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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
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October 1, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing with an update on the Senate's work, in particular, on the Chancellor search, Post Employment Benefits, undergraduate education, and graduate education.

My best information is that a Chancellor search committee will be constituted by the middle of October, and will begin meeting in early November, including a meeting at our campus to get early input from all constituencies. Chancellor search committees are large, including Regents, student members, community members, etc., but there will be three UC Merced faculty, chosen by President Yudof from a larger slate prepared by our own Committee on Committees (Jack Vevea, chair). I am very optimistic about this search, not least because the two most recent Chancellor searches run by President Yudof, at UCSF and UC Davis, had outstanding results.

By now, you may be aware that the University is planning to revise its Post Employment Benefits (PEB) plan, increasing employee contributions (to 3.5% in July 2011 and 5% in July 2012) and lowering benefits. This has implications for current employees, and how we save for retirement, but it will have even more dramatic implications for the future colleagues we will recruit, as they are likely to be brought in under different terms. These matters will be brought to a vote at the December Regents meeting, and currently the Senate is being consulted on these issues. The Merced Division will be collecting faculty comments and formulating its own response. As part of this consultation process, and in an effort to keep our colleagues informed, the Senate will be hosting a PEB Forum on Wednesday October 13, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm, in KL 232, led by Shawn Kantor, CAPRA chair and UC Planning and Budget representative, and Sean Malloy, Merced's representative on the UC Faculty Welfare committee. There will be a slide presentation and an opportunity to ask questions.

I strongly encourage you to attend. In the meantime, I recommend the following website, which is kept up to date by our own Staff Assembly.

<http://staffassembly.ucmerced.edu/members-corner/peb>

(As a reminder, note also that there is a Faculty-Staff Town Hall on Wednesday October 6, at 3 pm, in COB 102. This will be an opportunity to ask the Administration questions on other issues besides PEB.)

I would like to highlight work by two important Senate committees. Undergraduate Council (Susan Amussen, chair) has developed a new policy on proposing minors, which is available on the new Senate website.

<http://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate/files/public/MinorsPolicyFinal9.14.10.pdf>

This year, UGC is taking the lead on program review, which is the periodic review of academic programs such as majors and minors. Program review is not only a requirement for WASC accreditation, but it is a sign of our maturity as a campus that some programs have been around long enough to go through this process. There are still pending questions on how program review will be supported administratively at the school level, which I hope will be resolved soon. The program review schedule itself is here.

http://senate.ucmerced.edu/sites/senate/files/public/ProgramReview_Schedule2010_2017.pdf

The Graduate and Research Council (Chris Kello, chair) is conducting analyses and preparing recommendations with regard to graduate admissions. Although graduate student numbers have increased in absolute terms every year, recently they have begun to level off and even fall as a percentage of our total student body. Percentage of graduate students is a key benchmark of our status as a research university and the scope of our community of scholars. It is a high priority for both the Senate and Administration to focus on this issue this year and make positive changes to improve graduate student numbers and more generally our environment for graduate education. GRC has recently sent a survey to graduate group chairs. If you have received this survey, I hope you will return it with as much information as possible about issues in your own graduate group.

To conclude, I would like to note again that Divisional Council ultimately works for all Senate faculty. Please feel free to contact me or any member of DivCo to raise issues of concern.

Sincerely,



Evan Heit, Chair
Merced Division of the Academic Senate

Divisional Council Members 2010-2011

Evan Heit, Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Anne M. Kelley, Vice Chair, School of Natural Sciences
Susan Amussen, UGC Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Tom Harmon, CAP Vice Chair, School of Engineering
Shawn Kantor, CAPRA Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Chris Kello, GRC Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Ignacio Lopez-Calvo, At-Large, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
David Noelle, At-Large, School of Engineering/School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Nella Van Dyke, Secretary, Rules/Parliamentarian, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
Jack Vevea, CoC Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

cc: Senate Director Susan Sims
Senate Analyst Fatima Paul