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Michael T. Brown, past Provost and Executive Vice President, University of California (convener)  
Michael Bradford, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Education  
Jean-Pierre Delplanque, Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate Studies  
Jeffery Gibeling, Interim Vice Chancellor, Office of Research  
Ari Kelman, Faculty Advisor to the Chancellor and Provost  
Malisa Lee, Vice Provost, Enrollment Management  
Sarah Mangum, Associate Vice Chancellor, Budget and Institutional Analysis  
Lauren McDiarmid, Chair, UC Davis Staff Assembly  
Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate  
Katheryn Russ, Vice Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate  
Pablo Reguerin, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs  
Clare Shinnerl, Vice Chancellor, Finance, Operations and Administration  
Martin Smith, Chair, Academic Federation of the University of California, Davis  
Jason Stewart, Interim Assistant Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost (staff)

RE: Sustaining Teaching And Research Task Force (START)

Dear Colleagues,

I write to invite you to serve on the Sustaining Teaching And Research Task Force (START) aimed at assessing challenges, prioritizing strategies, and recommending specific action plans to bring about substantive and transformative improvements in our education, research, and service models at UC Davis with a focus on future excellence. As a member of START, you will develop detailed and concrete recommendations and initiatives specific to the mission and needs of UC Davis, including budgetary estimates of required resources and campus units assigned to oversee each program.

As noted in my [Operating Budget Framework letter for 2023-24](#), this task force has a very important charge: to develop transformative and strategic changes in how we achieve our education, research, and service missions, including possible new operating models that are financially sustainable while maintaining, if not increasing, our ability to achieve our mission and desired goals. Your work will begin this spring and you will spend 18 to 24 months developing recommendations and action plans, with a target of implementing initial changes starting in fall 2024. The efforts of START will complement work that is underway as part of the Revenue Generation and Institutional Savings Task Force as well as the Student Success and Equitable Outcomes Task Force. These groups will also assist us as we prepare for our upcoming Western Association of Schools and Colleges reaccreditation visit.

Members of START will meet twice monthly, as well as serve on one or more working groups. Working group members will be recommended by the Task Force and selected by the Provost, with broader campus representation and additional content experts drawn from faculty, students, staff, and administration. It is crucial that we have the full engagement of the entire UC Davis community and the broadest possible

consultation. As such, multiple communication channels will be utilized, including a portal for campus input, multiple town halls for receiving input and discussing recommendations, and monthly email updates to the campus.

The first six Working Groups will address the following:

1. **The Future of Graduate Education:** This group will assess current and future challenges in providing excellent graduate education, developing new education and enrollment models, as well as improving the structure and funding models for graduate students, department-based graduate programs, and graduate groups.
2. **The Future of Undergraduate Education:** This group will assess current and future challenges in providing excellent undergraduate education, developing new teaching and staffing models; examining the structure of the academic year, summer sessions, and online education; and helping to develop sustainable enrollment models.
3. **Increasing our Research Excellence:** This group will assess current and future challenges in advancing the campus' research excellence and develop recommendations on staffing models and infrastructure to enhance research quality and productivity; develop enhancements at the intersections of faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate research experiences; and develop recommendations to improve funding models, shared resources, access to services, as well as administration of our Centers, Institutes, and Core Facilities.
4. **Creating a Sustainable and Equitable Faculty Workload:** This group will develop recommendations to address teaching, research, and service responsibilities for all faculty, while also developing mechanisms for addressing the increased burden of administrative and compliance requirements placed on faculty over the past decade or more.
5. **Optimizing our Facilities:** This group will look at options for improving our use of space—including analyzing the actual use of our classrooms, laboratories, and offices—and make recommendations to optimize usage patterns given increased use of remote and hybrid work.
6. **Improving Campus Support Services:** This group will develop recommendations to improve administrative and technology support services for faculty and staff, such as information technology and shared service centers. They will also examine whether previous consolidations of services have advanced the university's mission; identify additional opportunities for consolidation; and make recommendations where consolidation has been less effective and should be rolled back.

With the support of the Academic Senate, I have asked Michael Brown, past Provost and Executive Vice President for the University of California and past Chair of the systemwide Academic Senate, to convene this task force. Membership in START spans across the leadership of the institution. This leadership representation is essential because addressing these issues will require building cooperative relationships and working across multiple campus constituencies. The six initial working groups will be appointed in the coming weeks, with broader campus representation and additional content experts drawn from faculty, students, staff, and administration. As the working groups complete their work, new working groups and their charges will be developed with campus input as START addresses and moves forward on additional issues. Jason Stewart, Interim Assistant Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, will serve as staff to the Task Force while each working group will have their own staff.

We anticipate that START recommendations will be reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis, with the first round of recommendations provided to me no later than December 15, 2023, for changes that will be implemented for the 2024-25 academic year or earlier. The second round of working groups and

recommendations will follow for implementation in the 2025-26 academic year or earlier. Prior to implementation of any recommendations affecting areas over which the UC Davis Division of the Academic Senate has authority, the Provost will issue a formal Request for Consultation (RFC). Opportunities for input and discussion will be provided to all campus constituents for all recommendations. START is expected to conclude its work by June 30, 2025.

I look forward to meeting with all of you and hearing your recommendations and insights. Thank you for being part of this significant and transformative work, as well as your commitment to identifying solutions that, as the name suggests, will sustain and enhance the core mission of the University of California, Davis in the decades to come.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Croughan".

Mary Croughan  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Cc: Gary S. May, Chancellor  
Karl Engelbach, Associate Chancellor and Chief of Staff