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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the new academic year! As I take office as the Chair of the UC Merced Academic Senate, I want to begin by thanking former Senate Chair Evan Heit, for his work; he has been a tireless advocate for both the campus and the faculty. I plan this year to continue Evan's practice of regular letters from the Chair, to keep you updated on the activities of the Academic Senate and the issues we are discussing. This letter will be short, as the new Divisional Council takes office today, but I wanted to greet you.

I am pleased to announce the inauguration of a new Senate committee at UC Merced, the [Committee on Faculty Welfare](#). Faculty Welfare considers and reports on matters related to the welfare of the faculty including salaries, benefits, insurance, retirement, housing, and conditions of employment. You should expect to hear from Sean Malloy, the Chair of the committee, at some point in the fall semester; the committee will also be conducting a survey to help develop its agenda. If you have thoughts about issues you would like Faculty Welfare to address, feel free to contact [Sean](#), who will also serve as the systemwide representative to the UC Faculty Welfare Committee.

One thing I'd like to do in these letters is highlight the role of the [Senate](#) and the importance of Shared Governance. The Senate is involved, through its committees, in almost all academic decisions on campus. But the Senate also serves as the voice of the faculty in relation to a wide range of administrative matters. The Senate is consulted both by the campus Administration and by the UC Academic Senate on both its behalf and that of the Office of the President on a wide range of policy and academic issues. I invite you to refer to the Divisional Council 2010-2011 [annual report](#) for a summary of last year's consultation activities. The sixteen items on which the Divisional Council was consulted ranged from the Calendar for 2013-16, Academic Personnel processes, the UC Merced-UC Davis Prime Program in Medical Education, a proposed background check policy, and Bylaw units for both SSHA and SNS. We also responded to five requests for Systemwide review. When the Senate is consulted, it is a formal, and very structured process. A request is sent to the Senate Chair, through the Senate Office. Depending on the issue, it is routed to DivCo, or to some or all of the Senate Committees, and sometimes to the Schools, for comment and review. All these comments are collected and summarized by DivCo, which may make additional comments, but also transmits

the separate comments. The consultation process acknowledges that different groups of faculty approach issues from different perspectives, and when these are incorporated, we get better decisions. Consultation is designed to be constructive, not confrontational, and its goal is to help the University at both the campus and system levels.

I look forward to hearing from you throughout the year. You may contact me at senatechair@ucmerced.edu. We will be using this address for all consultation requests so that the Senate Office and its outstanding staff can keep track of all the things that are going on.

I wish you all a productive and enjoyable year,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan Amussen".

Susan Amussen
Chair, Merced Division of the Academic Senate

cc: Division Council