

Reinvention Center
Meeting of Vice Presidents for Undergraduate Education¹ at Research Universities
San Francisco, CA
October 21, 2005

Attendees: Wendy Katkin (R.C. Director), Kathleen Flint (R.C. Assistant Director), Nelson E. Bickers (USC), K. Newell Dayley (Brigham Young), Lucia Gilbert (U of Texas at Austin), Andrew Grosovsky (UC – Riverside), Jerrold E. Hogle (U of Arizona), Joyce Kinkead (Utah State), William Ladusaw (UC – Santa Cruz), Alan Lamborn (Colorado State), Christina Maslach (UC – Berkeley), Judi Smith (UCLA), Fred Wood (UC – Davis), Al Wyner (UC – Santa Barbara)

Introduction and Welcome

Reinvention Center Director Wendy Katkin welcomed the group and gave a brief history of the Center's effort to form a national network of Vice Presidents for Undergraduate Education (UVPs) and other senior officials with campus- or college-wide responsibility for undergraduate education. The idea for the network originated with Judi Smith, Dean of Honors and Undergraduate Programs and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at UCLA and a former member of the Reinvention Center Executive Board, and was based on her experience with a similar group made up of individuals within the UC system who have this responsibility. The UC group was established when the position of VP for Undergraduate Education (or its counterpart) was new within UC, and its incumbents were struggling to define and give it shape. Judi, who was instrumental in organizing the group, felt that they might help and support one another in understanding the parameters of the position and addressing common problems. Although the positions are now well established, the group continues to meet regularly. Members share experiences, discuss issues of common concern, and counsel one another. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Education Working Group, made up of the senior officials at CIC institutions (the big ten plus northwestern and the University of Chicago), functions in a similar manner and can also serve as a model for the Reinvention Center network.

In an effort to assess the level of interest in creating a national network, the Reinvention Center invited senior administrators with this responsibility to a meeting that was held on the evening prior to the Center's conference last November. Fifty-four individuals attended, many in a VP or similar position and others representing a diversity of interests. Al Wyner, Dean of Undergraduate Studies at UC-Santa Barbara, and Ellen Woods, then Senior Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at Stanford University, presided. A summary of the discussion is available on the Reinvention Center Web site:

http://www.sunysb.edu/Reinventioncenter/Conference_04/proceedings.htm. The group appeared to support the network idea and recommended that the Reinvention Center continue to pursue it. The Center has followed up by convening small groups of VPs in different geographic regions. There have been two such meetings thus far-- in Washington DC and New York, both last June. This meeting in San Francisco is the third. The purpose of these sessions is to determine the goals and possible roles of a national network, how it should function, and how often should it meet. In order to keep the discussion focused, attendance at the meetings has been by invitation only and limited to UVPs and other senior officials who oversee undergraduate education.

Understanding and Strengthening the Position

¹ This is a generic title for senior officials with primary responsibility for undergraduate education; actual titles varied quite a bit.

Judi Smith presented a history and description of the UC group, using the attached handout summarizing the range of titles, purviews, and challenges of the UC UVPs as her guide. The UVP (or comparable) position was created as a result of UC university-wide conference on undergraduate education in the mid 1980s at which participants urged the establishment of a position on every campus with responsibility for undergraduate education. When the position was created, none of the incumbents had a sense of what it might or should entail. In response to all the uncertainties surrounding her new job, Judi, who was one of the first to be hired in this position, contacted the President Office (UCOP) to determine if others in similar positions might meet together, with UCOP (Linda Guerra) facilitating the meetings. Linda was very receptive to the idea and the group (composed of only 5 of the 7 undergraduate campuses) met initially, “as a band of very enthusiastic folks,” but not clear about their mission or roles. Though there was variability in their job titles, position descriptions, reporting arrangements, and portfolios (often a “hodgepodge” of programs), they all lacked both their own budget and direct responsibility for academic programs. Over the years, the situation has changed dramatically as these enthusiastic folks began to understand their position and build up their portfolios. In addition, they all now have budgets to support their various activities. Judi’s budget, for example, is \$18 million.

The group, which meets quarterly, has been instrumental in strengthening the UVP position and giving it coherence. They also pressed for all UCs to develop senior leadership positions for undergraduate education. Judi noted that the group helps members to connect and understand their commonalities and to co-mentor one another, which is especially useful as individuals in the UVP position change. While the range of titles for the position vary--reflecting the different reporting lines and administrative structures on the individual UC campuses—the principle responsibilities for all of the incumbents are to provide campus-wide advocacy and leadership for undergraduate education. Six other major functions common to most of the UC UVPs are: Developing and administering innovative campus-wide academic programs; collaborating with the Academic Senate in developing policies and setting standards for the review of courses and programs; developing and administering programs to support students from diverse populations; assisting faculty and graduate student instructors in the improvement and assessment of teaching and learning; developing and managing scholarship programs that encourage and reward educational enrichment; and collaborating with Student Affairs to ensure the integration of academic life with campus life.

The UVP position is cross-cutting and not focused on any one department or unit. The incumbents therefore spend lots of time using the power of persuasion, developing relationships with faculty, buying out faculty time, and “trading.” If a department for example agrees to teach a particular course, instead of assigning that department the usual two fellows, Judi will give the department three fellows. Each of the functions brings new responsibilities and requires different responses. Examples: Judi has established a Donors Council to raise scholarships to support students engaged in top priority academic programs, such as Honors, Student Research, Community-based projects, and the like; she devotes approximately 30% of her time on this. She has established a strong collaboration with Academic Senate groups that work on policy. She has built programmatic relationships, such as freshman clusters, with Student Affairs.

UVPs face many common challenges, most notably insufficient budget; how to best define and structure the UVP office to support its diverse functions; gaining the support of the Provost (or equivalent) and of the Deans of Colleges and Schools (many with strong responsibility for undergraduate education); networking with Associate Deans who have responsibility for undergraduate studies within individual Schools and Colleges; developing productive relationships with the Academic Senate and Student Affairs, which may have competing interests; addressing the structural division between Graduate and Undergraduate education,

developing and managing scholarship programs, including interfacing with Financial Aid; and providing leadership in the campus-wide accreditation process. Whether to define the UVP function as a “division,” “office,” or “college” depends on its responsibilities, the units which it oversees, and the overall administrative structure (e.g. within UC, the word “College” usually signifies the presence of a faculty). Other considerations include the UVP’s relationship with Institutional Research and other assessment and planning units, the advantages and disadvantages of representing and being the “voice of the Provost,” and the advantages and disadvantages of “wearing two hats” as Vice Provost and Dean, and the relationships that evolve as a consequence of title. As senior officials in the administration, for example, Vice Provosts are often approached for money. As Deans, they are asked to think about academic programs in much the same way that deans of colleges think about academic programs in their units.

Other challenges were mentioned as well. These include:

- The complexity of enrollment management, which involves “external” activities such as recruitment and “internal” activities relating to the curriculum, majors and minors and transcripts
- Academic Advising
- Career and Learning Centers

Many of these responsibilities typically are within the sphere of the Registrar, who is often part of Student Affairs, but some may more appropriately belong within the aegis of the UVP. UC-Davis and UC-Berkeley have moved the Registrar to the UVP office. There was consensus that collaboration with the Registrar’s office was critical, and several members of the group noted that their senior staff met regularly with the Registrar’s staff. At the same time, not all of the Registrar’s functions, academic appeals for example, belong within the purview of the UVP office, whose charge is academic.

UVPs need to conceptualize their position in terms of their mandates for advocacy and leadership, and they need figure out how to talk about and position their function to maximize effectiveness. Judi is aware of the sensitivity and balancing that is required, and at UCLA, she and her staff do this very cautiously. Over the years, the position and responsibilities of the UVP have expanded, and they will continue to grow. One area for possible expansion is embedding writing within general education. Judi now has four associate and four assistant Vice Provosts.

Defining “Undergraduate Research”

Lucia Gilbert, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Professor of Educational Psychology, and Frank C. Erwin, Jr. Centennial Honors Professor at UT Austin, reported on UT’s efforts to define “undergraduate research” and create a culture that encourages and facilitates scholarly and creative activity by students. Her remarks focused on “Connexus” (Connections in Undergraduate Studies), a diverse set of programs initiated by her office and designed to enhance undergraduate education and research in a cross-disciplinary way. In creating Connexus, she actively enlisted the collaboration and support of the Vice President for Research, the Associate Deans of UT’s various colleges, the Center for Instructional Technology, as well as individual faculty. Although Engineering was initially reluctant, she was able to get all these groups and individuals behind her by presenting her plan and making sure that they did not have to do the work--a strategy she strongly recommends. She also brought in the University’s Office of Public Affairs whose role is to keep the general public, including state government officials aware of what UT is doing with respect to undergraduate education generally, and undergraduate participation in research specifically.

A key component in UT's effort is EUREKA!, which is both a resource and model for undergraduate research. The resource EUREKA! is a comprehensive web-based database designed to increase undergraduate participation in research by connecting students with faculty (<http://www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/>). Key features include:

- Options for users at different levels and with different needs. Searchable headings, for example, include "faculty," "discipline," "department" and "subject" as well as other key words. The "faculty" heading contains profiles of all 1,800 UT faculty with descriptions of projects that welcome undergraduates. There is a general interdisciplinary subject heading that allows users to get a sense of the range and breadth and diversity of research on campus.
- A guide that educates students about what participation in research signifies and entails, how it varies across disciplines, and how to become involved.
- A monthly spotlight that features students and faculty engaged in research

Students who use EUREKA! and would like to become involved in research are directed to research coordinators, full time professionals whose role is to facilitate connections among students and faculty and help students identify an appropriate research placement. Their guidance may include directing students to specific courses to gain knowledge or skills necessary for participation in a particular projects. Students who find a research placement through EUREKA! are required to sign a contract that outlines the requirements of the project. UT Austin currently has two cross-disciplinary research coordinators who report to the Vice Provost and a third coordinator located in the College of Natural Sciences. EUREKA! is centrally budgeted and can provide some degree of research support and scholarships for students and faculty.

The model EUREKA! is more expansive and refers to undergraduate research generally. Steps are now being taken to weave research and research-related activities into the curriculum. These include:

- Developing a consistent set of "undergraduate research" course numbers to denote the activity
- Offering first-year and "Forum Seminars" that provide an introduction to faculty research on campus. The Forum seminars are organized around a theme (e.g. environment, ethics, leadership). The research coordinators visit the seminars to talk about EUREKA! and undergraduate research opportunities at UT Austin
- Building research into interdisciplinary general education courses that are organized around topics such as water which can be studied from multiple perspectives. These courses culminate in a research project
- Working with faculty to identify research components within courses and experimenting with targeted research methods courses
- Creating ePortfolios that highlight students' research or creative activity as an integral component of their undergraduate experience
- Developing a searchable database of courses with a significant research component

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of EUREKA, Lucia and her staff have identified a number of evaluation indices. At present they are tracking the number of hits the Web site receives, number of inquiries the research coordinators receive, and the number of projects offered through EUREKA!, among other quantitative measures. They are also using student self-evaluations of the experience. While they have yet to determine if the number of undergraduates participating in research has increased or if more faculty are involved, they have begun to require that faculty report undergraduate research supervision in their annual reports. Their goal is to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how EUREKA! is having impact on undergraduates and faculty.

There was some discussion about the role and credentials of the research coordinators, two of whom have Masters degrees. There was concern that they may not have the credibility of a PhD professionals in this position. A question was also raised as to the low number of coordinators in proportion to the number of UT undergraduates. This may become a problem as more and more students seek their help. Lucia noted that she would like more coordinators, but her hiring is limited by financial constraints. One suggestion was to engage academic advisors in promoting undergraduate research and directing students to appropriate preparatory courses. A second suggestion is to establish departmental research liaisons— faculty or postdocs charged with assisting majors in their department. Graduate students might be also be enlisted to mentor undergraduates, especially since they often bring interdisciplinarity to the research experience.

A copy of Lucia’s power point presentation is attached. Lucia also distributed an article to appear in the upcoming issue of Liberal Education on integrated learning and research across disciplinary boundaries. The article describes a new program at UT Austin on “Bridging the Disciplines” a structure through which students have a sustained interdisciplinary experience. Students who successfully complete the “Bridging Disciplines” program receive a certificate and have their participation noted on their transcripts. UCLA has developed a set of interdisciplinary minors with the same goal as the “Bridging” program, and USC offers have sets of majors and minors with emphasis areas for students intending to go to graduate school.

CIC Undergraduate Education Working Group

The CIC Education Working Group has been in existence for many years. It is one of 48 established constituent groups organized, supported and staffed by the CIC; its support includes hosting the meetings and maintaining a web site. With the exceptions of Northwestern and the University of Chicago, its members all come from large, public institutions. They are bound by their common interests and challenges, which, even for the two private universities, are far more important than the differences. The Group meets for one day twice a year, in the Spring and Fall semesters. The agenda emerges through an informal process: i.e. an email from the Group chair asking “What would you like to talk about.” Much of the communication takes place via email. There are usually one or two formal presentations. Most of the time is spent discussing issues, including policy implication, and to a lesser extent the nuts and bolts of how to do their jobs. The Group has a listserv that is well used, often to gather data and share resources. Typically, someone will use the list serv to pose a question: “What are you doing about. . . .?” The value of the group derives from its relatively small size, participants’ knowledge of one another and one another’s institutions, their ability to speak candidly and “off the record” with peers, and the insistence on only members attending (“no substitutions.”). Members have a strong sense of camaraderie and commitment to the group.

The Group serves a number of functions. First and foremost, it provides a forum for exchanging information both during the meetings as well as through constant email “chatter.” The latter is especially helpful as issues emerge on a campus and the UVP (or counterpart) has to respond quickly. Members also use one another as benchmarks to assess and guide their own actions. Finally, the Group provides an opportunity for members to interact with colleagues without concern that they might be in competition with one another. CIC members who spoke at the DC and New York meetings emphasized the “real” value in talking with people facing the same problems.

Examples of recent issues discussed by the Group.

- First-year students

- Emerging living/learning programs
- Academic orientation programs
- Transfer students
- Undergraduate research
- Academic Integrity

Occasionally, Group members undertake a joint activity; this occurs primarily when one or two members have a real interest in a topic and step forward to take the lead. Recently, for example, the Group created an online tutorial on academic integrity for first-year students piloted at Michigan State. The tutorial introduces the students to the definitions of academic integrity and cheating and tells them about the consequences. Students are required to complete the twenty-minute tutorial prior to arriving at orientation. The Summer 2005 was its first test.

People attend the Group's meetings because of the opportunity to sit down for 4-5 hours for a sustained conversation with peers who are knowledgeable. "There is no substitute for working with people who deeply understand issues that you are addressing." The Group is particularly useful for individuals who are new to the UVP position. At any one time, it will include both experienced and new members. The more experienced members in many ways serve as peer mentors to their less experienced colleagues.

The three CIC members who spoke at the DC and New York meetings see real value in adopting a regional approach to the UVP network. Members get to know one another well, engagement is greater, and since the meetings are relatively closely to members' home institutions, they are more likely to attend. For all three, attendance at the meeting has become a genuine priority. At the same time, they support the Reinvention Center national network and see it as an opportunity to engage with a larger group and as a complement to what they do.

The "Nitty Gritty" of Forming the Network

Wendy described the two previous UVP networks meeting, which produced different recommendations for the network. The DC group, which was made up largely of officials from universities in the south and southeast, voted to continue to meet as a group once a semester, with meetings rotating among campuses. The group has already had its second meeting (in Chapel Hill on October 28) and is planning a third in the spring. The New York group, on the other hand, opted for semi-annual meetings that have a topical focus. VPs would be welcome to attend all meetings, regardless of region. A suggested format is for the meetings to focus on two questions—one involving a philosophical paradigm and the other a substantive question that addresses a specific programmatic or topical issues. A topical meeting will be scheduled for the Spring 2006. Both groups agreed that there should be a national UVP meeting every two years. It was suggested that it be held the day before the Reinvention Center bi-annual conference.

Wendy noted that the NSF is interested in providing funding for the network if a case can be made that it will benefit STEM education.

Participants all agreed that they found real value in the UVP network so far. Those outside UC found access to a peer group extremely attractive. Those in UC decided that it is important for them to have a broad view and develop national comparisons. The group decided that it was best to meet twice a year in order to build relationships colleagues within their region, but acknowledged that some effort might be made to coordinate with meetings of the UC group from time to time. There was some discussion of what constituted the "Western Region," and all agreed that they would like it to reach east to Texas and north to Washington.

To help guide planning for the next meeting, Wendy asked those present to list the two or three major issues they will be addressing next year.

Brigham Young

- Federal mandates on the acceptance of transfer credit
- The outcomes of the new Commission on Higher Education
- Incorporating instructional technology (starting to use Blackboard)

Colorado State

- Many similar issues
- Overriding concern: Major upheavals in the Colorado system due to potentially drastic cuts to the state budget for higher education
- Undergraduate research and writing incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum. This is also driven by state mandates on including writing in the core courses.
- Access and retention of their core constituency as tuition costs sky-rocket
- Decreasing in male student enrollment

UC–Davis

- Access and retention, but specifically time to degree. Currently, only 35% of students at Davis graduate in four years.
- “Agricultural Egalitarianism” which makes it difficult to build an honors program with the perception of elitism. (BYU had a similar challenge, but went to an ‘open system’ over an Honors system as a solution)

UC–Santa Barbara

- Many similar issues
- The future of public universities and the impact this has on private universities
- Emergence of new technologies
- Academic integrity
- Increasing incidence of mental illness and drug/alcohol abuse among students. This includes counseling issues as well as the impact on students and faculty.

UC–Santa Cruz

- Many similar issues
- Making undergraduate education better within *existing* resources
- Learning diplomatic “change management” in an era of dramatic changes and upheavals (e.g. doubling student body, changing leadership)

USC

- Healthy endowment, but with growing student body it is now small per student
- How to continue to add value to University education
- Incorporating more undergraduate research
- Increasing the faculty-student ratio
- Increasing research funding and providing more attention to undergrads
- Direct vs. distributed contact
- Shifting from commuter to residential life and trying to guarantee four years on-campus residence
- Future of public universities and the impact this has on private universities

Utah State

- Moving to “intentional” change, such as having data-driven decision making
- Retention
- First-year experience
- Retaining students who take a leave of absence for church service
- Accountability
- “Branding of institution” as related to enhancing enrollment
- Student “Bill of Rights” vs. Academic Freedom
- University college
- Orphan degree programs

UC–Riverside

- Time to degree
- Freshman success and retention
- Faculty instruction in order to enhance freshman success in gateway courses
- Improving outcomes for graduates
- Assessment
 - Here Wendy described conversations with Miles Boylan at NSF about how best to do assessment of undergraduate research. She suggested inviting him to the UVP meeting at the next RC conference to discuss assessment with the group. The group approved of this idea.
 - It was also suggested that we invite someone from WASC to discuss assessment solely within the research university environment and someone from ETS, which has designed a test to assess what college students should know.

Wendy’s Issues

- Local legislation that prohibits teaching of evolution, and how this will affect teaching in higher education, such as the need to offer remedial biology
- Changing demography of today’s student body, creating new cultural foundations within the classroom
- The effect of changing societal paradigms on higher education, such as globalism, fluidity of disciplines

UC– Berkeley

- Infrastructure problems resulting from having an old physical plant. How can one integrate (and fund) instructional technology and new innovations?
- How institutions collaborate and communicate: New models like the Sakai Consortium
- Access and affordability for students when tuition and fees continue to rise
- Broadening international opportunities
- Intercollegiate athletics, e.g. neverending expense, gender equity

UCLA

- AP credit: How do you ensure UCLA graduates actually have a UCLA education?
 - How do you deal with “dual credit” from community colleges?
- Pipeline issues: How to maximize success after graduation. UCLA is instituting a capstone experience to help address this.
- Educating our students to become global leaders: The need to serve the state and simultaneously admit more international students and more out of state students in order to increase the diversity beyond California.

U of Arizona

- Balancing responsibility for undergraduate education between central administration and colleges. This includes budgetary balance.
- Changing admissions standards. The University must admit the top 50% of Arizona high school graduates, but can now use discretion, such as diversity considerations, in admitting the lower 25%
- Balancing between high-quality university and outreach to the public in the land-grant mandate, i.e. balancing “flagship” campuses with satellite campuses

In determining the next steps, the group decided to meet again in the spring at a member’s campus. Subsequent meetings would rotate among universities. It was suggested that the host university President or Provost be invited to address the group.

Next Meeting

Thanks to an invitation from Jerry Hogle, we have tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Friday, April 7, at the University of Arizona. So mark your calendar! At the same time, if you are aware of another major meeting being held on April 7 that many in the group are likely to attend, please let us know asap. (reinvention@sunysb.edu)

New Initiatives

Wendy briefly presented several Reinvention Center initiatives currently underway.

The Center recently submitted a proposal to the NEH to develop a template and resources to support the design and teaching of a lower division interdisciplinary course in “Moments of Discovery.” The “heart” of the project will be a five-day summer institute (June 2006) during which 24 faculty in diverse disciplines will develop these materials and produce model syllabi for four major intellectual achievements: Galileo’s observations of the solar system, the invention of the printing press, the writing of the U.S. Constitution, and the discovery of nuclear fission. The Center will learn in March whether the project will be funded. Since this leaves us only two months or so to distribute information on the project and solicit applications (the tight schedule is the result of the NEH requiring us to offer the institute in 2006), the Center is compiling a list now of faculty interested in participating. Assuming the funds are granted, they will be given stipends of \$1,000. So, please help us spread the word. Faculty who would like more information should contact Wendy (wendy.katkin@sunysb.edu; 631-632-6998) and/or submit an application form. The proposal, institute program, and an application form are attached.

***The faculty member listed in the proposal as leader of the group on the Constitution is unable to do it, so we are looking for someone to take his place. If you have any colleagues whose research and/or teaching relates to the Constitution who might be interested, please let me know asap. Group leaders will receive a \$2,200 stipend.

We are currently working on the program for the next Reinvention Center conference, which will take place in Washington DC on November 9-10, 2006. I am attaching the latest draft, which reflects changes suggested by you and your counterparts at universities in other regions. If you have recommendations for speakers or session leaders, please pass them on. Or if you have further suggestions regarding the program, pass them on as well.

Note that the national UVP meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 8. So, mark your calendar.

Finally, the Reinvention Center Web site “Spotlights” topics of interest to the research university community. Following Jerry Hogle’s suggestion, we would like to have a Spotlight on the diverse forms undergraduate research can take. These form can include both traditional and non-traditional modes and include group projects, exhibits, performances, portfolios and models embedded within courses. If there is a “form” on your campus that you would like us to feature, let us know.

We are also planning a “Spotlight” on the applications of technology in a range of educational settings and are looking for good models to showcase. The settings may range from high enrollment and introductory courses to science and writing laboratories to classes in the fine or performing to seminars to individual or class research activities and they may encompass any discipline.

To see what “spotlighting” your initiative will entail, we invite you to visit our Web site; <http://www.sunysb.edu/Reinventioncenter> .