Dear Colleagues,

As the UAW strike continues, we seek to help Senate faculty members make informed decisions. Given where we are in the fall term, the Systemwide Senate has issued the attached guidance to assist faculty members in considering how to adjust their teaching and assessment. In addition, we would like to share the following information for faculty consideration.

1) Senate regulations regarding examinations and the Faculty Code of Conduct remain in effect and require faculty to give final examinations in undergraduate courses (with exceptions for laboratory courses, unless required by the department) and to submit final grades for both undergraduate and graduate courses in a timely manner. However, faculty have flexibility in what kinds of final assessments they give and how they grade them. Some potential options are discussed on the DTEI Pedagogical Continuity website.

- Failure to assign final grades can have serious implications for all students, both undergraduate and graduate. Specifically, failure to obtain a final grade may impact students’ financial aid and their ability to make satisfactory progress in their programs of study, including degree completion.

- In accordance with Senate regulations, faculty can assign an Incomplete (I) grade only if a student’s work is of passing quality but is incomplete for good cause. It is inappropriate to assign an I grade for a student who does not have passing performance in the majority of their coursework, or for a student whose work is complete.

- When no grade is submitted by the grade submission deadline, the notation No Report (NR) will be made.

- Importantly, both I grades and NR notations will turn into F or NP grades (or U for graduate students), unless a final grade is submitted within a designated time frame.

- The Senate is working with the administration to explore whether the grade submission deadline for this quarter can be extended and, if possible, to develop additional guidance on grading.

- If faculty wish to drop upcoming assignments or exams and base final grades on students’ performance to date, they should consider how such a change may affect students, especially those who are expecting upcoming assignments or exams to improve their grades. Their disappointment could lead to grade disputes and pursuance of formal appeals, especially given that final exams in undergraduate courses are required by Senate regulations (see above).

2) Senate faculty who are striking, or considering striking, in sympathy should understand that the administration can withhold pay for anyone on strike and that “partial strikes” (partial withholding of labor or intermittent striking) are not considered a protected activity. For example, if Senate faculty do not perform instructional responsibilities (e.g., cancel classes, withhold final grades) but continue to carry out service or research responsibilities, they should understand that their entire pay for the
strike period may be withheld. Please also refer to “Strike Protections for the Faculty” in the attached guidance from the Systemwide Senate.

3) Faculty must be careful never to threaten or intimidate anyone engaged in a protected activity. Conversely, faculty can report strike-related threats against themselves or others:

- For threats to health or safety, contact the police by dialing 911 for emergencies and 949-824-5223 for non-emergencies.

- For non-emergency threats with accompanying evidence that might establish a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, report the incident to UCI’s Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct at: https://aisc.uci.edu/resources/reporting.php.

4) The Council on Educational Policy has approved an emergency resolution that allows a temporary shift to remote or hybrid instruction for undergraduate courses at the discretion of the instructor. The previous communication is attached.

5) We have worked with the administration to add watermarks to teaching evaluations for the fall term (and other applicable terms if needed) to indicate the course was taught during the UAW strike period. These watermarked evaluations would not be optional in review files, but they would be presented in the appropriate context to all levels of review. Faculty can indicate the difficulties they may have experienced during the strike in their teaching statements for additional context.

For additional strike-related guidance from the Academic Senate, as well as information from administrative leadership, please consult https://provost.uci.edu/continuity/.

Finally, please note that the Irvine Faculty Association – the Irvine Chapter of the Council of UC Faculty Associations (CUCFA) – does not represent the Academic Senate and is not affiliated with the Academic Senate in any way.

Sincerely,
Georg Striedter, Chair
Academic Senate – Irvine Division