



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
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Dear Faculty,

Well, that happened. Yes, it was a tough fall. We had wished for low Covid numbers and in-person classes, and that wish came true. However, as you know, the strikes in November were another challenge that faculty (and everyone) were asked to overcome. And once again, you, the faculty at UC Merced, showed the campus that you could be counted on to step up in a time of crisis. Some faculty were passionate in support of the striking graduate students and post docs, some faculty felt differently. But everyone came together and made sure that our undergrads were given a UC-quality education and that the research enterprise continued. A million thanks, from all the Senate leadership! Now, we hope to have reconciliation and to move forward as a Bobcat family together.

This letter is also to officially welcome you to the spring semester and to highlight upcoming Senate-related matters. We hope you had a refreshing winter break and that you have been able to stay (mostly) dry during the recent deluges. In the new semester, the Senate has several ongoing projects that we hope to move forward with, including a campus-wide Honors program and a Senate/Administrative working group to chart a more efficient path for developing new Schools, as we await an informal review from the Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) of the pre-proposal for a Gallo School of Management. We are also working closely with the other 9 campus Senate leaders to discuss solutions to systemwide issues, such as drastically reducing campus carbon emissions and delving into our core mission of graduate education and how to fund it.

As always, I would like to remind you that the Senate is here to work for the interests of the faculty, in a shared governance model as trusted partners with the administration. If you have an issue that needs attention or action, "there is a committee for that". Our Committee on Research has been working tirelessly to not only administer campus grants, but also to push the administration to improve the usability of the Oracle system. Our Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is (among other things) dedicated to looking at faculty promotion data to ensure fairness for all. During the recent strike, the Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom Committee advocated effectively to ease the process of submitting grades and our Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid worked with the Registrar and the Office of Financial Aid to ensure that no undergraduates would lose financial aid due to lack of grades. Our Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation is continuously working with the highest levels of the administration in their advisory role so that budget calls are allocated to the best benefit of the university. And during the recent strike, Senate leadership met frequently with both campus leaders and systemwide leaders, including President Drake, to receive updates and information.

Please feel free to peruse the Senate web site (<https://senate.ucmerced.edu>) to see the good work that the

Senate is doing. And as always, please email me as Chair ([senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)) or any senate leader if you have concerns or issues to bring to our attention. Good luck for a productive and healthy Spring, 2023!

Sincerely,  
Patti LiWang  
Chair, Merced Division of the Academic Senate