UC Online

2023–24 ANNUAL REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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A message from the executive director

At the April 2024 systemwide UC Academic Congress on the Evolution and Possibilities of Online Education, Provost Katherine Newman challenged the audience to rethink what online education could mean at the University of California. She identified several key reasons for her own belief in the capacity for online education at UC: technical resources, students' attitudes about digital study, and research showing the effectiveness of thoughtfully designed online materials. Provost Newman stated that UC is at an "inflection point" and that opportunity exists for the system to launch a program that would resonate as a "shot across the bow," firmly establishing UC as a global leader of teaching, service and research in the online space.

In that spirit of bold vision and partnership, I share the UC Online Annual Report for 2023–24. Readers will see a strategic plan that aligns the unit's work with the UC Office of the President (UCOP) and, within that, Academic Affairs and Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs. The plan will serve as a north star for strategic, staffing and financial decisions to further amplify online education systemwide. The role of UC Online is to manifest the system's commitment to online education. What emerges from this centralized effort will be a hub that employs campus partnerships to support and scaffold those areas of pressing need as well as the infrastructure that is critical to future successes.

One of the goals of the strategic plan is to generate a regular annual report, complete with data metrics and cross-campus apparatus that fully depict the systemwide impact of online education. By necessity, this report comes before those mechanisms are in full operation, as we work with campus and UCOP partners like Institutional Research and Academic Planning to develop a dashboard for raw data as well as for the fully distilled metrics that are critical to long-term success. Meanwhile, this initial iteration serves to highlight the scope and reach of UC Online: our support of students through cross-campus enrollment and course credit, our support of campuses through award funding and conversational convenings, and our support of the greater California community through multipartner educational initiatives.

What excites me most about the stories throughout this report is how much of this work is grounded in the present and yet positioned for the future. 2023–24 was a remarkable year for online education in the UC system, and the best is yet to come!

ROLIN MOE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

About UC Online — strategic plan

UC Online is a unit within Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs under the Academic Affairs division at the UC Office of the President. Our primary mission is to amplify online education across the UC system.

During the 2023–24 academic year, UC Online partnered with the Strategy and Program Management Office (SPMO) on a three-pronged initiative to better align the unit with the university's goals and to harness the potential of systemwide online education support: the development of a strategic plan, an organizational review and a process of change management. The work throughout 2023–24 resulted in newly organized mission, vision and strategic goals. Work throughout 2024–25 will continue to focus on organizational review and change management.

Goals

1. Collaborate with campuses to develop shared working agreements on the requirements and infrastructure for online instruction and degree programs that meet UC quality standards as well as external regulations and accreditation.

2. Establish a systemwide online education community of practice.

3. Collaborate with campuses to assess, amplify and identify online education efforts that help students achieve their academic goals.

4. Develop and deliver a UC Online annual report to relevant systemwide and campus audiences.

5. Review existing UC Online systems and procedures to ensure continuous improvement.

6. Develop and implement a process to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of central funding resourcing.

7. Prioritize and implement an advocacy plan aimed at legislative, fundraising/development and sustainable growth initiatives.

8. Equip, enable and empower UC Online team members with the knowledge and tools needed to be successful and satisfied in their jobs.

MISSION

UC Online amplifies the university's educational mission, campus expertise, technology infrastructure and other resources through advocacy, leadership and planning. UC Online:

- Is grounded in partnerships with individual campuses and bolstered by UC-wide and external collaborations.

- Accelerates educational innovation, highlights effective pedagogy and promotes the development of exceptional online instruction.

- Demonstrates accountability, transparency and continuous improvement to online education through assessment, evaluation and iteration.

- Advances access, equity and inclusion so that all students can achieve their educational goals.

VISION

UC Online engages with its community to empower the University of California in providing the best online educational experience in the world.

UC Online: 2023–24 in review

The unit partnered with …

- **10 UC campuses**
- **15 California Community College (CCC) campuses**
- **Several UC-affiliated groups (MESA, UCDC and others), state and national high schools, and guild organizations dedicated to teaching, learning and technology**

… and created or supervised:

- **11 systemwide initiatives to support mission goals for online education**
- **$375K to support educational outreach to underrepresented high school students**
- **$175K to support two- to four-year transfer throughout the CCC system**

UC Online provided services and support amounting to:

- **$1.75M in block award funding for campus online education**
- **4,761 students successfully completed courses offered via cross- campus enrollment (CCES)**
- **671 courses approved by academic senates for CCES**
- **$625K to support a systemwide technology infrastructure**

Existing innovations — Supporting the UC Online cross-campus program

Background

UC Online was created to support undergraduates in overcoming time-to-degree obstacles by enabling them to take courses at more than one UC campus. The development of this work required significant investment in technological infrastructure, data-sharing agreements, course credit analysis and systemwide guidance on collaborative action.

The resulting structure, one of the first cross-campus enrollment systems in the world, has not only assisted in more than 10,000 students taking classes at other campuses, but also has influenced campuswide practices on data sharing, provided scope for course credit conversations and established a foundation upon which broader guidance for systemwide sharing can form.

2023–24 enrollments

The UC Online cross-campus enrollment system (CCES) enabled 4,761 students to take a course at a separate campus during the 2023–24 academic year. This number represents 71 percent growth from the 2022–23 academic year, the greatest nonpandemic rate of growth for UC Online enrollments in nearly a decade.

From a catalog of nearly 700 courses developed and approved by UC Online, more than 300 of them were taught with enrollments through CCES in 2023–24, including calculus, foreign language, nutrition, environmental science and music.

Course credit

UC Online market research shows that students and their advisors want to know how an online course will apply to degree progress

before a student chooses to enroll. In fall 2024, UC Online launched a new web interface — the Credit Review Portal — which increases data security and provides real-time course information that hundreds of campus faculty and staff who evaluate courses can apply to more than 2,050 degree pathways.

General education, major, pre-major and equivalent opportunities are available to all UC students through UC Online. Thanks to the efforts of our campus partners, these opportunities range from upper- to lower-division; foreign language to scientific inquiry; quantitative reasoning to writing composition; and even a full, four-course sequence in Calculus for Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

Terms 22,23,24 Cross Campus Enrollments (data as of 12-10-24)

Longtime partnerships and support
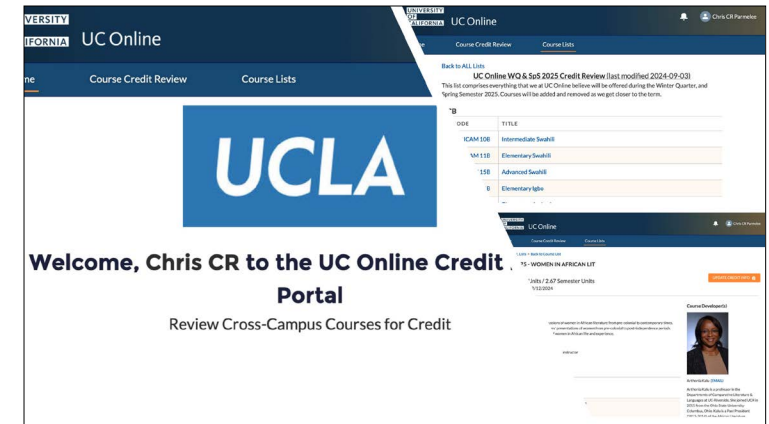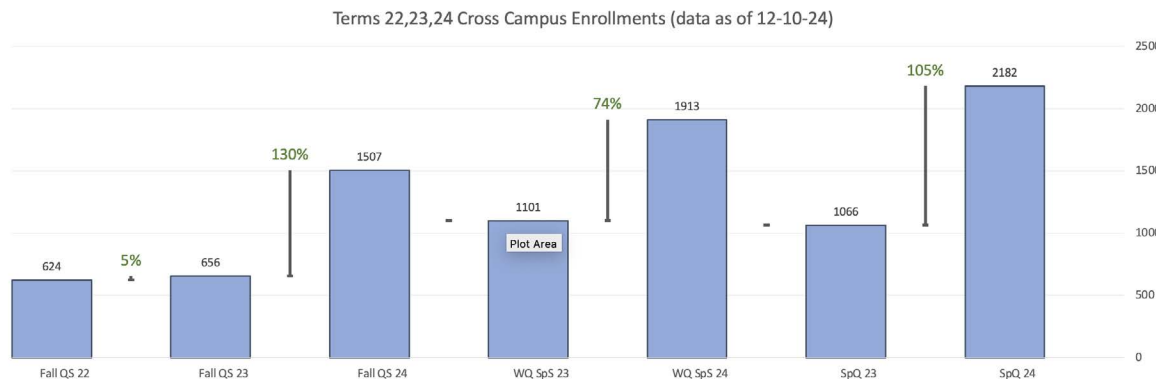
Technological capacity

The UC Online team produced one new portal and one portal enhancement for campus stakeholder groups — the aforementioned Credit Review Portal and the Faculty Portal.

The Faculty Portal now includes a new enrollment tool to give faculty and instructors a better look at the status of UC Online enrollments in their courses. Campus faculty and staff can now view all registrations and student approval status in real time through an easy-to-use interface.

The Cross-Campus Enrollment system (CCES) team partnered with campuses to update and implement the recent UC lived-name policy across all systems for cross-campus enrollment.

The CCES team also launched a new service to automatically configure, route and manage unscheduled campus data outages. The service uses an asynchronous communication model, custom APIs, queuing and broker service management with a publish/

subscribe messaging pattern. Since the service launched, campus operations teams have seen a reduction in maintenance and troubleshooting incidents and greater platform stability. The scalability of the platform was also enhanced, since services producing messages were decoupled from services processing those messages.

Partnerships through technology

Programs and initiatives throughout the UC system rely on the UC Online Canvas learning management system to deliver workshops and courses to its constituencies.

In 2023–24, more than 1,000 UC students participating in the **UC Washington Center (UCDC)** program accessed Canvas to complete courseware.

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) offered its hybrid Climate Stewards certification course on Canvas and at partner facilities to more than 500 participants in 30 cohorts.

MESA now supports advisor resource sites on Canvas for both California educators and educators nationally.

The California Reading and Literature Project (CRLP) offered 40+ workshops to more than 1,000 K–12 educators.

The UC **Center for Climate, Health and Equity (CCHE)** ran a new course — Climate Resilience — on eight campuses simultaneously, in a for-credit capacity.

Systemwide climate resiliency support

The Bending the Curve Project (btc.ucsd.edu) and UC Online are helping the university to lead in climate education. The undergraduate course, first offered in 2018, now boasts a library of 30+ hours of lecture content and is consistently offered at four UC campuses, as well as at universities elsewhere in the U.S., Europe and Asia. Licensing agreements signed in the past year will provide access to course content worldwide through the following organizations:

- **Environmental and Climate Change Literacy Projects**, via its workshops for California educators on climate education (PK–12)

- **The One Health Workforce Academy**, via its network of 100 universities in the Africa One Health University Network and the Southeast Asia One Health University Network

- **Coursera**, via a four-course massive open online course specialization

- **The American Medical Association (AMA)**, via the AMA Education Hub and its catalog of continuing medical education offerings

- **The National Education Equity Lab**, via a partnership that will offer the course to up to 250 high school students for UC credit when it launches later this academic year

Block award funding

Background

In alignment with systemwide compact goals, UC Online provides funding through a block award system for projects that accomplish one or more of the following:

- Enhance student and faculty teaching-and-learning experiences and outcomes
- Advance the use of digital technology
- Promote digital inclusion
- Help close equity gaps

Historically, the areas in which that funding has been deployed have fallen into one of four categories:

- **Courses** using development funding to create and offer online courses at the home campus and through the CCES
- **Professional development** focused on online education and student success
- **Research** into the efficacy of online instruction and/or closing equity/performance gaps for historically underrepresented students.
- **Infrastructure** and technological development to further support data structures and systems

2023–24 Awards

Through the block-funding award process, UC Online provided more than $1.8 million in direct funding to campuses in academic year 2023–24.

The breakdown of funding by project type:

- $1.21 million awarded to support 36 distinct course offerings
- $120 thousand awarded to support two distinct infrastructure measures
- $465 thousand awarded to support four distinct professional development initiatives
- $83 thousand awarded for one research project

The opportunity for cross-campus collaboration and effective shared engagement was evident in this round of funded projects; of the 43 initiatives that received funding, 15 are measures that involve at least two campuses.

Reports from completed projects

More than 30 projects from prior years completed work or achieved key milestones in their initiative's objectives. Those include:

- The Creative Technologies online major offered by UC Santa Cruz. Three of the ten courses within this major were developed with the support of award funding. The initial cohort for the major is set for the 2024–25 academic year.
- A multicampus (Berkeley, Irvine and Santa Barbara) initiative developing modules on the relationship of equity, diversity, inclusion and access in the teaching and learning space. The first two module programs for professional development were completed and will be ready for offer by the end of the 2024–25 academic year.
- A technological intervention for language study, EyeVocab, was developed at UC Davis to support the unique way in which vocabulary is integral to knowledge-transfer for foreign language.
- Multiple online courses were developed and ready to deploy in the cross-campus enrollment system, including multiple courses in public health and an offering for the systemwide Disaster Resiliency Network.

Outreach and support structures

Inquiry learning with SuiteC

SuiteC was created in a partnership that joined UC Online, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and UC Berkeley in support of inquiry-based learning. In NSF documentation, the support is described as professional development and a means for faculty members to make use of the system.

During the 2023–24 academic year, UC Online facilitated an inquiry learning pilot program using SuiteC at four UC campuses — UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara and UC Santa Cruz — with technological development offered and regular meetings held to discuss obstacles and opportunities. The purpose of the pilot was to ask: What is the pedagogical value of SuiteC and what is necessary to update the system for broad adoption across UC?

Each campus cohort consisted of between four and eight faculty members and campus instructional design experts. In total, 12 disciplines were represented, including writing, social sciences, humanities, foreign languages and public health.

In addition, two program managers from UC Online participated in an orientation workshop to learn about inquiry learning with SuiteC. They revised an existing course in online, hybrid and in-person formats by creating "inquiry learning with SuiteC" activities, with courses taught during the 2023–24 school year. Results from our end-of-year survey were quite positive: 100 percent of participants endorsed SuiteC as being essential for inquiry-based learning, and 100 percent of participants recommended giving SuiteC access to their campus.

UC Online student support center

UC Online Support was created to help UC students achieve their graduation objectives by providing a direct, people-staffed service to those seeking online courses across the system. Based at UC Merced, the team offers a single point-of-contact resource for cross-campus enrollment, course registration, learning management, system access, waitlist management, student drops or withdrawals and grade changes.

Focused on ensuring that each student feels supported and cared for, the team also serves as a key liaison for campus registrars, academic advisers and faculty. In 2023–24, the team managed and successfully resolved approximately 14,000 cases, compared with 9,400 cases in 2022–23 — a 48 percent increase.

Online education partnership: From UC to the state and beyond
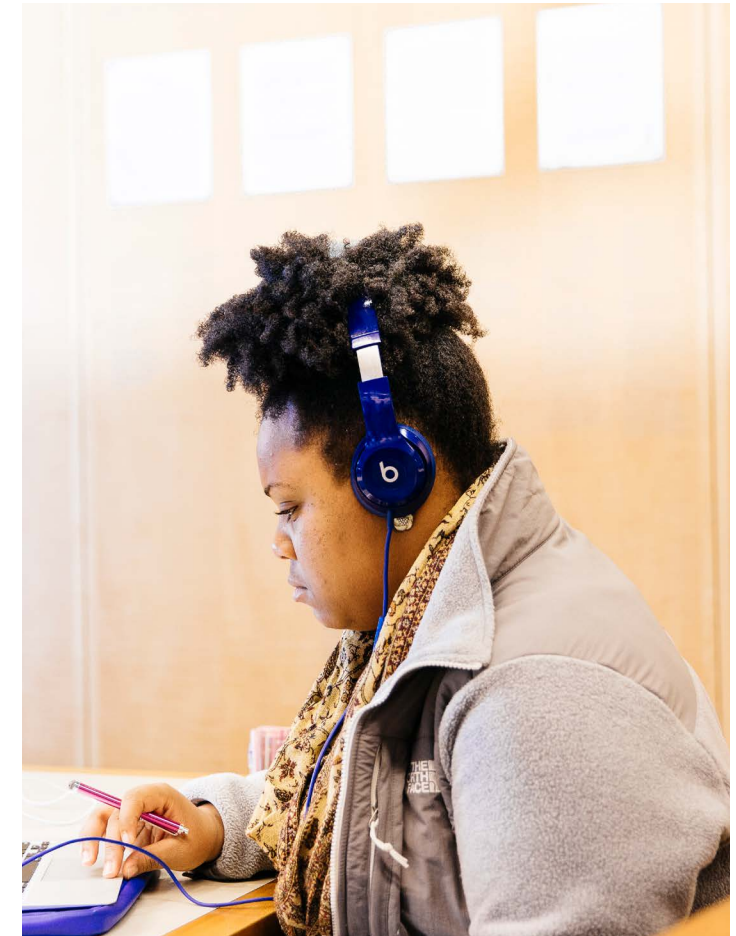
UC Merced Division of Professional & Continuing Education

UC Merced Division of Professional & Continuing Education's mission is to build and support a culture of lifelong learning by offering flexible, reality-based and innovative courses that power our diverse community of learners in their pursuit of academic and professional excellence.

UC Merced Division of Professional & Continuing Education offers workforce-responsive, nondegree credentials and pathways that provide opportunities to "upskill and re-skill." It can develop and deliver alternative, skills-based credential programs that align with the needs of employers and high-demand jobs.

UC Online supports UC Merced Division of Professional & Continuing Education through technology and staffing, most notably through sharing the student information system apparatus as well as through supports in organization and aggregation of information.

National Education Equity Lab

In the Summer of 2023, UC President Michael Drake announced a partnership with the National Education Equity Lab (NEEL), a nonprofit advocacy group dedicated to opening doors to higher education for students from historically underrepresented groups in high schools throughout America. The partnership immediately linked the nine UC undergraduate campuses with NEEL, creating multiple access points for Title I high school students across the nation (more than half of whom reside in CA) to access the UC system.

UC Online worked with the Office of the President to secure nearly $400,000 in funding over a three-year period to establish, run and assess online courses. For its initial course, UC Online partnered with the Center for Climate Justice to offer UCM MIST 11 (Climate Justice) to high school students at 10 high schools across the nation. This climate justice course was developed with the support of faculty, teaching assistants and staff at UC Davis, UC Merced, UC Santa Cruz and UC Office of the President.

Campaign for Transfer Excellence

Supported with funding from the Aspen Institute, the Campaign for Transfer Excellence is designed to support foundational areas of need with the two- to four-year transition of hundreds of thousands of California transfer students each year.

Through both direct and predictive analysis, UCOP has identified that 69 of the state's 115 community colleges see a lower-than-expected percentage of transfer students from their campuses enrolling at UC. With compact goals focused on increasing the rate of transfer throughout the state, we have identified multiple opportunities to further engage in cross-state partnerships.

One element of the project is the creation and regular offering of courses that are vital to numerous STEM transfer pathways but may not be offered at community colleges on a regular basis. UC Online partnered with UC Merced to develop two math courses (Calculus II for STEM; Differential Equations and Linear Algebra) which will be offered to UC Merced and California community college students at least once every academic year as well as during the summer.

Staff and council members, 2023–24

For project funding opportunities and campus liaisons, please visit UC Office of the President's UC Online website.

Leadership

Rolin Moe, Executive Director

Program Operations

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Program Director

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Program Manager

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Mary Wong
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Director, Course Design and Technical Development

Srinivas Tummala
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Adam Flanders
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Fernando Corral
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Laura Rosenzweig
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Senior Applications Programmer

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Paul Montoya
CFO and Director of Outreach

Thu Le
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Maurice McElhaney
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Ianna Urquhart
Digital Communications Specialist

UC Online Support

Loronda Norah
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Carlton Stroud
(UC Merced) Director, Enrollment Management Systems

Soceek Tchouboukjian
(UC Merced) Enrollment Services Advisor

Lisa Perry
(UC Merced) Director, Students First Center

Carol De Hoog
(UC Merced) Enrollment Services Advisor/Customer Support

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Lucy Avetisyan, UCLA

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Joan Holmquist, UC Merced

Brian Utter, UC Merced

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Raquel Rall, UC Riverside

Karen Flammer, UC San Diego

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Melanie Cocco, UCEP

Erin Webb, University Registrars

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