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OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
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May 21, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Last weekend's graduations were glorious events, and it was great to see so many of you there celebrating our record number of Ph.D.s, as well as our ever growing number of alumni.

Graduation does not make the same break for us as it does for our students, but it does create a pause in the year. Without the pressure of the semester, we have more time for research. Some of us are off to do field work, or work in distant archives. It's also a good time to look back on the year past, and look forward (a bit) to the year ahead.

It's been a year of hard work for many of us. There have been the three major initiatives that were launched last fall: the transition to departments; the development of instructional budgets; and academic planning. Departments will go live on July 1, with a monitoring committee to troubleshoot issues as we move forward. Schools and departments will have access to instructional budget information as well, though departments won't yet be accountable to them. We have the first data from our academic planning exercise, and CAPRA and the deans will soon be in touch with the schools to ask further questions. The goal will be to complete the process by the end of the fall 2018 semester, so that we can plan hiring for 2019-20 with some clear framework.

Every program has submitted multiple courses for review for the new General Education program. The General Education Sub-Committee (GESC) under the leadership of Jack Vevea and Carrie Menke has done extraordinary work in reviewing those courses and moving GE forward, meeting every week. This has been particularly challenging because, as we noted in the town halls on the GE bylaws, Senate committees are legislative bodies, and are not designed to administer academic programs. As soon as a plan for an interim governance structure for GE is agreed on by UGC, GESC, and the school executive committees, we will let you know.

This is a lot of activity, and it explains why the consistent theme of the Chancellor's meetings on a new provost was "no new initiatives". Furthermore, we've also been doing the normal business of the university. We have (or will soon have) sent three proposals for new graduate programs for systemwide review. That means the last of our emphases in the Interim Individual Graduate Programs (IIGP) will shortly be replaced by CCGA-approved graduate programs. A fourth proposal, independent of the IIGP, is almost ready for systemwide review as well. In addition, on July 1 five new academic units will become departments: a last program in Engineering (Computer Science and Engineering) and four new units formed by the reconstitution of Humanities and World Cultures (Anthropology and World Heritage, Global Arts, Media and Writing Studies, History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, and Literature and Languages). The newest academic offerings include the Philosophy major (approved by

the Senate in Fall 2017), and the Management Analytics and Decision Making (MAD) Minor, effective in Fall 2018.

We have also received good news regarding faculty salaries. President Napolitano has committed to a multi-year program that focuses on rebuilding competitive salaries for our ladder-rank faculty and other non-represented academic appointees. The first step will be a 4% increase to the salary scales for ladder rank faculty this July 1. Salary scales for other non-represented faculty and academic personnel will be increased by 3 percent. Plans for the coming two years are in development and I have no doubt that the incoming Senate leadership, both local and systemwide, will be attending to this critical topic. Chancellor Leland is aware that UC Merced's salaries are on the low end of the UC spectrum, and has said she will work with the Senate next year to develop a campus plan to address that.

Senate Vice-Chair and incoming chair Kurt Schnier and I have already met with Gregg Camfield, who will become Interim Provost/EVC on June 1. He agreed with us that the highest priority will be to continue and complete the initiatives we have begun this year. We all need time to consolidate our work and catch our breath. Gregg has asked to work closely with the Senate, and we look forward to doing so. The Senate doesn't really stop, but we slow down over the summer.

When classes begin in August, we will have a new dining hall as well as new dorms; next year the campus will be working on the sequence of moves that will be required as we begin to move into new buildings in 2019. You will do that with new leadership, with Kurt Schnier and Anne Kelley as chair and vice-chair. It's been an honor to serve as division chair for the last two years, but I know that Kurt and Anne will provide outstanding leadership. So I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a restful and restorative summer - whatever that might mean to you.

Fiat Lux,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Amussen".

Susan Amussen, Chair
Merced Division of the Academic Senate