

Modifications to the Faculty Hiring Plan February 2017

The UC Merced Ladder Rank Faculty (LRF) hiring plan, driven by the Strategic Academic Focusing Initiative (SAFI) and as defined in my April 2015 memo to the faculty, proposed that approximately 150 Ladder-rank faculty would be hired on top of a base of 200 LRF (there were 202 LRF in Fall 2015) over a six year period. This would result in 350 LRF by *approximately* fall 2021. Further, that hiring plan recommended concentrating two-thirds or more of the LRF hires in the six strategic areas defined by the SAFI process that had been developed and refined over the previous 18 months. This suggested that in the process of adding 150 faculty, we would hire approximately 100 by SAFI/cluster hiring and 50 by traditional approaches.

In the first year of hiring using the SAFI approach, 5 faculty members were hired through cluster hiring and the remainder (16) by traditional approaches, yielding 223 faculty in fall 2016. During FY17, 40 LRF searches (16 SAFI cluster searches and 24 foundational searches) are being conducted and, if successful, the UCM LRF will total 263 in fall 2017. Those 61 hires (above the base of 202) consist of $5+16=21$ SAFI cluster hires and $16+24 = 40$ foundational hires.

Therefore, in the two year period under which SAFI hiring was a part of the hiring process, we will have hired approximately one-third of the LRF by the SAFI cluster hiring mechanism and two-thirds by foundational hires, a ratio of cluster-to-foundational hiring *significantly* lower than that proposed by my April 2015 memo.

Based largely on the recommendations from CAPRA in their December 20, 2016 memo, significant changes to the UCM faculty hiring plan as described in my April 2015 memo will be implemented. The intent is to hire 50 of the 150 faculty (one-third) according to a SAFI cluster hiring approach and 100 of the 150 faculty (two-thirds) using a foundational hiring approach. This is essentially a “flip” of the percentages originally proposed to be allocated to SAFI and foundational hires, respectively.

Assuming all the *current* recruitments are successful¹, approximately 90 LRF positions will remain to be filled (350 – 263). Sixty of those positions will be filled through foundational hires, and 30 through SAFI-directed cluster hires. Further, because CAPRA, in their December 20 memo, presented some thoughtful potential alternatives to faculty recruitment driven by strategic initiatives, I will suspend **for one year** plans for any future LRF recruitments driven by the SAFI. While the exact number of LRF recruitments during AY17-18 has not as yet been determined, all such recruitments will be by-law unit based, that is, “foundational” hires.

Challenges

Keeping on a trajectory to recruit 90 additional LRF over the next four years presents a formidable set of challenges. This office would welcome advice and suggestions from CAPRA on how best to deal with these challenges, which include:

- Research and office space. While we have the promise of truly abundant and high quality space as a consequence of the 2020 Project, that space will not begin coming available until the fall of

¹ As has been the case in the past, any current searches that fail to be concluded successfully will be carried over, without change or redistribution, to the following year.

2019. The two year period (fiscal years 2018 and 2019) will present serious challenges for finding wet lab, dry lab, computational and performance spaces, as well as office spaces (with the challenges listed in approximately descending order of difficulty). Thanks largely to the recent addition of COB2 and the conservative reassignment of 'backfill offices' (largely in COB) we have a nearly adequate number of faculty offices available to accommodate THIS year's recruits. Research space is unfortunately another story. From the faculty perspective, what is the best way to deal with this? Some options to consider include:

- Postpone hiring
 - Hire only in areas where we can clearly identify currently available space
 - Continue to utilize free space (which is also rapidly being depleted) at Castle
 - Through the cooperation of our current faculty, open research space on a shared basis until new space comes available
 - Hire with the identification of space to come, and the agreement that performance expectations (especially those related to the tenure clock) will be adjusted until research space becomes available
 - A combination of multiple approaches
 - Other options
- Accommodating spousal hires and targets of opportunity. To date, positions have *not* been held back in the Provost's office for these purposes. That does not mean, however, that we have in any way been non-responsive to a rather significant number of spousal/partner hiring requests. A significant percentage of our LRF hires involves efforts to meet spousal/partner hiring needs. Both spousal/partner hires and targets of opportunity have been met directly from positions allocated to the schools. This approach has been taken because spousal/partner accommodations and faculty diversity should be an intrinsic goal for *all* searches in *all* schools and not be viewed as a "separate obligation" met only via a separate pool of resources. Further, it is a zero-sum game (no additional positions), and this approach directly acknowledges that fact. Should we continue with that strategic approach or might other approaches (e.g., holding back a specific number of positions for this purpose) be better?
 - Stabilizing instructional costs of non-senate faculty. Given that the fiscal support for all academic needs (e.g., ladder rank faculty, academic senate lecturers, represented lecturers, teaching assistants, etc.) comes from the same pot of money, and the budget model assumes that non-LRF instructional costs will not increase significantly, how do we reduce our significant reliance on lecturers? Our projections for being able to fund 350 faculty by 2021 (or perhaps a year or two later) are strongly predicated on controlling and minimizing all "non-LRF faculty" cost increases. It will be very difficult to fully fund 350 LRF without directly addressing both our current reliance on lecturers and our campus-wide workload expectations.

Summary

- Based on CAPRA recommendations, the original intent to hire 150 LRF using a SAFI cluster hiring process for two-thirds of the hires and a foundational hiring process for one-third will be modified significantly. The intent will be to hire those 150 LRF using a SAFI cluster hiring process for one-third of the hires and a foundational hiring process for two-thirds of the hires.
- To give the faculty and campus leadership adequate time to refine the current methodologies for LRF hiring prioritized by the SAFI, faculty recruitment in AY17-18 will exclusively follow a foundational hiring process. The exception will be any *current* searches that fail to conclude successfully, which will be carried over to the next recruiting cycle without modification.

I want to thank CAPRA once again for their thoughtful analyses and suggestions. I hope it is apparent by this response that this office has taken very seriously the concerns and suggestions posited not only by the CAPRA recommendations but also the sentiments expressed in the survey conducted approximately one year ago. I look forward to implementing this hiring plan, and providing the longer-term predictability that has been clearly requested. I am also looking to you for guidance and advice on how to deal with some rather significant challenges impacting our ability to recruit new LRF, as outlined above.