

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
senatechair@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
(209) 228-7954
February 8, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

As always, my plan to get a letter out at the start of the semester failed, so this is a late welcome to the Spring semester. Classes are well under way, and committees are all getting started on their work.

I want to thank everyone for the work they did on Academic and Space planning last semester. Some idea of where we are going, and what we will have to work with (and where) will be key to our success and happiness going forward. I know that for many of us the uncertainty about the future, and particularly that of the programs we are part of, is a source of stress. My hope is that the planning will reduce some of the anxiety going forward, especially as we roll out the new GE program. Even if we don't hire as many faculty as we hope for (or even as many as we think we need) we will know what we will have. Right now, we have asked the School Executive Committees and deans to review the plans, meet with faculty, and solicit revisions, as relevant. They can ask questions like, "What happens if you hire an LSOE here rather than a ladder faculty? What happens if you get one line instead of 3?" We are working to find ways to make that discussion public, and give all faculty an opportunity to participate. After that, CAPRA and all the deans (including the Undergraduate and Graduate deans) will review the plans to make recommendations to the Provost.

You all will have received Provost Peterson's announcement that he is stepping down at the beginning of June. As you have heard from the Chancellor, she will be starting a discussion on how we move forward, and the skills and experience we believe are necessary in our provost.

At the systemwide level, the Academic Council is working to support UC in Sacramento, and particularly to emphasize to legislators and regents the importance of the work of the faculty. We are concerned about Governor Brown's proposed budget for the University (which provides a 2.7% increase instead of the 4% promised four years ago), and what it says about the lack of trust in system leadership. We hope that lobbying by students in Sacramento will successfully increase that amount. We are also examining the Huron Report that President Napolitano commissioned about the future organization of the Office of the President (OP). We hope her desire to address the legislature's concerns about the size of OP does not lead to decisions that do not serve the university.

From February 27 – March 1, UC Merced will host the WSCUC review team for the campus's reaccreditation. As you have already heard, the team's main [lines of inquiry](#) focus on campus character and identity; student success; program assessment, data analysis, and impact on policy; and financial success and sustainability. The team will be hosting open meetings for Senate and, separately, non-Senate faculty. I encourage you to participate. Meeting dates, times, and location will be forthcoming. You can also visit <https://accreditation.ucmerced.edu/re-affirmation> for additional information.

Of course through all this, we are teaching our students, working with graduate students, and pursuing our own research. Senate committees also continue to do their work. That work is hard; there are no easy answers, and we don't always agree. However, one thing I am certain of is that we are all deeply committed to building UC Merced as a research university, which offers an outstanding education to our undergraduate and graduate students, and fulfilling the University's mission of teaching, research and service.

Fiat Lux,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Amussen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and "A".

Susan Amussen, Chair
Merced Division of the Academic Senate