To: Incoming Chancellor, UC Davis
From: Carolyn Thomas, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
Re: Introduction, priorities, and plans
Date: 12/16/16

Undergraduate Education introduction
Our job is to ensure students learn at the highest levels within this large, complex campus where decision-making does not always put undergraduate student education first. Within UE we oversee the University Honors Program, Undergraduate Research Center, First-Year Seminars Program, Center for Educational Effectiveness, International & Academic English, the Washington Program, the Center for Leadership Learning, the Office of Academic Advising, Academic Assessment support and the Pilot Testing Center. Most of our units were created to enable students to succeed academically in the face of challenges presented by the larger university structure. Others are placed with us because they serve all students and fit no single academic dean's portfolio. We have roughly 45 professional staff members and three academic administrators (VPDUE at 100%, an associate dean/honors director at 75%, and an associate vice provost of academic planning at 75%). In the last two years, UE has undergone large, positive organizational changes, led jointly by leadership and our professional team. Today, anchored in the shared values of curiosity, inclusion, advocacy, and kindness, our team confronts the challenges that come with efforts to enhance student learning during this time of campus growth, within our state's landscape of inequitable k-12 educational opportunity and attainment, and overcomes them.

Together we are united in our dedication to our vision:
To create the highest quality learning environment for undergraduates at any university

And we seek to create it via our mission:
Working collaboratively with faculty, staff, and students, Undergraduate Education advocates for diverse educational experiences that promote inclusive learning. Ultimately, we serve students by aligning resources with opportunities to foster curiosity, engaged citizenship and academic success.

Our current priorities center around achieving this mission through the following five plans, all of which serve two primary goals:

Two Primary Goals:

- **Goal 1:** Increase academic success for all students, thereby closing persistence and achievement gaps; and
- **Goal 2:** Cultivate undergraduate students who have discovered and developed their unique talents, and, as a result, can tackle their generation's most pressing challenges.

1. Teach students effectively across the curriculum so that learning outcomes are achieved and achievement and persistence gaps are closed
   Campus Steps (with direct or indirect UE leadership or participation):
- Implement direct assessment of student learning within Academic Senate undergraduate program review
- Assess international English as a Second Language graduate student preparedness to teach prior assignment as a teaching assistant
- Enable faculty to know the preparation levels of their students prior to teaching each quarter and intervene to close preparation/achievement gaps with simple pedagogical tools
- Enable colleges to hire LPSOEs who specialize in research into pedagogical effectiveness, across colleges, and support their work so enhanced learning outcomes are achieved

2. Provide students with accessible and accurate information about courses, majors, and requirements at all phases of their education
   Steps:
   - Recent collaboration with faculty to undertake a systemwide review of upper division units in all majors to encourage completable degrees within 4/2 years
   - With our Acaemic Technology Services and Registrar partners, fully implement on campus the new Canvas Learning Management System that enables effective communication and grade/scoring information
   - Assist the campus with the enforcement of prerequisites as we move in fall 2017 from the pilot stage to the full implementation stage
   - Support IET and advisors as we adopt Degreeworks, an advisor and student facing tool that will allow easy sharing of information on course requirements and degree completion

3. Create in students the emotional and intellectual self-awareness that comes from mentorship from faculty, instructors, and academic advisors
   Steps:
   - Support the colleges to hire sufficient academic advisors, ensure clear reporting lines to professionals, enhance professional development, make advising mandatory once a year for all students
   - Collaborate in all student success matters with Student Affairs student success centers and staff
   - Engage all undergraduate students in knowledge creation/research

4. Provide for all students opportunities to learn how to ask questions and generate new knowledge, particularly through small courses mentored research experiences
   Steps:
   - Expand first-year seminars to reach all students
   - Generate additional research opportunities by incentivizing faculty to increase the number of opportunities and by collaborating with campus partners to create a posting interface for research/internship positions that's universal across campus and easy to use
   - Build honors faculty and students who continuously raise the level of learning across campus

5. Build and refresh classrooms and explore new technology-aided pedagogies so that learning happens in sites worthy and reflective of our engaged faculty and talented students
   Steps:
   - Develop, with faculty, hybrid and online courses to expand access for students, decrease time to degree, maximize use of campus instructional facilities. Work with senate to find appropriate vendors/software solutions to enable online examination
   - Create new collaboration between IT/facilities/planning/custodial to address classroom problems comprehensively
   - Tackle significant deferred maintenance of classroom spaces and audio visual/technological equipment in classrooms
   - Build new classrooms for growth to create twenty-first century learning spaces, large and small