Chair Ho called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. and asked if there were any members of the press present. She introduced Provost Stern and thanked him for his partnership with the Senate.

1. Remarks from Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Hal Stern

Provost Stern also acknowledged the strong partnership with the Senate and provided several campus updates to members.

*COVID-19*: Provost Stern reported that campus leadership is watching carefully as cases uptick due to the new variant, but there is no plan to change policies regarding masking and other measures, as numbers are still far lower than during the Omicron surge. UCI faculty, staff, and students are highly vaccinated and boosted, and the campus has not seen serious disease in its population. Provost Stern noted that when the campus has identified transmission of cases, it has not been in the classroom, but has been tied primarily to social and other events.

*Budget*: Provost Stern reported that while the state budget is not final, the Office of the President (OP) is optimistic that the governor’s proposed increase to UC for the coming year (5% to core funds) will be reflected in the final budget. OP also expects the system will receive one-time funds of close to $300 million for deferred maintenance and efforts related to climate change. There is also discussion about a possible five-year agreement with the governor in which the state would commit to budget increases of 5% per year over a five-year period, which would provide much-needed stability. With this commitment, the state would place some expectations on increased access for California residents, improved graduation rates, and reduction of graduation gaps. At the campus level, Provost Stern reported that we continue to be in strong financial shape, but as we emerge from the pandemic, there is a structural deficit of around $40 million. The provost has convened a budget workgroup, which includes Senate representation and is looking at ways to grow revenue and cut expenses, and considering how to manage the deficit without spending down reserves.

*Strategic Plan*: Provost Stern noted that the campus has hit some of its goals from the 2016 Strategic Plan (e.g., increasing research funds), but has not quite reached others (e.g., growing the faculty at the projected rate). Rather than develop a new plan, campus leadership convened a workgroup to “refresh” priorities in the current plan. Senate Chair Ho serves on this workgroup, and the group plans to have a draft document completed by the end of the academic year.
Cybersecurity: Provost Stern noted that cybersecurity has emerged as an important issue after the Accellion data breach and significant ransomware attacks at UCSF and other institutions. The campus is taking several steps in this area including implementation of multi-factor authentication and secure email platforms. The UCI community has been subject to several phishing attempts, and all employees are required to use a secure email system such as Gmail or Outlook. The campus is phasing out the old Webmail system, as it is not capable of providing necessary security. Another major concern is data protection, including student, patient, and research data. When PIs accept research grants from funding agencies, they make a commitment to protect data, and the campus provides mechanisms for secure storage of all levels of data. Provost Stern noted that faculty buy-in is important to the success of these efforts.

Provost Stern opened the floor to questions, and one member asked whether, in light of inflation and increased funding from the state, there was any plan for faculty salary increases. Provost Stern replied that OP is implementing a salary program that provides a 4% increase to faculty salary scales (and that UCI will do the same for off-scale salaries), with an additional 1.5% to address equity considerations on campuses. He added that there is a similar plan for staff, and it is expected to be effective October 1.

2. Minutes from March 10, 2022 Divisional Senate Assembly Meeting

Chair Ho called for any discussion of the minutes, for a motion to approve and a second. She noted that instructions for voting would be sent via email following the meeting.

Following the meeting, members voted 28-0-2 to approve the minutes from March 10.

3. Proposed Modifications to Irvine Bylaw 175 - Modification of Legislation

Chair Ho explained that currently, Bylaw 175 states that in the amendment of the bylaws or regulations of the division, all legislation becomes effective 30 calendar days after the distribution of the minutes of the meeting at which it was enacted, unless an alternate date of implementation is approved. This leads to delays of 60-90 days for legislation to become effective or requires the Assembly to take a second vote in order to enact legislation immediately.

The proposed revisions would make legislation effective immediately upon approval by the Divisional Assembly, unless an alternate date of implementation is approved. With the proposed change, a second vote would only be necessary to approve an alternate date of implementation.

Chair Ho reported that Cabinet approved the modifications at its meeting on April 19. She asked for any discussion of the modifications and called for a motion to approve and second, and for a motion and second to make the
changes effective immediately if they are approved. She noted that instructions for voting would be sent via email following the meeting.

Following the meeting, members voted 28-0-1 to approve the revisions and 31-0-1 to make the revisions effective immediately.

4. Announcements by Chair Ho

Conforming Changes to Irvine Bylaws 180-183: Chair Ho reported that Cabinet approved minor conforming changes to Irvine Bylaws 180-183 at its meeting on April 5. She explained that Bylaws 180-183 outline the policies and procedures for conducting the Senate election. The revisions change days of instruction to calendar days for processes to ensure consistency since some schools offer instruction on the weekend. She noted that conforming changes do not require Assembly approval and are shared for members’ information only, and that members may find the clean and redline versions of the changes in the meeting materials for reference.

2021-22 UC Academic Senate Survey of Faculty Life: Chair Ho encouraged members to participate in the 2021-22 UC Academic Senate Survey of Faculty Life before the June 25, 2022 deadline. She added that by submitting the survey, they would help the systemwide Senate convey faculty experiences during the pandemic this year to the UC Administration, the UC Regents, and the California Legislature. Chair Ho noted that this year the systemwide Academic Senate-Administration Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty Working Group made recommendations based on surveys conducted over the last two years. Chair Ho served on this working group, and pending approval from UC Provost Brown, the group will send its final report to all faculty to help guide them in preparing their merit and promotion files.

A member asked whether there was any progress on extending some of the COVID mitigation policies that were implemented over the last two years. Chair Ho noted that she raised lifting the cap on stop-the-clocks and other issues at the systemwide level. Council on Faculty Welfare (CFW) Chair Dalton added that the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) is working hard to have principles of achievement relative to opportunity codified into the APM as ongoing policy beyond pandemic mitigation. This will be a longer effort, and she will continue advocating for faculty when she becomes chair of UCFW next year. A member said that achievement relative to opportunity is not adequate when it comes to issues outside faculty control, such as external letters for tenure. They suggested that efforts should not be limited to codifying achievement relative to opportunity, but should also seek additional stop-the-clocks without OP approval and other interventions. Chair Dalton will raise these concerns systemwide.

Memorial to the Regents on Fossil Fuel Combustion: Chair Ho reported that the systemwide Assembly passed by near-unanimous vote (46-1) a Memorial to the Regents on fossil fuel combustion. The Senate is
conducting a systemwide vote on the proposed Memorial. In it, the Senate petitions the Regents for investments in UC’s infrastructure that will reduce on-campus fossil fuel combustion by at least 60% of current levels by 2030 and by 95% of current levels by 2035. The Irvine Division will send all members instructions for accessing the ballot, along with statements for and against the Memorial, on May 12. Chair Ho encouraged members to vote and to encourage their colleagues to vote, as high turnout will help the systemwide Senate chair advocate for campus investments to the Regents and the state legislature.

**UCI Ukraine Emergency Response Fund:** Chair Ho reminded members about the UCI Ukraine Emergency Response Fund crowdsourcing effort. The UCI Scholars at Risk program has launched a campaign to raise $100,000 by June 1, and the program will work on matching funding from various other sources, to sponsor two or three Ukrainian colleagues and their families at UCI. She reported that as of the meeting date, the effort had garnered 245 donations and raised more than $63,000. She encouraged members to donate if they are able.

**Senate Chair Coffee Hour:** In an effort to begin rebuilding community after the pandemic, Chair Ho announced she is hosting a second coffee hour for faculty this quarter. This session is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18 from 3-4 p.m. She noted that members should have received an invitation earlier in the week and invited them to RSVP, as space is limited.

**Senate Election Updates:** Chair Ho announced that Arvind Rajaraman, Professor of Physics and Astronomy, has been elected Chair Elect of the Irvine Division for 2022-23; and Jim Steintrager, Professor of English, has been elected Vice Chair of the systemwide Academic Senate for 2022-23. She noted that Professor Steintrager would be only the fifth systemwide Senate chair from Irvine. Chair Ho also noted that Irvine would be well represented on systemwide committees next year, as members of the division will chair the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW), the University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB), and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE).

5. **New Business**

Chair Ho invited members to raise other issues they would like to discuss.

One member expressed concern that student course evaluations no longer include a watermark to indicate the course took place during the pandemic. They noted that instructors are still accommodating students by not tying attendance to their grades, for example. They felt it did not make sense to remove the watermark from evaluations when instructors are still dealing with COVID impacts in their courses.
Another member mentioned that as we move forward students assume we should regularly accommodate remote modality for them. Students are now used to it and expect it, and they will reflect in their course evaluations when they do not get it. Another member observed that students who took earlier courses in a course series or sequence remotely were not prepared for later courses in the series; for some, it is the first time they have been in a college classroom. These members felt that their instructional experiences were still being impacted by COVID and that removal of the watermark does not reflect this.

CTLSE Chair Straughn added that the council is looking at course evaluations this year and next, acknowledging that we need better tools to evaluate courses holistically. He noted that we should shift to having students evaluate their experiences in courses rather than evaluate their instructors, and he encouraged members to help this effort.

Chair Ho invited others to reach out to her if they, too, are concerned about removal of the watermark from course evaluations. She will further discuss this issue with Academic Personnel if needed.

Chair Ho adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

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