



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
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**September 12, 2022**

Dear Colleagues,

As we start this new academic year, we are grateful for many things. We are grateful for the vaccines that allow us to teach in person and do research in our labs and offices on campus. We are grateful for the over two thousand new students, both undergrad and grad, that have come to our campus. And we are grateful for each other: every faculty member has worked through this pandemic and gone above and beyond to carry out excellent research, teaching and service, all while maintaining a caring posture for our students and each other. I know the administration appreciates us for this effort, and please know that the Senate leadership is overwhelmingly grateful for your work, particularly in these last two years.

It is important to remind all faculty that you are all members of the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate is the voice of the faculty in the University of California. The Senate enables the faculty, through the principle of [shared governance](#), to exercise its right to participate in the University's decisions. The faculty voice can be channeled through several campus and systemwide committees. At UC Merced, there are campus wide Senate Committees for essentially every aspect of faculty function, from teaching (Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council) to Research (Committee on Research) to promotion of diversity and equity (Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) to quality of life (Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom). There are also several other committees. I encourage you to review their duties [here](#). Therefore, if you have a concern, there is likely a Senate Committee that can address that issue. Feel free to contact [senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu) and your request will be addressed by the relevant Senate Committee(s).

This year, the Senate has several priorities that we want to share with you. First, we know that the proposed formation of a new School on campus has led to many divisions as people made strong arguments both in favor and opposed. While the negotiations for this continue, the Senate, in consultation with the administrative leadership, plans to establish a clear set of guidelines that can be approved by both faculty and the administration, with the goal of making future growth into new schools more smooth and transparent.

This year, one of the Senate's highest priorities will be to undertake ways to raise faculty morale so that we can continue on our path to inspire our students while creating and disseminating new knowledge and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

So as we start the new academic year, please accept my greetings, my thanks for your past work, and my commitment to work hard for the faculty and campus this year.

Sincerely,

Patti LiWang  
Chair, Academic Senate, Merced Division