.

Periodically, Academic Planning supports systemwide long-range enrollment planning. These plans are more comprehensive than short-term or mid-term plans, taking into account demographic shifts in California and beyond, projections of K-12 students, and projected demand. IRAP also tracks community college student demand, the state's education, workforce, and economic needs in relation to academic program development across the University, and the University's facilities and physical capacities.

State and national academic planning

IRAP's Academic Planning unit serves as a source for expertise on state and national academic planning and policy. In particular, the unit provides expertise on the [California Master Plan for Higher Education](#), which governs the differentiation of functions among the state's public postsecondary education segments and established the principle of universal access and choice to California's postsecondary education system. In connection to the Master Plan, Academic Planning regularly reviews legislative efforts to revise, amend, and/or interpret the Master Plan and examines the need for intersegmental coordination in areas such as higher education data exchange or non-duplication of degree programs.

In addition to work related to the Master Plan for Higher Education, IRAP's Academic Planning unit organizes state-level research; for example, research on the need for increased bachelor's degree production in California or on trends in UC degree program establishment and California's workforce development plans. At the national level, Academic Planning might evaluate and comment on a legislative proposal from the U.S. Department of Education, advise on accreditation issues at the national level, or

provide input on proposed changes to rules governing professional bodies, such as the American Bar Association. In these ways, Academic Planning connects an array of planning initiatives at the state and national levels to the University's goals and mission.

While advancing work along the lines of these dimensions of planning, Academic Planning acts as a steward of UC's academic policies, serving as a source of institutional knowledge about the guiding documents that help shape the University, its mission, and goals.