

The Berkeley Undergraduate Initiative

Executive Summary

Introduction

Responding to the Chancellor's call for enhancing undergraduate education at Berkeley, several committees, drawing on a wide range of expertise and opinion and working under the guidance of EVCP Claude Steele and VCUE Cathy Koshland, developed a compelling vision for improving the curriculum, co-curricular opportunities, student support, and residential life at Berkeley.

This "*Undergraduate Initiative*" seeks to make UC Berkeley as renowned for its undergraduate education as it is for its faculty research and graduate programs. It outlines a broad and holistic re-envisioning of undergraduate education for the twenty-first century. The Initiative will enhance an already vigorous program of undergraduate education and it will make the special opportunities of studying at a world-class research university a signature feature of the Berkeley experience.

A newly established Council, comprised of deans of all units conferring undergraduate degrees (to be known as the Council of College Deans), together with the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, will be charged with the further development, implementation, and governance of the Undergraduate Initiative.

By the spring of 2018, which will mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the University of California and when a new capital campaign is likely to be launched, we will announce a set of comprehensive measures that will renew undergraduate education at the world's greatest public research university.

The Initiative

The Undergraduate Initiative has four central components: 1) A College at Berkeley; 2) A Berkeley Curriculum; 3) A 21st Century Berkeley Undergraduate Campus; and 4) A Philosophy of Educating the Whole Student at Berkeley.

1. A College at Berkeley

In order to realize its visionary ambition, the University will transform its largest undergraduate college—the College of Letters & Science—and reconceive the L&S undergraduate programs as a four-year liberal arts "College at Berkeley." The College at

Berkeley will be the high-profile centerpiece of undergraduate education at UC Berkeley, providing a foundation for a comprehensive four-year education beginning with the lower-division and continuing through majors, while also serving as the central coordinating hub for the undergraduate experience across all schools and colleges at Berkeley.

The Dean of the L&S Undergraduate Division's role will be recast, as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for the College at Berkeley. In concert with the Divisional Deans and the Executive Dean, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies will be empowered, via a reallocation of resources and responsibilities, to ensure that the College can meet the needs and serve the interests of undergraduate students at the highest level.

The College at Berkeley's Undergraduate Dean will have primary responsibility for the implementation of the lower-division components of the newly designed Berkeley Curriculum (see below), for enhanced student advising and support services, and for academic orientation and enrichment programs for all entering freshmen and transfer students within the College. In close collaboration with the academic deans of *all* undergraduate schools and colleges, the Undergraduate Dean will also be responsible for coordination of the lower and upper division curriculum campus-wide, in order to ensure that all students (be they freshmen or transfers) are provided access and well-guided pathways into their chosen majors.

The aim of the College at Berkeley is to give every undergraduate a well-coordinated liberal arts experience in their freshman and sophomore years, one that exposes them early-on to the breadth of opportunities the campus offers and one that ensures that, in their first two years, they acquire the foundational skills and guidance they need to succeed in a well-chosen course of study. Equally, the College will provide transfer students with a clear map of campus academic opportunities, and ensure that all students can create a well-designed pathway to success in their future personal and professional lives.

The College at Berkeley will be physically located at the academic heart of the campus, anchored in a newly renovated main atrium of Dwinelle Hall. With a grand entrance facing Dwinelle Plaza, the vast majority of students matriculating to Berkeley will pass first through Sather Gate and across Strawberry Creek in order to commence this new and exciting phase in their lives. In turn, Dwinelle Hall will serve as the hub for satellite facilities dedicated to undergraduate learning and life (see below).

2. A Berkeley Curriculum

The new Berkeley Curriculum, focused on an excellent lower-division instructional experience that prepares students for advanced study across all of our undergraduate programs, will be a centerpiece of the Undergraduate Initiative. Although not envisioned as a conventional common core, changes at the lower division will ensure a solid foundation for students in all fields of study—from Engineering and Architecture

to Chemistry and Theater, Dance and Performance Studies—and opportunities to share that experience among students with diverse intellectual interests.

The goal of the Berkeley Curriculum will be to ensure that every student graduates with the intellectual dispositions and academic capacities essential to life-long success. The Berkeley Curriculum will include a set of shared, lower division requirements. These courses will provide a richer and more coherent academic foundation for students over their careers at Berkeley, one that is attuned to the challenges and needs of twenty-first century leaders and citizens, that will encourage them to develop their own unique trajectory into a chosen major and broader course of study, and that will ensure that students develop their individual intellectual identities and are prepared and inspired to take full advantage of the special opportunities that undergraduate study at a world class research university has to offer.

When fully realized, a new Berkeley Curriculum will:

- a. *Create a Shared Undergraduate Academic Experience.* We will craft a common lower-division platform, including a set of Berkeley common-experience courses taught by ladder faculty and targeted to freshmen, sophomores, and transfers; a revised and smaller set of breadth requirements; improved R&C courses; opportunities to take innovative courses in data science, global studies and in arts and design; a sophomore declaration exercise; and a capstone experience for all majors.
- b. *Involve Undergraduates in Research, Public Engagement, Creative Activities, and New Ventures.* We need to establish a one-stop clearinghouse to match students and faculty who share research and creative interests, help students find internships, incubate student start-up projects, and identify and provide the facilities (labs, arts spaces, innovation hubs, equipment, etc.) necessary for these endeavors. Sophomores and juniors would be eligible for a modest research stipend to support their research, public engagement experience, creative activities, or start-up venture.
- c. *Create New Opportunities for Interdisciplinary Study.* While recognizing that interdisciplinary study builds on the strengths of existing disciplines and departments—and thus requires devoting adequate resources to those existing disciplines and departments—we also want to create additional opportunities for interdisciplinary study and research for undergraduates. These could include innovative, multi-disciplinary minors that take advantage of the wealth of courses throughout the curriculum, that deploy Berkeley's outstanding faculty and graduate student instructors, and that optimize the use of our facilities (buildings, classrooms, labs, studios, etc.). The Council will also work with

Summer Sessions and Study Abroad to develop summer-only minors that will maximize utilization of resources during the summer and that can generate revenue for participating units.

- d. *Enhance Student Advising and Mentoring.* Our aim is to open our students' eyes to the wealth of opportunities that Berkeley offers while also helping them find the best pathways for the realization of their full potential as students and citizens of the Berkeley community. We are especially mindful of the need for mentoring and advising of undeclared College students. Expanding the highly successful "Berkeley Connect" program to embrace this entire population, as well as all interested students from across the entire campus, is one of a number of coordinated measures that should be taken in order to ensure that our undergraduates are given the best possible guidance in shaping their collegiate experience.

It is vital to note that the Berkeley Curriculum represents a fundamental expansion of support for the teaching mission at Berkeley. In order to deliver the finest educational experience to our undergraduates, the University will dramatically enhance the instructional capacity of campus and greatly expand opportunities for faculty-student interaction.

The Berkeley Curriculum will be developed in partnership with the Academic Senate. The design, development, and implementation of the Berkeley Curriculum will be the shared responsibility of the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, the Undergraduate Dean of the College at Berkeley, the deans of the other Colleges and Schools that offer BA and BS degrees, and the Academic Senate.

3. A 21st Century Berkeley Undergraduate Campus

The transformation of the undergraduate experience on the scale we envision, especially the far-reaching Berkeley Curriculum, demands 21st century educational facilities. Among the priorities of the next UC Berkeley capital campaign will be instructional infrastructure, informal learning spaces, and residential facilities for undergraduates campus-wide. The goal will be to support a sweeping renewal of the landmark buildings that support learning, research, creative activities and professional development.

This effort has already begun, with the new Lower Sproul Plaza complex and the radical renovation of Moffitt Undergraduate Library. Many of the heritage buildings that are central to the undergraduate experience will need to be redesigned and woven into a coherent undergraduate academic landscape that supports contemporary digital-age pedagogy, enhances research, creative endeavor, and informal learning, and provides undergraduate students a distributed network of "launch pads" on the large Berkeley campus, where they can alight, study and reflect, interact, and feel at home.

4. A Philosophy of Educating the Whole Student at Berkeley

The Initiative will be guided by the principle that Berkeley should encourage and support the development of every undergraduate's educational identity. This requires a whole-student educational philosophy. Rather than considering undergraduate education as a throughput system (e.g., how to assign students to dorms, advisers, majors, classes, and graduation cohorts) Berkeley's highest goal will be to guide students through a well-integrated undergraduate education. We will ensure that from the day that each student arrives at Berkeley s/he receives the support and guidance needed—in both residences and on campus—to thrive personally as well as academically at Berkeley and beyond.

One of the most important conclusions of our strategic planning process is that UC Berkeley is severely constrained in moving such an educational philosophy into practice, because the campus is underinvested in student advising and in its support of student life and learning outside of the classroom. This must change both through the addition of financial and personnel resources, and through more effective coordination across campus.

A holistic transformation of undergraduate life will require a significant increase in residential opportunities and student learning services, as well as enhancement of social and learning spaces designed to facilitate the full integration of non-residential students into campus life. This may entail, for example, the construction and renovation of sufficient student residences for all freshmen and sophomore students and enhancement of the support services and social life provided in student residences and elsewhere on campus.

Many campus units (for example, the Vice Chancellors for Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, and Equity & Inclusion) already support the academic and extracurricular lives of our students by providing early orientation of students to campus, support structures for their well-being and personal development, or mentoring and cultural enrichment. The Council will work to deepen the connections and coordination between these efforts and the College's academic goals with the aim of providing a balanced environment that has as its core the development of the full educational potential of our undergraduates.

Governance: the Council of College Deans

The Berkeley Undergraduate Initiative is a campus-wide effort that aims to better support students over the full course of their studies, whether they enter as freshmen

or as junior transfers. A Council of College Deans, convened by the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, and comprised of all academic deans responsible for undergraduate education at Berkeley, will serve as the governance body of the Initiative.

Thus the Council will include:

- VCUE (Convener)
- Executive and Divisional Deans of the College of L&S
- L&S Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- Dean of the College of Natural Resources
- Dean of Chemistry
- Dean of the College of Environmental Design
- Dean of Engineering
- Dean of Haas School of Business

In addition, the Council would include, as non-voting members, the Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate and the EVCP.

The Council will be charged with overseeing the implementation of the Berkeley Curriculum for all Berkeley undergraduates, and with insuring on-going review of the lower division curriculum, including its relation to upper-division academic programs across the campus. It will also oversee the expansion of the Office of Undergraduate Research to include “Public Engagement,” entrepreneurial “New Ventures” programs, as well as other creative and academic enrichment programs such as Berkeley Connect.

One of the primary tasks of the Council will be to recommend a protocol for the level of participation of all units, and to evaluate the extent to which undergraduate colleges aside from the College of Letters & Science are interested in joining in the formation of a shared undergraduate (especially lower division) curriculum.

The detailed parts of the lower-division curriculum may take as long as two years to fully create and begin implementing. The Council will immediately draw up a roadmap of the relationships among the undergraduate colleges as well as with the non-academic units responsible for student advising, support, housing, admissions, and financial aid. This will require coordination with the VCSA, the VCEI, and the VCRE. It will also entail timely engagement with the relevant Senate committees, such as COCI and the Council.

The Council will serve, as well, to institutionalize long-term strategic planning with respect to undergraduate education, to promote continuous campus innovation in pedagogy, curriculum design, and courses of study. It will also play a role in improving study-abroad programs, student-learning facilities, and residential life.

Beginning this fall, the Council will be charged to recommend what resources (classroom and other space; fractions of TAS and other budgets; etc.) are required by the Undergraduate Initiative, and how to ensure the proper allocation of resources. The Council will oversee the distribution of responsibilities, accountabilities, and transfers of resources, in support of the design, development and implementation of the Undergraduate Initiative.

The Council, along with the Chancellor, the EVCP, and UDAR, will also be charged with developing a fund-raising plan for the Undergraduate Initiative. All Council deans will be invited to participate, understanding the need for L&S to play a leading role in this effort while respecting the integrity of other undergraduate colleges and their own fundraising needs.

Given the financial situation of the campus at large, most of the incremental financial resources will need to be raised through philanthropy, which is one reason we are committed to making the undergraduate initiative a centerpiece of the upcoming campaign. Success in this campaign will benefit the entire campus as we focus attention on every aspect of undergraduate education, including the endowment of faculty chairs, support for graduate students in their teaching capacity, the endowment of teaching postdocs, undergraduate financial aid scholarships, and the raising of resources for residential life, among many other things.

A Compelling Cause

Berkeley is entrusted with the educational lives of an undergraduate student body of enormous talent, energy, and diversity. Our students offer us the opportunity to help them develop their potential to the highest possible levels. Because we are a public university, fortunate to have an exceptional faculty and remarkable intellectual resources, and because undergraduates are by far the largest segment of students on campus, we have the responsibility to marshal all of our collective energies to support their education.

The aims outlined in this document and the measures required to achieve them demand that we build upon what is already a vigorous and exciting palette of opportunities for undergraduates. But placing undergraduates at the very center of our activities, and supporting them in the development of their identities as *Berkeley* students, will also require some significant changes in the culture of the campus as we maintain our preeminence in research and graduate education. These changes will require the participation of *all* faculty and of *all* the non-academic units on campus. The Undergraduate Initiative can and will be guided by the leadership of the Council, and will depend heavily upon the support and leadership of the Chancellor and EVCP. But

effective and timely implementation will also require a deep commitment from all the faculty and staff who together are entrusted with delivering the best possible undergraduate education for our students.

We must communicate our aims clearly and convincingly to members of the campus community, and together with them we must inspire all the philanthropic friends and institutional allies from whom we wish to seek support. We must be in a position to convince all our constituents—now, at the beginning of the next campaign, and for decades into the future—that a Berkeley undergraduate education will be the single greatest lever of opportunity that any college student could possibly have.

APPENDIX

Timeline for Implementation

2013-15: Planning phase of the Initiative

2015-16: Inauguration of the College at Berkeley

2015-18: Phased implementation of the Berkeley Curriculum

2020: First graduating class of the new College at Berkeley

2015-25: Phased implementation of the new student residential life program