

UC AI Leadership Initiative

Dear Chancellors/Regents:

I have been listening, learning, and forming initial observations on the immense opportunities and significant challenges facing the University of California.

Our unmatched scale and record of achievement are our greatest assets. Our public service mission to the people of California amplifies the importance of all we do.

While a more formal strategic planning process will be a priority for us in the coming year, I wanted to share early thoughts on elements that will guide some immediate efforts.

My initial view is that our strategy will be built on three pillars:

1. Pioneering Innovation in Education and Research

Innovation in service to our academic community will be integrated into every facet of our work. We have a significant opportunity to use our depth and breadth to implement new teaching and research models more quickly and broadly than any other institution.

2. Advancing Health Equity and Medical Innovation

Our role in healthcare is one of the most powerful expressions of our public service mission. We will harness the scale of UC Health to close health equity gaps, accelerate medical breakthroughs, and build a more resilient public health system for all Californians.

3. Ensuring Operational Excellence and Financial Resilience

To power this ambitious work, we must be exceptionally rigorous in our operations. A resilient financial and administrative foundation will be an essential platform for achieving all our public service, research, and healthcare ambitions.

I offer these pillars as a starting point for discussion. They will require careful coordination across our institutions, particularly at this unpredictable time. I look forward to partnering with each of you as we move toward a comprehensive, formal strategic plan for the University. The first step in this plan -- which touches upon all three pillars -- is the creation of an AI steering committee and an AI Leadership Initiative, as outlined below.

AI Steering Committee Charge

The University of California is uniquely positioned to lead the nation in artificial intelligence. I propose establishing the **UC AI Leadership Initiative**, a multi-year program to secure this leadership position.

This initiative will serve our academic priorities while becoming a cornerstone of UC's long-term financial health. It is designed to create a more resilient and sustainable model for the university by driving operational efficiencies, diversifying our revenue streams, and expanding our value to the State of California. At the same time, this initiative positions UC to advance California's role as the engine of the state's economic development through workforce development, innovation and entrepreneurship, and student success.

Our Distinctive Advantages

The UC system's unparalleled scale, research breadth, and public mission create a set of unique, nation-leading opportunities. We will not just participate in the AI revolution; we will lead it by transforming national challenges into catalysts for innovation, economic growth, and operational strength.

This initiative will create a powerful, reinforcing ecosystem of innovation and financial strength.

World-class infrastructure attracts **top faculty and diverse grants**, which enable **breakthrough research**. This in turn creates **valuable IP and a highly-skilled workforce, generating new commercialization revenue and attracting industry co-investment**, which provides resources to advance our core mission.

Our approach will be based on these core opportunities:

- **Interdisciplinary Solutions to Grand Challenges:** The UC system is one of the few entities on earth with the interdisciplinary expertise—from medicine and agriculture to climate science and computation—to solve society's grand challenges. We will seize the opportunity to be the nation's primary hub for "AI for Good," and will attract federal and philanthropic investment to tackle complex problems that are too large for any single institution.
- **AI for Teaching and Learning:** Educational technology is on the cusp of deploying AI for personalized, adaptive learning that delivers better outcomes for our students. Academic and career advising will ensure that they have the necessary guidance and support. An essential component of this will be to support faculty in the development of pedagogy and tools for classroom and specialized curriculum.
- **AI in Health:** UC Health already leads the nation in collaborative care and data harmonization, our next great opportunity lies in convergence. We have the unique capacity to fuse our massive clinical datasets with the University's broader leadership in climate science, agriculture, and law—sectors that heavily influence health outcomes but are invisible to traditional medical AI. By training models at these unexplored intersections—linking, for example, environmental patterns to chronic disease—we will pioneer a new class of holistic predictive intelligence that no standalone health system can replicate. This strategy differentiates UC from commercial providers, positioning us to capture the next wave of federal innovation funding and lead the market in "whole-person" health solutions
- **Defining the National Workforce:** Our opportunity is not just to graduate more engineers, but to educate the *entire* future workforce—from doctors to lawyers to artists and public servants—to be AI-literate leaders. We will use our scale to create the national model for AI-integrated education, ensuring California's graduates remain the most sought-after in the world.
- **The 'Trusted AI' Standard:** In a world wary of AI's risks, our public mission allows us to lead not just on *what* AI can do, but what it *should* do and the *whys* and *hows* that will govern how it should be done. Building on our UC AI Principles, we will make ethical, equitable, and transparent AI a core part of how UC is perceived, becoming a trusted

source for AI research and policy. This trust will be a critical asset that will attract partners, talent, and public support.

- **Strategic Economic Partnerships:** We have the opportunity to move beyond traditional tech transfer and become the central R&D partner for the AI-driven economy. By aligning some parts of our research enterprise with industry and state needs, we will create a powerful engine of co-investment, high-value IP, and new ventures, securing our financial future in parallel with California.
- **The 21st-Century Public University:** We have the opportunity to use our own system as a proving ground for administrative innovation, building the most efficient and effective public university administration in the world. By streamlining our operations, we will not only reduce costs but—more importantly—liberate significant resources and human capital to be reinvested directly into our core mission of teaching, research, and public service.

Design Principles

- **Mission Alignment:** Ensure all AI activities directly support UC's core mission.
- **System-Wide Collaboration, Local Empowerment:** Harness UC's collective scale while leveraging campus strengths.
- **Amplify Internal Stakeholders:** Empower and connect our faculty, researchers, students, and staff to accelerate innovation.
- **Multisector Participation to Galvanize External Partners:** Collaborate with government, industry, and philanthropy to drive co-investment and policy relevance.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Set the standard for transparent, fair, and accountable AI, data protection, and the privacy of our academic community.
- **Return on Investment:** Prioritize initiatives that generate significant ROI through efficiency gains and new revenue.

Governance & Leadership

A federated and multisector model ensures a unified strategy, flexibility, and clear accountability. Development of these initiatives will proceed in consultation with the Academic Senate and appropriate faculty committees.

- **President Milliken** serves as the executive sponsor.
- **UC AI Steering Committee:** The initiative's governing body, co-chaired by **Chancellor Pradeep Khosla, Professor Ahmet Palazoglu, and Vice President Van Williams.**
- **Regent Ann Wang and Maria Anguiano** serve as special advisors to the President on AI.
- **Ann Kirschner** serves as special advisor to the President

The steering committee membership should reflect our commitment to bridging academic excellence, industry innovation, and public service, with leaders selected for their expertise and experience.

This initiative represents our first concrete step toward realizing the University's strategic vision. It will create a powerful, reinforcing ecosystem of innovation and financial strength by which world-class infrastructure attracts top faculty and diverse grants, which enable breakthrough research and advanced teaching and learning initiatives. This in turn creates valuable IP and a highly-skilled workforce, generating new commercialization revenue and attracting industry co-investment, which provides resources to advance our core mission.

I invite your counsel, expertise, and partnership as we position UC to shape the future of technology in the service of California and the nation.