

## UC Berkeley Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) Proposal

October 14, 2022

### Executive Summary

Since UC Berkeley's reaffirmation by WSCUC in 2015 [\[Link\]](#), the campus has continued to explore the most effective ways for UC Berkeley students to enjoy full participation in a major research university and how we can best prepare our graduates to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. In a world marked by rapid change in knowledge in a variety of fields, a deluge of information, and large data sets and competing interpretations of data, supporting our students in developing a creative and investigative mindset combined with the skills necessary to tackle difficult questions is vital to their success at UC Berkeley as well as an engaged lifelong learner and citizen post graduation. UC Berkeley's unique nature as a large, public, world-class research university with an expectation of excellence in a wide breadth of disciplines makes possible an ambitious effort to connect more undergraduates to this powerful research portfolio, thereby supporting the development of these important competencies in our students.

Conversations with students, faculty and staff highlighted that disciplines approach and define their work quite differently. For many, research fits as a descriptor of the search for new knowledge in a lab or in the field. For others, they see creative works or books that explore ideas and ask new questions as the heart of their disciplines just as others define analysis in search of understanding an issue or problem as the disciplinary focus. Along with these and many other ways in which disciplines approach and present their work, we also found that many co-curricular experiences tapped students' creativity, challenged them intellectually and met the hallmarks of an immersive study of a question. The term "Discovery" emerged as broad enough to encompass the types of research, analysis, design, creative expression, community-engaged scholarship and other types of experiences available to our students. A Discovery Initiative has been launched that seeks to make it possible for all Berkeley undergraduates to participate in such a Discovery experience, reconsiders the curriculum in support of a Discovery-centered education, and provides the structures and opportunities for engagement needed to support students on their Discovery paths. The UC Berkeley theme, ***Promoting Student Success Through Discovery and Engagement***, will enable us to explore how we can effectively support our students on their Discovery paths and become life-long learners.

We will utilize institutional data, departmental and student surveys, and working groups representing from faculty, staff, and students, to answer the following questions:

- What are our definitions of Discovery and an undergraduate Discovery experience?
- What percentage of students reported having the awareness, interest, and resources to pursue a Discovery experience?
- What are the best practices for graduate students to promote the success of undergraduate students with particular attention to students from non-traditional and under-resourced backgrounds?
- What are the best practices for faculty in designing and delivering a discovery course or a discovery experience?
- What do the data show about student success related to engagement with advising, cohort group programs, graduate students, and faculty?

### **Overview of the Institution: Values, Mission and History**

The University of California was founded in 1868, following a provision in the State's constitution (1850) requiring the legislature to create a state university. The establishment of the University of California also benefited from President Lincoln's signing of the 1862 Morrill Act, which mandated the creation of land-grant colleges and universities to broaden access to higher education. The first class of 12 men graduated in 1872 and, following the Regents' Memorial Resolution in October 1870 to admit women on equal terms in all respects to men, the first woman, Rosa Scrivner, graduated in 1874. Until 1919, the University of California had one comprehensive university campus: the Berkeley campus.

Our roots formed many of our basic values, including our commitment to access and excellence and to serving as an engine of social mobility for the citizens of California and for students from other states and countries. By the early 1900s, UC Berkeley was recognized as a center of excellence. In 1934, a national survey ranked Berkeley as having as many "distinguished departments as any University in the country." This broad commitment to leadership across the major areas of scholarship—physical and biological sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, the arts and many modern professions continues and is now recognized as Berkeley's commitment to comprehensive excellence.

In these 154 years, University of California, Berkeley, has developed into an academic community of scholars committed to the creation of new knowledge about society and culture, to scientific discovery, to technological innovation, and to defining the intellectual debates of our time. These endeavors are sustained by the University of California's policy on Academic Freedom [\[Link↗\]](#) which, by extension to UC students, enables the University to foster in its students a mature independence of mind. As stated in the University's Mission Statement [\[Link↗\]](#), we approach these goals with the firm belief that we achieve them through synergies of excellence in research, in the teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students,

and in service to both the intellectual communities we lead and to the people of California, the U.S. and the world.

### **Process for Development of Themes**

The development of the UC Berkeley theme began with the establishment of a WSCUC Reaffirmation Executive Steering Committee (ESC), which held its first meeting in March 2022. The ESC reviewed a variety of documents to understand the thematic pathway review process, concluding, in partnership with the Chancellor and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, that the most recent campus strategic plan [[Link](#)] provided a broadly vetted and widely discussed set of provisional themes for the campus TPR.

Utilizing the four elements of focus in the 2019 campus strategic plan, the WSCUC Executive Steering Committee then designed a survey instrument that was used to gather input from across the campus around potential campus themes. This survey was sent to and discussed with all college deans and members of the Chancellor’s Cabinet. The results of this work produced a single theme and a set of questions. The questions and theme were refined in a series of meetings with the Academic Senate, the Associated Student of the University of California (ASUC) and the Graduate Assembly (GA) in Fall of 2022.

### **Description of Themes**

#### **A. What is going to be undertaken?**

In our self-study, we will examine data from a variety of sources and engage in discussions to better help our students, faculty and staff understand Discovery, its place in the curricular and co-curricular pathways of undergraduate students, how we can best train graduate students as undergraduate mentors, and the areas of improvement we need to address in creating a student academic experience that encompasses Discovery. Specifically, we will:

1. Work with our Discovery Executive Advisory Committee to continue to evolve our definition of Discovery and offer an expansive framework for an undergraduate Discovery experience. The Committee will build upon earlier work already undertaken and engage with the campus community throughout 2022–23;
2. Use existing University of California Student Experience Survey (UCUES) data (2018, 2020) and the recently collected 2022 UCUES data to understand how many of our undergraduates have been able to participate in a Discovery experience, the variety of those experiences, and what roadblocks kept students from doing so.
3. From entry-level campus requirements through culminating capstone projects, we will assess the impact of integrating inquiry-driven learning into courses in a current Discovery Trailblazer pilot curricular innovation program.

- Utilizing existing survey data, identify faculty best practices of developing and delivering Discovery experiences via campus co-curricular programs.

A similar variety of data will help us understand how student engagement with advising, cohort groups, faculty, and graduate students influences student success:

- Analyze institutional data for any connections between student success to identified areas of engagement;
- Use data about graduate student experiences to determine best practices for graduate students to promote the success of undergraduate students with particular attention to students from non-traditional and under-resourced backgrounds.

### B. Themes and CFRs

Our themes, *Promoting Student Success Through Discovery and Engagement*, will address CFRs in Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 as shown below.

Question	WASC Criteria for Review
What are our definitions of Discovery and an undergraduate Discovery experience?	2.2a, 2.2.b, 2.3 - 2.6, 2.8 - 2.11, 3.1, & 4.1 - 4.7
How is the university creating awareness and interest, and providing opportunities and resources for students to engage in Discovery experiences?	2.2a, 2.2.b, 2.3 - 2.6, 2.5, 2.9, 2.11, 3.1, 4.5 & 4.6
What are the best practices for graduate students to promote the success of undergraduate students with particular attention to students from non-traditional and under-resourced backgrounds?	1.2, 1.4, 2.2b, 2.5, 2.10, 2.14, 3.2, & 4.4
What are the best practices for faculty in designing and delivering a discovery course or a discovery experience?	2.2a, 2.4, 2.8 - 2.11, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.4
What do the data show about student success related to engagement with advising,	2.5, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 3.1 - 3.3, & 4.1 - 4.7

cohort group programs, graduate students, and faculty?	
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### **C. Why is this important for the institution (rationale)**

A culture of innovation, exploration and excellence is deeply embedded into the UC Berkeley DNA. In that spirit, in 2016, the nascent Undergraduate Initiative [\[Link↗\]](#) asked the simple question, “How can this world-class public university ensure that a Berkeley undergraduate education is designed to reflect the emergent needs of society?” The first inklings of Discovery and engagement were born as central elements of our answer. By 2019, the new UC Berkeley strategic plan [\[Link↗\]](#) was published with three pillars, one of which proclaimed that: “UC Berkeley empowers engaged thinkers and global citizens to change our world” and to get there, “Discovery will be the foundation of the Berkeley experience and the heart of our campus identity.”

Our proposed TPR work, then, is central to UC Berkeley making progress on a significant campus priority. Perhaps more importantly, the questions we are asking will enable us to make clear to our students how and why Discovery is meaningful to their success, so that they graduate with the understanding, capabilities and drive to excel as leaders needed by our society. On a campus with over 30,000 undergraduate students, finding discovery experiences can neither have a single point of entry nor be left to chance. Our TPR work will also help us understand which points of connection and engagement will offer students the support and guidance they need to succeed at UC Berkeley and in a Discovery experience.

### **D. What work has already been done:**

- Spring 2017: Discovery Town Halls—Vice Chancellor of Undergraduate Education Cathy Koshland and Vice Chancellor of Research Paul Alivisatos, in collaboration with Berkeley Collegium faculty, hosted a series of open campus forums to generate ideas for how to foster Discovery experiences in undergraduate education.
- Summer 2017: Discovery Working Groups—Growing out of the enthusiastic campus forums, forty-five faculty, staff, and administrators volunteers took part in summer working groups. The working groups explored themes of: undergraduate mentoring, scaling existing Discovery-oriented programs, curricular entry points to Discovery, undergraduate maker spaces and program assessment.
- Fall 2017: Discovery Initiative Draft—First report issued on the potential components and strategies of a “Discovery Initiative” and shared with Chancellor Christ’s Cabinet

- Spring 2018: All Department Survey—All departments completed a survey gathering information on how Discovery learning appeared in their curriculum and ideas for further developing Discovery learning in their curriculums.
- Fall 2018 and 2020 University of California Student Experience Surveys (UCUES) included Discovery and engagement questions. Additional questions focused on advising in relation to Discovery.
- Spring 2019: Campus Strategic Plan [[Link↗](#)] named Discovery as the foundation of the student experience.
- Fall 2019: Faculty Working Group—Discovery faculty working group completed a white paper on Discovery in the undergraduate experience [[Link↗](#)]
- Fall 2019: Inventory of undergraduate cohort programs developed.
- Fall 2019–2021: Cohort Program Assessments (Berkeley Connect, Summer Bridge, Fall Program for Freshmen, Biology Scholars Program) devised and reviewed.
- Fall 2021: Berkeley Discover Departmental Innovation Grant Program launched with a focus on developing and infusing Discovery throughout the undergraduate curriculum.
- Summer 2021: Six “Discovery Trailblazer” faculty teams for Departmental Innovation Grant Program issued.
- Fall 2021-present: Discovery Trailblazers of faculty teams have begun exploring innovations to curricular and other pathways to Discovery experiences for undergraduates.

#### **E. Goals, Expected Outcomes and Deliverables**

We intend for our TPR plan of inquiry to move the campus forward on our discovery and engagement goals. We believe our *Discovery* theme will help guide curricular and co-curricular design and faculty and graduate student mentorship and engagement with undergraduates, as well as help us smooth the undergraduate path to a Discovery experience. Additionally, this *Discovery* theme will aid us in codifying our institutional identity in the modern era. Is *Discovery* a program enhancement element that we deploy across our curriculum? Or is it the identifier that grounds us as a single campus with a collection of small colleges? With our *engagement* theme, we seek to better understand how student engagement with advising, cohort groups and faculty influence student success, so we can build on their achievement and improve where needed. We also believe that the *engagement* theme will highlight for us the ways that we will be able to increase the scope of our curricular reach while our physical campus size remains relatively static.

- Goal 1 and Deliverable: Finalize definition of Discovery and definitional framework for an undergraduate Discovery experience.

- Goal 2 and Deliverable: Identify existing Discovery pathways as well as roadblocks for undergraduates. For example, are there a set of courses already deployed that particularly do well in promoting Discovery? Or are there roadblocks that our undergraduates routinely encounter in attempting to engage in research partnership opportunities with graduate students or faculty?
- Goal 3 and Deliverable: A report of undergraduate engagement with advising, cohort groups, faculty and graduate students and its impact on student success. The report will highlight successes and identify areas for improvement.

### Timeline

UC Berkeley’s Timeline for the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) of Accreditation is proposed as follows:

Action	Date	Party
Make final determination of Berkeley’s eligibility for TPR review	March 31, 2022	WSCUC
Submits proposal for themes to WSCUC	November 1, 2022	UCB
Response to proposed themes for UCB	December 1, 2022	WSCUC
UCB submits full self-study to WSCUC	10 Weeks prior to Peer Evaluation Team Visit	UCB
WASC on-site review	Fall 2024	UCB
UCB responds to errors of fact in review committee’s report	November 2024	UCB
UCB responds to committee’s full report	December 2024	UCB
UCB receives WSCUC’s Action (Decision) Letter	February 2025	WSCUC

### Resources

UC Berkeley’s TPR is designed to integrate a cornerstone initiative of the campus, focusing on the undergraduate Discovery experience, into the broader scope of this assessment opportunity for the entire campus. The decision to proceed in this manner allows the TPR Steering Committee to draw upon already identified faculty, student, and administrative stakeholders knowing that the financial and personnel resources of this large public university must be

carefully maximized, our intent is that the outcomes of the study will serve to improve and accelerate the campus' Discovery initiative. Mindful of the demand that this project will incur, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (which is spearheading the WSCUC Reaffirmation process) recently added a new analyst who will support the project.

**Institution Stipulation (signature of Chancellor for proposal)**

This submission has been reviewed and approved by Chancellor Carol T. Christ. See attached Institutional Report Certification Form.