

June 9th, 2021

Dear Chancellor Block and EVCP Carter,

As members of the faculty who wish to see UCLA thrive, we are writing to ask that you **release detailed proposals** on the Bruin Budget Model, the IT Transformation (previously referred to as IT Hub and Spoke Model), and the Research Hub and Spoke Model and that you **put a pause on implementation of these plans until the proposals have been made widely available and have been thoroughly discussed, including how the changes fit together**. We strongly believe that the public provision of detailed proposals (rather than the controlled release of power points and selective engagement with few faculty) will help avoid costly unintended consequences. We believe you have already learned at the various listening sessions and fora that the deans, chairs, directors, and faculty generally, have expertise that can be used to improve the plans. We make this request not out of a resistance to change per se, but rather, because we have serious concerns about both the formulation and implementation of these plans.

Our top concerns and priorities as faculty members, chairs, and center directors differ, but we enumerate below some of the issues faculty members have identified.

We have several broad concerns about the **IT Transformation and the Research Hub and Spoke Model**:

- 1) The **premise** behind Hub and Spoke may be false. The management literature recognizes that Hub and Spoke models slow decision making, block innovation, alienate team members, and overload leaders.¹ **The IT Hub and Spoke initiative at the schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Public Health has degraded service.** The Academic Senate reports that, "The DGIT centralization created new administrative positions, centralized decision-making, and moved local IT services, which had been distributed at departmental and unit levels, into a centralized group structure. The promise, like the currently proposed Deloitte model being considered for the rest of campus, was increased cybersecurity and efficiency. However, many faculty have experienced a decline in service levels for their non-clinical activities and a frustrating tin ear from the new IT structure to ideas that have not originated within a more limited group of decision makers."²
- 2) UCLA's prior experience has revealed **centralized IT to be unresponsive** to faculty needs and slow to catch up to the technological frontier.
- 3) Our leadership is misinformed regarding **network security**. We request more consultation about this issue with faculty. Provided they are properly managed, multiple networks are more secure than centralized ones because they limit the scope of damage, and do not act as a visible and more easily accessible target for hackers³. **We are aware of no significant breaches of distributed academic networks** on the central campus at UCLA. The major breaches in the UC system have been at UCSF and the recent enormous one at UCOP. We find it disconcerting that prior to the UCSF breach which cost them more than a million dollars in bitcoin ransom⁴, their CIO was on the review team that concluded UCLA

¹ <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/when-collaboration-fails-and-how-to-fix-it>

² <https://dms.senate.ucla.edu/issues/issue/?3734.UCLA.IT.Assessment>

³ <https://www.wired.com/story/accellion-breach-victims-extortion>

⁴ <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/06/417911/update-it-security-incident-ucsf>

needed more centralization. We are angry and frustrated that rather than monitoring its own systems UCOP is spending resources to monitor ours, and that ITS is spending time assessing research software even though the biggest security breach – the one at UCOP which has endangered not just us but also our children, arose from using an outdated file transfer system. It is very upsetting that we have received so few details regarding this breach, although data revealed from the Dark Web indicate that this could be yet another failure associated with UCPATH⁵. We strongly support our leadership implementing the best security realistically possible on critical administrative data. Most faculty, however, have **no desire to be centrally connected to what is clearly a very tempting target for hackers.**

- 4) There has been **no transparency on the financing** of the IT Transformation and of a Research Hub and Spoke system. The suspicious will infer that these systems are likely to be highly expensive and that they will be financed by taxes or reduced transfers in the Bruin Budget Model.
- 5) There has been **no transparency on which units are unhappy with their IT services**, making it hard to assess what the inequities are and how they should be resolved.
- 6) While we recognize that IT security is becoming increasingly important, we fear that UCLA is not recognizing the **limits to any risk assessments and insurers' growing unwillingness to provide cyber insurance** as hackers seek out those with insurance.⁶ Bureaucratic unwillingness to take risks on academic software will lead a slowdown in research and will affect adversely the time to degree of our students. Many of us already have seen a **deterioration in research services** because of demands for risk assessments of commonly used research software.

We humbly suggest that it would be better to establish the feasibility of centralization and Hub and Spoke models for administrative networks and computing over several years before any changes are made to academic networks and computing.

While we agree that we need a more transparent budget process which recognizes the political reality of decreased state funding, we also have several broad concerns about the proposed **Bruin Budget Model:**

- 1) The system of taxes and transfers means **that units cannot rely on educational funds following students.** The starting point of the new budget model entrenches prior inequality in faculty and staff to student ratios. This hurts our students. It also harms our research mission because faculty recruitment and retention is harder when classes are enormous. The experience of faculty at the University of Michigan under a similar model suggests that there is no reward for efficiency.
- 2) The model provides **no guarantee that even over a period of five years taxes will not increase**, thus creating disincentives for entrepreneurial activities, whether in fund raising or establishing new programs, both of which require a large fixed, upfront cost.
- 3) The model incorporates the **false premise that we are sitting on many endowed funds** which we could be spending. This is an accounting chimera. Endowed funds, including those which permit graduate student support, are allocated to specific uses.

⁵ <https://www.zdnet.com/article/ransomware-group-targets-universities-of-maryland-california-in-new-data-leaks/>

⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-ransomware-proliferates-insuring-for-it-becomes-costly-and-questioned-11620811802>

- 4) Because units cannot rely on educational funds following students, units face the prospect of being in **permanent deficit to the center**. The response of units will thus be to devolve costs to individual departments but, other than SSDPs and summer session, the new model provides **no guarantees to individuals departments that they will benefit from serving more students**.
- 5) The system of taxes and transfers enables the **use of educational funds for administrative projects** in the guise of education and without faculty oversight.

We agree that it is important to implement reforms which will make UCLA stronger and enhance our teaching and research missions. However, we do not wish to rush into a plan in haste only to repent at leisure. Details have been so scarce that it is hard to assess the appropriateness of plans which would implement major changes in how UCLA is run. The details matter. Unfortunately, the engagement with faculty before the EVCP leadership transition has been selective and at a level where there would be no knowledge of the details of day-to-day administration. Engagement now is complicated by the limits on faculty bandwidth imposed by the pandemic and more than a year of remote education. An hour-long town hall on complicated plans with no chat function and no detailed documents to read beforehand is not sufficient. **Full disclosure of plan details, time for the faculty to study those details during the new academic year, and open discussions that are recorded for all to view will do much to build trust between the faculty and the administration.**

We acknowledge that you and the other VCs have been communicating with faculty and been receiving input, and we thank you all for this listening. We understand that there have been changes to these programs based on our conversations. What has been lacking, however, is **communication back to faculty about which concerns were taken seriously and what changes to the plans resulted**. For example, have the Academic Senate recommendations⁷ on the IT Transformation been implemented? As the plans are finalized, it is time to **provide a clear working version that incorporates the faculty input so we may help identify remaining or new problems** arising from these sweeping administrative changes. The State of California requires a **comment period** for proposed change to regulations, why should UCLA not also follow the wisdom of this approach? UCLA has an outstanding team of academic experts that can and should be more involved, and who have legitimate questions regarding these initiatives that still need to be addressed.

We also urge you to consider **structural reforms so that there can be real faculty oversight** into determining whether the Bruin Budget Model, the IT Transformation, and Hub and Spoke Models are serving UCLA's academic mission. Many of the answers at the faculty forum on the BBM held on 5/18/21 amounted to "trust us, we'll get the answer right eventually". That trust simply does not exist. Oversight by faculty from across the University and the diversity of roles that faculty serve would help ensure the integrity of the process with regards to supporting the University's core mission.

Respectfully Yours,

(In Alphabetical Order)

⁷ <https://dms.senate.ucla.edu/issues/issue/?3734.UCLA.IT.Assessment>

Aaron A. Burke	Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology	NELC
Aaron Panofsky	Associate Professor	Public Policy, Institute for Society and Genetics, Sociology
Abel Valenzuela Jr.	Professor and Director	Chicana/o Studies, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment
Abigail Bigham	Associate professor	Anthropology
Abigail Saguy	Professor and Chair	Sociology
Adam Moore	Associate Professor	Geography
Aisha Finch	Associate Professor	Gender Studies and African American Studies
Akhil Gupta	Professor and Chair	Anthropology, American Indian Studies
Alan Page Fiske	Distinguished Professor	Anthropology
Alessandro Duranti	Distinguished Professor	Anthropology
Alex J. Norman, DSW	Professor Emeritus	Luskin School of Public Affairs
Alex Purves	Professor and Chair	Classics
Allen F. Roberts	Distinguished Professor	World Arts and Cultures/Dance
Allen J. Scott	Distinguished Research Professor	Geography and Policy Studies
Andrea Fraser	Professor and Chair	Art
Andrea Moudarres	Associate Professor	European Languages and Transcultural Studies
Andrew Apter	Professor, Director	History, Anthropology, African Studies Center
Anna Kudyma	Senior Lecturer	UCLA Slavic, East European and Eurasian Languages and Cultures
Anna Morcom	Sambhi Chair of Indian Music	Ethnomusicology
Anthony Seeger	Professor Emeritus	Ethnomusicology
Anurima Banerji	Associate Professor	World Arts and Cultures/Dance
Aradhna Tripathi	Associate Professor	EPSS/AOS/loES
arvind thomas	Associate Professor	English
Asma Sayeed	Associate Professor	Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
Ayala Levin	Associate Professor	Architecture and Urban Design
Barbara Herman	Professor	Philosophy
Benjamin Karney	Professor and Chair of the Social Area	Psychology
Benjamin M. Wu	Professor	Bioengineering/Dentistry
Brent Vine	Professor and Chair	Program in Indo-European Studies
Bronwen Wilson	Professor and Director	Art History, Center for 17th and 18th-century studies/Clark Library
Bruce Hayes	Biggs Distinguished Professor	Linguistics
Bruce Kagan	Professor of Clinical Psychiatry	Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences
Carla Pestana	Professor and Chair	History
Carlos E. Santos	Associate Professor	Social Welfare
Carlos Portera-Cailliau	Professor	Neurology
Carollee Howes	Professor Emerita and Research Scholar	Education
Carrie Bearden	Professor	Semel Institute /Dep of Psychiatry & Biobehavioral sciences
Carrie Hyde	Associate Professor	English
Carson Schutze	Professor	Linguistics
Casey Reas	Professor	Design, Media Arts
Catherine Cahill	Professor	Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences
Catherine Lord	George tarjan distinguished professor	Psychiatry
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Chon Noriega	Professor	Film, Television, and Digital Media

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Christopher Evans	Professor	Brain Research Institute, Psychiatry and Psychology
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George Baker	Professor of Modern Art	Art History
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Lynne G. Zucker	Professor	Sociology
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Mark Cohen	Professor	Psychiatry, Neuro., Rad., Psych., Bioengineering, Biomedical Physics
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Peter Lunenfeld	Chair	School of Arts and Architecture

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Stefan Timmermans	Professor	Sociology
Stefania Tutino	Professor	History
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Stephen Bell	Professor	Geography and History
Stephen Mamber	Research Professor Emeritus	Film, Television, and Digital Media
Steven Clarke	Professor	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Stuart A Kirk	Distinguished Professor Emeritus	Social Welfare
Susan Bookheimer	Professor	Psychiatry

Susan L. Foster	Distinguished Professor	World Arts and Cultures/Dance
Susan Slyomovics	Distinguished Professor	Anthropology and NELC
Susanne Lohmann	Professor	Political Science
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Takahiro Ogawa	professor	Dentistry
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Torquil Duthie	Associate Professor	Asian Languages & Cultures
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Ursula K. Heise	Professor and Chair	English
Valerie Matsumoto	Professor	History and Asian American Studies
Veronica Cortinez	Professor	Spanish and Portuguese
Victoria Marks	Professor	World Arts and Cultures/Dance
Vilma Ortiz	Professor	Sociology
Vinay Lal	Professor	History
Vivian Sobchack	Professor Emerita, Former Associate Dean	Theater, Film & Television
Willeke Wendrich	Professor and Director	Egyptian Archaeology, Digital Humanities, Cotsen Inst. of Archaeology
William Boyd	Professor	Law; Institute of the Environment & Sustainability
William G. Roy	Research Professor	Sociology
William Summerhill	Professor	History
Yasemin Yildiz	Associate Professor	European Languages and Transcultural Studies
Yongkang Xue	Professor	Geography
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