# Draft Report and Recommendations of the Unparalleled Undergraduate Education and Student Experience Committee

July 26, 2023<sup>1</sup>

**Akirah Bradley-Armstrong**, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs and Success, co-chair **Sean Keilen**, Professor of Literature, Chair of Council of Provosts, co-chair **Elizabeth Abrams**, Provost, Merrill College

**Peter Alvaro**, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Engineering **Alex Belisario**, Executive Director, College Student Life & Senior Director, College Student Life - Crown and Merrill Colleges

Nandini Bhattacharya, Associate Director of Teaching

**micha cárdenas**, Associate Chair and Associate Professor of Performance, Play and Design; Associate Professor Critical Race and Ethnic Studies

Melanie Douglas, Associate Vice Chancellor, Technology & Services

Judith Estrada, Assistant Vice Chancellor for ODEI

Sheila García Mazari, Online Learning Librarian

Madison Hassler, Graduate student representative

**Richard Hughey**, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement

Marshall Ibanez, Undergraduate student representative

**Courtnie Prather**, Associate Director of Athletics and Recreation, Senior Woman Administrator and Physical Education, Interim Director of Athletics & Recreation

Molly Sims, Executive Director of Development for Student Success

Stacey Sketo-Posener, Assistant Vice Provest for Undergraduate Advision

**Stacey Sketo-Rosener**, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising **David Smith**, Professor, Physics

**Ebonée Williams**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Equity **Daniel Wirls**, Professor, Politics

Administrative Support by **Lucy Rojas**, AVC and Chief of Staff, Division of Student Affairs and Success.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The July 10, 2023 version of the Committee Report incorporates feedback from the Academic Senate.

### **Executive Summary of Recommendations**

The Unparalleled Undergraduate Education and Student Experience committee was tasked with creating opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to discuss how the campus should approach undergraduate education and the student experience over the next decade.

The committee was asked to explore the following areas and outline at least one ambitious goal for each area of the committee charge. The committee was also encouraged to consider additional topics based on community input:

- Assess the role of the colleges in enhancing the student experience.
- Recommend housing options that best support student success.
- Recommend major and general education curricular options that provide clear pathways and flexibility for exploration, and also prepare students for a successful future.
- Propose new and emerging structures and services to support student identity, development, well being, sense of belonging, and community. These structures and services should consider the different support needs of traditional first time, transfer, non-domestic, and underrepresented students.
- Propose enhanced opportunities to strengthen and complement the intellectual experience outside the classroom with co-curricular experiences (e.g. service learning, internships, research opportunities, leadership development, clubs and organizations, athletics and recreation, campus employment).

Based on the data the committee collected and the analysis conducted in small workgroups, the committee recommends the following four goals. These goals build on existing strengths and future opportunities identified by the committee.

- Establish a curriculum of elective courses at the colleges that builds upon the program learning outcomes of the Academic Literacy Curriculum, aligns with the Student Success Initiative and the Boyer 2030 Commission's Report, and fosters the competencies for career readiness published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).
- Establish a Co-curricular Record to increase the visibility of, and provide structure for, educational activities beyond credit-bearing courses.
- Ensure that every undergraduate has the opportunity to graduate from UCSC having participated in one or more experiential educational opportunities.
- Nurture a sense of belonging by developing gathering spaces in the form of true "living rooms" and commuter lounges at the main campus, Coastal Science Campus, and Silicon Valley Campus, and establish more eateries, lounges/program spaces, and study spaces for students throughout the campus. Ensure that these spaces—including the sidewalks, bike lanes, and pathways that lead to them—are physically accessible to all.

## **Committee Charge and Background**

We aspire to be the campus of choice for students seeking an extraordinary education and a holistic experience that provides opportunities for critical thinking, creativity, exploration, and preparation to achieve their life goals. Toward this end, the Unparalleled Undergraduate Education and Student Experience committee was tasked with creating opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to discuss how the campus should approach undergraduate education and the student experience over the next decade.

The committee was asked to explore the following areas and to outline at least one ambitious goal for each area of the committee charge. The committee was also encouraged to consider additional topics based on community input:

- Assess the role of the colleges in enhancing the student experience.
- Recommend housing options that best support student success.
- Recommend major and general education curricular options that provide clear pathways, flexibility for exploration, and prepare students for a successful future.
- Propose new and emerging structures and services to support student identity, development, well being, a sense of belonging, and community. These structures and services should consider the different support needs of traditional first time, transfer, non-domestic, and underrepresented students.
- Propose enhanced opportunities to strengthen and complement the intellectual experience outside the classroom with co-curricular experiences (e.g. service learning, internships, research opportunities, leadership development, clubs and organizations, athletics and recreation, campus employment).

To meet this charge, the committee hosted a mini retreat in fall 2022 to kick off the charge and met three times as a large group in fall and winter quarters. The committee also engaged outside of meetings via email and provided feedback to the committee's work via Google forms. In addition, the committee organized itself into four work groups, each led by a pair of co-chairs:

- Akirah Bradley-Armstrong and Judith Estrada (Sense of Belonging Committee)
- Akirah Bradley-Armstrong and Melanie Douglas (New Ideas Committee)
- Sean Keilen and Alex Belisario (Role of the Colleges Committee)
- Sean Keilen and Stacy Sketo-Rosener (Major and General Education Committee)

These work groups met regularly and were tasked with conducting a deeper dive into the thematic areas outlined in the committee's charge. The work groups led stakeholder consultation and did outreach to engage with students, staff, and faculty to gather information and feedback on the goals. These activities included meetings, focus groups, and surveys. A full list of stakeholder engagement activities can be found <a href="here">here</a>.

As the committee engaged in its work, the cross-cutting themes of equity, social justice and academic excellence emerged as ever-present considerations. The committee has worked to meaningfully integrate these themes into all committee products.

Recognizing that the campus is already engaged in efforts to bring new housing projects online, the committee did not develop a recommendation directly addressing student housing. Still, the committee acknowledges that creating community spaces on campus would foster students' sense of place and belonging and provide spaces for connection, study, and rejuvenation

A number of themes related to the undergraduate student experience emerged as the committee engaged in analysis and solicited input from the campus community. These themes include safe and reliable transportation, support for basic needs, support for a safe campus environment, accessibility and disability justice, and post-pandemic impacts such as long COVID. Based on feedback received during this process, we also acknowledge that support structures for student success must include robust advising and open communication channels between faculty, advisers, and students. In addition, themes related to sense of belonging emerged throughout conversations; for instance, we considered whether the goal of building belonging can be more integral to the goal of all of undergraduate education, bridging curricular with co-curriculars and experiential education. Further, the committee recognizes the potential of projects that are in process such as early alert programs to help identify students who may need extra support. While the committee is not explicitly recommending goals for these areas, we note that several of these themes are already campus priorities and should continue to be studied in an attempt to advance solutions for students.

### Goals

Based on the data the committee collected and the analysis within small workgroups, the committee recommends four goals. While the committee discussed other ideas, such as a transfer college and a Center for Student Involvement, ultimately we settled on the following because these goals build on existing strengths identified by the committee and have strong viability for implementation. The full list of the committee's recommendations can be found here.

• Goal 1. Establish a curriculum of elective courses at the colleges that builds

- upon the program learning outcomes of the Academic Literacy Curriculum, aligns with the Student Success Initiative and the Boyer 2030 Commission's Report, and fosters the competencies for career readiness published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).
- Goal 2. Establish a Co-curricular Record to increase the visibility of, and provide structure for, educational activities beyond credit-bearing courses.
- Goal 3. Ensure that every undergraduate has the opportunity to graduate from UCSC having participated in one or more experiential educational opportunities.
- Goal 4. Creating Place: Nurture a sense of belonging by developing gathering spaces in the form of true "living rooms" and commuter lounges at the main campus, Coastal Science Campus, and Silicon Valley Campus, and establish more eateries, lounges/program spaces, and study spaces for students throughout the campus. Ensure that these spaces—including the sidewalks, bike lanes, and pathways that lead to them—are physically accessible to all.

### **Narrative**

The following narrative provides a description of each goal including background and rationale for the goal. The discussion includes possible ways to achieve the goals as well as how we can leverage what we have already achieved to enhance the goal's impact. The committee has also included information on what challenges we anticipate and suggestions to overcome them. Finally, a set of metrics has been included to help guide the implementation of the goals.

#### Goal #1:

Establish a curriculum of elective courses at the colleges that builds upon the program learning outcomes of the Academic Literacy Curriculum, aligns with the Student Success Initiative and the Boyer 2030 Commission's Report, and fosters the competencies for career readiness published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

This goal is intended to empower students to make good decisions about their education beyond their majors and to make college affiliation a more meaningful experience beyond the first year for all students. These ideas are the result of consultations with a wide range of faculty, staff, and student stakeholders, including: VPDUEGE, Council of Provosts, Office of Campus Advising Coordination, University Registrar, College Student Life (Senior and Associate Directors), College Program Coordinators, STARS, Council of College Academic Preceptors and Advisors, Coalition of Department Advisors, and a focus of group of approximately 30 student leaders from all of the colleges. These findings and recommendations are also informed by the external review conducted of the UCSC College System in 2022.

These certificates would be optional for students.

The proposed curriculum would:

- Provide credit-bearing learning opportunities in areas such as Civic Engagement and Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Responsibility, Financial Independence, Health and Wellbeing, Legal Literacy, Professional Communication and Public Speaking, and Professional Ethics (and/ or similar areas).<sup>2</sup>
- 2. Lead to <u>Senate-approved certificates</u> at each college and across colleges that would:
  - a. combine new and existing college courses to align with concrete goals and student learning objectives
  - b. provide intellectual coherence among courses students use to satisfy GE requirements
  - acknowledge participation in significant non-credit activities aligned with the certificate program (co-curricular programming, campus organizations, internships, etc.), increasing the visibility of these learning opportunities and providing structure for students who pursue their educational goals through them
  - d. honor and develop the intellectual priorities of each college
  - e. be open to all students, regardless of college affiliation
  - f. be recorded on the official transcript<sup>3</sup>

The <u>Pathways Program</u> at the College of Wooster—which serves students "who are interested in exploring careers perhaps related to but not defined within a major or minor" and offers "flexible and personalized ways to learn more about a field of interest, gain related experience and skills, and connect with experts"—is an example of what we could achieve were this recommendation adopted.

A certificate could include college and departmental courses that carry GEs without requiring that the sole purpose of the certificate is fulfilling GE requirements. For example, a certificate at Porter in "Entrepreneurship in the Arts" might require students to complete an Arts Division course that carries Interpreting Arts and Media. But as they are imagined in this proposal (Rec. 1, 2.c), college certificates would also include student activities, co-curricular programs, and off-campus experiences. Thus, the Porter certificate might require participation in some sort of endeavor that brings the arts into public spaces. The colleges (in consultation with the Senate) would determine which GE courses from the departments were suitable for the certificates, and that would mean

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> According to IRAPS, "[a]t least half of students across colleges were interested in elective courses if they were offered by their colleges on topics such as personal finance, career readiness, and health and wellness."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This will require a change in senate/university policy: certificates do not currently appear on the transcript.

coordinating in new ways between colleges and departments (curriculum planning). Over time, Senate faculty in the departments offering the GE-bearing courses that feed the college certificates could become involved in the development of the certificates or even expand them into minors (in that sense "returning" to the colleges voluntarily). This is a long-term strategy.

The creation of optional certificates in the colleges would give the curriculum there an intellectual focus and coherence that is normal for academic departments and programs where students pursue majors and minors. However, there is no reason why the disciplinary divisions could not develop certificates too, either for themselves or in partnership with other divisions and the colleges. The new, grant-funded <a href="Humanizing Technologies certificate program">Humanizing Technologies certificate program</a> in the Humanities Division illustrates what might be gained from divisional certificates.

- Establish a Planning Committee that includes VPDUE, representatives from the Council of Provosts, the Colleges Academic Program Policy Analyst, representatives of the Office of Campus Advising Coordination, Associate Deans from the Academic Divisions, Representatives from Academic Departments, Career Success, and Senior Directors of College Student Life (DSAS) to determine what topics are optimal for certificates; what changes to existing elective curriculum and co-curricular programming in the colleges are necessary; and how to facilitate Senate approval for the certificates and their inclusion on the official transcript. It will be important to consider the aims, learning objectives and imperatives of the departments and the faculty who conceive and teach these courses with a GE designation on a regular basis. Consultation and coordination will be needed to further develop the workflow for implementation and questions such as these will need to be explored further:
  - Would the new ideas for college curriculum fold in or replace all existing college courses?
  - Would there be a plan for some of the new or revised college courses to connect or share cross-listing with relevant majors?
- The Planning Committee will work hard to engage Senate faculty if *departmental* certificates are to be pursued.
- After consulting with University Registrar, CEP, and CCI, the Steering Committee will organize the launch of certificate programs in three or four colleges per year, with the goal of establishing one certificate at each college by fall 2026.

- The Steering Committee will work with IRAPS to design an assessment of the new certificates on a three- to five-year cycle.
- Create an annual "unparalleled student experience" survey that includes questions regarding this goal to measure the impact on student success.
- Create a mechanism to measure the number of students engaged with and completing each certificate (see also Goal 2)
- Develop a survey that is administered to alumni who complete certificates to evaluate the impact of the certificates on student success one or two years after graduation.

#### Goal #2:

Establish a Co-curricular Record to increase the visibility of, and provide structure for, educational activities beyond credit-bearing courses.

Many colleges and universities have taken up co-curricular records as a mechanism of supporting and recognizing student engagement outside the classroom, and there is a fair amount of literature on this topic; for example this 2013 report on the use of co-curricular records at Canadian Universities.

The committee identified two models for developing a campus-wide co-curricular record at UCSC.

- UC San Diego offers a <u>Co-curricular Record (CCR)</u> for students as one of several <u>Engaged Learning Tools</u> belonging to its <u>Teaching and Learning Commons</u>; it recognizes achievement in the following categories: Research and Academic Life, Student and Campus Engagement, Community-Based and Global Learning, and Professional and Career Development.
- 2. At UCSC, College Nine offers an <u>International & Global Perspectives Leadership</u>
  <u>Certificate</u> and John R. Lewis offers a <u>Social Justice & Community Leadership</u>
  <u>Certificate</u>. 4 Oakes College offers a credit-bearing academic certificate in
  <u>Community-Based Action Research and Advocacy</u>.

A campus-wide co-curricular record (CCR) will help students to shape their engagement with the vast range of opportunities available at UC Santa Cruz and to make their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Note that the certificates at College Nine and John R. Lewis College are not credit-bearing academic programs as defined by the Committee on Educational Policy.

education their own. A CCR would be the glue that binds together scattered opportunities into coherent structures through which students can navigate their way to their goals. Adoption of a CCR would involve coordination and communication across many offices and programs, developing co-curricular pathways, and advising and encouraging students to make the most of their selected choices.

Initially, a CCR might focus on experiential learning related to the NACE competencies students would be developing. (<u>UCSD's list of competencies</u> revises and expands the NACE list.) Having an agreed-upon set of learning outcomes for the entire campus, promoted by faculty and staff in all units, would unite us around common goals for student success. In the long run, UCSC may wish to consider inclusion of the co-curricular record in the permanent record (e.g., UCSD's co-curricular transcript), although to begin with, a non-permanent record, supported by careful guidance throughout every student's academic journey, could transform our educational environment.

The committee recognizes that establishing an official co-curricular record would require a great deal of labor, technological requirements, and administrative costs. We further recognize that there might be other mechanisms that would help students develop strategies to communicate the nature and value of their training (e.g., a portfolio of accomplishments, and self-statement reflecting on their training at the time of graduation, etc.) that could accomplish similar objectives but with less administrative complexity. We are confident that other universities offer many models for achieving this goal prudently and sustainably, including our sister campus UCSD. One of the key partners in this endeavor is the Office of the Registrar; our Registrar believes that the co-curricular record is an achievable goal.

- Establish a committee co-led by DSAS and CITL that includes representatives
  from the following areas: VPDUE, the University Registrar, representatives from
  the Council of Provosts, the Colleges Academic Program Policy Analyst,
  representatives of the Office of Campus Advising Coordination, and Career
  Success to design and implement a Co-curricular Record in alignment with the
  Student Success Initiative and the range of competencies informing the colleges
  elective curriculum by Academic Year 2025.
- The committee will begin with an inventory of what would qualify currently as experiential education.
- The committee will research best practices and model programs at other institutions of higher learning such as Michigan State University which has

developed a "Comprehensive Learner Record." A colleague from MSU has volunteered to assist UCSC with this process.

- Create an annual "unparalleled student experience" survey that includes
  questions regarding this goal to measure the impact on student success; this
  could also be achieved through integration with UCUES.
- UCSC Core Competencies and Areas for Recognition will be identified
- A co-curricular record process is established, including the method by which students will submit their activities for inclusion
- Once data is available, assess the level of participation of students in the co-curricular record process

#### Goal #3

Ensure that every undergraduate has the opportunity to graduate from UCSC having participated in one or more experiential educational opportunities. To achieve this goal, the campus will need to:

- Create more opportunities for students to engage in internships, faculty-mentored research or creative activities, practicums, field study, service learning, community-based research, student employment, leadership opportunities, etc.
- Communicate more clearly information about these opportunities to improve student access
- Provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the experiential educational opportunities they undertake
- Improve the methods by which we measure and recognize student participation in experiential educational opportunities.

When students participate in experiential education opportunities, they gain a broader view of the world, an appreciation of community, and insights into their own skills, interests, passions, and values. They also gain a better and more enduring understanding of course learning objectives as they apply what they have learned in the classroom in a practical setting. Experiential learning engages students' emotions and enhances their knowledge and skills.

Based on the information collected by Institutional Research and Policy Studies (IRAPS), via a survey conducted by the committee, and through stakeholder engagement, it is clear that students, staff and faculty want to see more opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning through internships, individual research

work with faculty, practicums, field study, and service learning. The committee recommends that every undergraduate engage in experiential learning to develop critical thinking and interpersonal skills via hands-on experience and to prepare them professionally for future careers. One of our student survey participants shared the following: "I think that having an on campus internship would be greatly beneficial to my own professional development and future career success. I think it would help me to get an introduction into the professional working world and guide me in future job prospects."

Via the survey conducted by the committee, when asked what practical skills they were interested in learning while at UCSC, most students responded that they wanted to learn more about time management, communication, networking, and problem solving. It would be possible to achieve these outcomes through experiential learning.

The campus-wide survey also included the following results in support of this goal:

- The vast majority (91%) of undergraduate students are interested in opportunities for employment on campus. Most (83%) are interested in working with staff or faculty in their major department; 63% with staff and/or faculty at colleges; and nearly half at student resource centers.
- Nearly 60% of academic and non-academic staff and 68% of Senate faculty indicated that their unit (department, lab) could hire more students if they were given funds and/or space. Among faculty, three-quarters of Arts faculty, around two-thirds of Humanities, Social Sciences, and PBSci faculty, and over half of Engineering faculty said they could hire students if they had funds/space. Very few (under 10%) of staff and faculty respondents said that their unit cannot hire students due to the nature of their work/space.

While this idea has popularity among stakeholders, it is important to note that some students expressed a concern for engaging in "unpaid" labor and stated that the experiential learning experience would need to be administered in such a way that it did not add undue burden or stress on an already busy academic schedule. To address this, the campus could explore the possibility of more paid and credit-bearing opportunities that would satisfy academic requirements. For example, there are tremendous opportunities to increase experiential learning within the curriculum itself. Developing mechanisms for low-cost or no-cost summer credit-bearing experiential learning would make possible access to summer aid for students with financial need, especially important for unpaid low-paid opportunities.

Potential avenues to further explore include providing support for potential geographical challenges involved in completing an off-campus internship (how do students without a car get to where they need to go?), and ensuring a strong staff support network so that students are matched with quality experiences. Further, should Goal #2 be adopted, student interest in pursuing experiential education with the option to add experiences to a co-curricular record.

Experiential learning should not be a requirement, rather a pillar of the undergraduate student experience that is reinforced consistently throughout each student's time at UCSC. The committee felt strongly that this goal be implemented in such a way that our learning and co-curricular values demonstrate the importance of experiential learning via promotion and establishment of experiential learning as a core value of our educational experience. An additional benefit to incorporating experiential learning into student engagement is the appeal to potential employers of our graduates, and to expand the network and working relationships of the university and public.

Finally, the committee believes that this goal is aligned with and inspired by the charge to the committee of proposing enhanced opportunities to strengthen and complement the intellectual experience outside the classroom with co-curricular experiences (e.g. service learning, internships, research with faculty where students can gain a great appreciation for the university's research enterprise, leadership development, clubs and organizations, athletics and recreation, global learning/study abroad, campus employment).

- Establish a Steering Committee that is charged with developing a conceptual framework for integrating experiential learning as a core campus goal. The conceptual framework will include a plan that includes who will be involved in integration, communication, promotion and student support.
- The steering committee shall develop an approach for articulating the framework for the co-curricular record, including the core competencies that will be measured, levels of engagement required for opportunities to be applied to the record, etc.
- Develop strategies for recognizing faculty mentorship of undergraduates engaged in research and creative activities.

- Deepen existing partnerships with the Silicon Valley Campus to ensure that students have increased access to internship opportunities throughout Bay Area companies and organizations, and develop corporate sponsorships and relationships that will benefit the breadth of experiential learning opportunities that are available for students.
- This work will likely need to be led by a dedicated FTE that could be housed within Career Success or Undergraduate Education.
- Developing a culture around experiential learning would take a few years. The target would be that every student in the class of 2028 would graduate having had an experiential learning experience.
- Create an annual "unparalleled student experience" survey that includes questions regarding this goal to measure the impact on student success.
- Create a process for drawing data from co-curricular records, to assist with understanding trends among experiential learning, and to help inform future resource investment.

#### Goal #4

Creating place and a sense of belonging: Nurture a sense of belonging by developing gathering spaces in the form of true "living rooms" and commuter lounges at the main campus, Coastal Science Campus, and Silicon Valley Campus, and establish more eateries, lounges/program spaces, and study spaces for students throughout the campus. Ensure that these spaces—including the sidewalks, bike lanes, and pathways that lead to them—are physically accessible to all.

Several themes emerged in committee discussions related to creating places and spaces in support of student sense of belonging. Student gathering and resting spaces beyond the residence halls consistently appeared in committee discussions and constituent feedback. As stated earlier, in response to the committee's charge to explore housing options to support student success, the committee decided to take a step back and think more broadly about solutions to create spaces and places for students to rest, study, gather, eat, socialize, and connect. The committee also noted intersecting themes around gathering, food, accessibility and transportation — themes that are connected and harmonious. Further, the committee asserts that it is essential to provide student services in these hubs, particularly related to health & wellness (and especially mental health support). During the consultation process, one staff member stated that students need mental health support that is easy to access and widely available; they also often need private spaces (to speak with counselors, for example).

The committee notes that an initiative is already underway to renovate the Bay Tree Building, and that a goal of this project is to create a "living room" for the campus, with open areas for gathering, increased flow between the three floors of the building, and flexible space that can be used for student programming. In addition, based on the space utilization framework that is being developed in the pre design phase, hubs of activity and service delivery will be offered at the renovated Bay Tree Building such as dynamic tabling and outreach by Student Health Outreach and Promotion (SHOP); SHOP recently added a new mental health educator (funded through the Equity in Mental Health funding). The McHenry and Science Libraries currently fulfill some of the needs but do not provide the full range of services that the subcommittee is suggesting. Baskin Engineering has also worked to provide student lounge and study space in JBEB and Silicon Valley Center has implemented a new student lounge. The committee recommends that this idea be carried throughout campus and that spaces be intentionally and creatively identified for similar purposes. These models, along with the STARS model, could be models for spaces, small and large, where students could gather, study, relax and recharge between classes.

Based on a survey conducted by the committee, the development of commuter lounges has emerged as a key idea to help enhance the student experience, sense of belonging, and academic wellbeing. Nearly two-thirds—62%—of the students surveyed responded that a commuter lounge would make a positive difference for students; 50% of staff respondents said the same. The most popular location requested for a commuter lounge is the main campus. Focus groups with staff further supported the development of commuter lounges. Housing costs and insufficient on-campus housing mean that approximately 50% of undergraduate students no longer live on campus after the first or second year, making a commuter lounge on the main campus more necessary. In addition to the main campus, the committee recommends commuter lounges be implemented at the Silicon Valley Campus, Coastal Science Campus, and within the Colleges. These commuter lounges could serve as programming spaces to bring students together socially and could also be locations where staff from departments like CAPS, Slug Support, Academic Advising, Career Success or STARS would hold office hours - bringing critical services to students where they are. Further, lounges could be designated for specific populations so that programming could be focused; for example international students and parenting students.

The (modestly sized) commuter lounge at STARS is a busy place where students can study, grab coffee, and also store personal belongings via lockers. This concept could be replicated across campus. This is a sound campus investment especially with so many staff working remote or hybrid; we can use those underutilized spaces to

repurpose for student space. Here is a great opportunity to create a space for students commuting to be able to have a place to lounge, do homework, study, warm up food, etc. With the lounge embedded within STARS, students who visit also have the benefit of access to staff for supportive services, including advising and academic planning. Many campuses have such places that promote a sense of belonging and UCSC would greatly benefit from such an investment. The committee suggests exploring the possibility of having a commuter lounge at each college. This could both provide space and extend the connection of students to their colleges well beyond their first year.

When surveyed, students shared that there are a lot of great places to study but no central places where they can work comfortably, get a good bite to eat and connect with one another. Students (and employees) are seeking more eateries that provide affordable and healthy food options and even places where they can warm up their own food. Students mentioned many lounges were converted to student housing and there aren't a lot of spaces to gather and be in community. One of the student survey participants wrote the following: "I think a lot of students, including myself, can relate to feeling like there isn't really a 'hub' or central place to hang out. In my experience, the lounges each college has can feel small and awkward when multiple people go to hang out, so a larger and more central "living room" space can create a more comfortable environment for students. I think including more eateries is also important, especially since it can be hard to access food near McHenry areas (McHenry cafe lines are always long and sometimes the only source of food in the area)."

The committee believes that what we recommend, given what is happening in these spaces, can help contribute to a thriving student community that will keep current students engaged and attract future students as well. The inclusion of student services - along with other programming such as social activities - in these spaces creates a tighter web of support for students. The concept of inclusive, intentionally planned, and dynamic spaces will support a sense of belonging.

- A campus wide initiative involving Capital Planning & Space Management, the Colleges, DSAS, Coastal Science Campus, Silicon Valley Campus, and many others would be required to implement this goal. This work would be conducted in collaboration with the University Space Committee.
  - It is worth mentioning that a Phase 2 of this initiative could come online when Student Housing West is completed in 2028, and some lounges that were converted to housing are returned to their intended uses.

- Activities would include completing a space audit to identify potential spaces, developing programming plans to design spaces, and operational plans to inform how spaces would be managed, sustained, etc. The audit must pay close attention to physical accessibility in order to promote a truly inclusive environment. The lounge locations should be in easy to find, easy to access spaces.
- As the campus contemplates next steps, the implementation of this goal will include review of the suggestions of the 2021 LRDP on infrastructure development and the Governor's Compact to identify overlapping goals.
- Implementation should be informed at every step of the way by students.
- Appropriate budget would need to be identified appropriate for student space projects.
- DSAS will develop a section of its website dedicated to listing these spaces in a central online location for ease of access by new students and to help with engagement by student support offices.
- Create an annual "unparalleled student experience" survey that includes questions regarding this goal to measure the impact on student success.

### Conclusion

The committee enthusiastically recommends embracing these goals, which build on existing campus structures and would enhance students' experiences and outcomes.

## **Appendices**

- Committee Membership List
- Committee Survey
- Complete List of Goals Developed by the Committee
- IRAPS Survey Data
- Stakeholder Engagement