

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
SUSAN AMUSSEN, CHAIR  
[samussen@ucmerced.edu](mailto:samusen@ucmerced.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343  
(209) 228-7954; fax (209) 228-7955

10 October 2011

Dear Colleagues,

As you all know, when the semester gets going, it is sometimes hard to get our heads above the class preparation and grading and all the other things we do. So I'm a bit late on this letter, but I wanted to bring you up to date on some of the things that are happening in the Academic Senate. Since I last wrote to you, the Divisional Council has met three times; we also met with President Yudof when he was on campus. Vice-Chair Peggy O'Day and I are meeting regularly with Chancellor Leland and with EVC Keith Alley. In addition, the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Directors of each of the campus Academic Senates met for a retreat in Oakland; and the Academic Council – consisting of the chairs of each Division of the Academic Council, and the Chairs of the major systemwide committees, has had its first meeting of the year.

These two systemwide meetings highlight the significance of our being part of a system: we work in a framework established by the Academic Senate of the University of California. For an excellent discussion of the accomplishments and strengths of shared governance, as well as the challenges it faces, you might be interested in reading former system-wide Senate Chair Dan Simon's "[Report on the State of Shared Governance](#)", which he wrote at the end of his year as chair. Why does this matter? Merced has had exceptional support from our sister campuses. A good bit of this is practical, and not unique to Merced: we draw on expertise on other campuses in hiring and personnel cases; we use colleagues on other campuses as members of doctoral committees, and serve on them; we collaborate through CITRIS, the UC Humanities Network, and other multi-campus research groups. In this way we are equal members of the system, with talents to share. But we all know that Merced has fewer resources than other campuses. In offering advice to President Yudof this summer, the Academic Council recommended that UC Merced be spared cuts, even if – as has happened – the University suffered additional cuts in state funding. This is a generous acknowledgement of our needs, at a time when the other campuses are all making painful cuts.

Many of you will have read in the press of the University's proposal for a four year funding strategy, a proposal which the Regents declined to act on at their most recent meeting. What got the headlines was how the plan would affect tuition should there not be an increase in state funding for the University. What is more important to us as faculty is that President Yudof's stated goal – which he emphasized both in his meeting with the Academic Council in Oakland,

and his meeting with the Divisional Council when he was on campus – is to rebuild the resources of the University. While the Academic Council and the President occasionally disagree, we are in complete agreement that we should not compromise the quality of the university or its research mission.

On campus, committees are beginning to develop their agendas for the year. As the Divisional Council has defined its goals for the year, we are particularly concerned with the areas of campus life that support us in our scholarship and teaching. The ongoing concern with space is one of those, and will take the longest to solve. Faculty Welfare will use the results of the survey on Faculty Work Climate, and we will address as many issues as we can. (Concerns about faculty work climate for women can also be shared with the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, which is co chaired by Professor Jan Goggans (SSHA) and De Acker, Assistant Dean in SNS.) Some concerns can be addressed rapidly: Faust Gorham, the Interim Associate Vice-Chancellor and CIO has asked the Senate to provide names of people to work on an ad hoc committee on email, calendaring, and collaboration tools. Revised budget numbers have allowed Provost and EVC Keith Alley to change the hiring plan, so that instead of hiring 15 new faculty a year, we will gradually increase the number to 24. Next year, each school will be adding one more position to the number it has listed this year, and he expects that an additional line will be added in each of the following two years. While this is slower than all of us would wish, the additional faculty will certainly make a difference!

As many of you know, Tuesday the consultants who will be working with us on the search for a new Provost and Executive Vice-Chancellor will be on campus. If you cannot attend the open meeting with the faculty (I won't be there, because I teach at that time!), please feel free to get in touch with me or the search consultants with any thoughts and recommendations you might have.

The work of the Senate depends on you: no one else but the faculty can do the work of the Senate. If there is a concern I have about service at UC Merced, it is that we have not yet found a good balance: too often people think it's all or nothing. As a former committee chair, I can tell you that conscientious committee members are tremendously valuable. And one of the pleasures of Senate service is the opportunity to meet and work with outstanding colleagues who you never would have known otherwise.

Feel free to get in touch with me at any time, at [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Amussen". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Susan Amussen  
Chair