

Answer of the Month MiniMag

“What does UCSF do well to institutionally support early career faculty, and what does not work so well?”

Thirty-four respondents noted that UCSF has great strengths in the mentoring of early career faculty, an effective Faculty Development Day, and a wonderful intellectual environment. However, faculty members commented that mid-career mentoring, as well as management skills training, such as those needed to run a lab, could be improved. Many liked the availability of intramural research grants, but noted that the pressures to obtain salary support via extramural grant funding had a negative impact. The costs of living in the Bay Area, and work life balance were also seen as challenges. Several respondents reported that research and personnel management problems negatively impacted faculty. Others wanted more transparency in how resources are allocated (including start-up packages), and in how promotional decisions are made. Some people referenced special perks given by other institutions

to improve work-life balance, such as Stanford’s provision of Blue Apron meal ingredient boxes so attending physicians can more easily provide fresh meals to their families while they are performing clinical services. *While this is a nice perk, would this type of benefit be the best use of UCSF funds? What would be better?*

“The fact that this question is asked shows what a great institution UCSF is in supporting its faculty. Benchmarking early career or all career faculty across different departments and make such data openly accessible could be helpful to everyone involved in the process.”

“Lack of recognition and reinvestment in junior faculty who have made demonstrable progress - once captured by UCSF, the institution just looks pass you.”

The Senate offers its popular [Faculty Research Lectures](#) (Basic, Clinical and Translational Sciences). The [Committee on Research](#) takes nominations and selects lecturers based on outstanding scientific achievements, which are often the culmination of career-long efforts. *Should the Senate offer an Early Career Faculty Research Lecture, perhaps inviting two to three early career faculty who have made particular progress?* The Committee on Research leads planning for these honorary lectures, and interested faculty can reach out to [members](#), or indicate willingness to join this committee.

A number of faculty commented that *mentoring appears to drop off* after reaching mid-career status, even though mid-career faculty experience new challenges, such as managing a lab, and handling personnel issues. This is an important point, and we will work with Brian Alldredge, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, to invigorate professional development resources for mid-career faculty. Other faculty note that the *merit appraisal and promotions process appears to vary by department, and that the amount of information provided to early career faculty also varies by department*. Using funds provided by the Chancellor to the senate, the [Committee on Academic Personnel](#) is creating a new web-based interactive system that can aid faculty in producing an optimal appraisal package, and provide some benchmarks that are tailored to their specific type of work and appointment level.

Comments concerning the high cost of living and cost of family were included in the *Question of the Month* postings, which is no surprise given the high costs of living in the Bay Area are impacting the entire UCSF community. The Senate provides funds (from monies provided to us by the Chancellor) to increase the capacity for children of faculty in the UCSF child care program. *We wonder if the provision of an expert consultant to assist faculty in working with Bay Area child care resources (Parenting Concierge) would be helpful, particularly since the UCSF Childcare Program has a significant wait-list?*

Some faculty noted problems with administrative support services at UCSF, one remarking that it diminished the perception of the benefits of relocating her or his lab to UCSF. The Senate is working to increase the diversity of faculty involved with campus planning, including groups working on changes to administrative services.

Finally, we believe it is essential to engage faculty when services are being planned and to effectively communicate the rationale for decisions around supportive services. *Additionally, when changes are made to reduce cost, we encourage the administration to provide some of the savings back to faculty, particularly when savings are achieved related to expenses that are paid by indirect recovery from faculty generated research funds, gifts, and clinical income.*

Despite the perception that UCSF offers a mentoring program specifically for women faculty, no gender-specific mentoring is offered by UCSF. UCSF has hosted special events that address issues related to gender differences in faculty experiences, research productivity and promotions. Many of these feature speakers who discuss research findings related to gender and science, such as the “Eye Opening Conversation about Women at UCSF” which occurred in September 2015. Additionally the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Association of Medical Colleges, have identified good mentoring as an important determinate of research success among women working in the health sciences.

Space, the ultimate UCSF frontier

Campus space plans and how UCSF plans space, for both new and existing areas, will be the focus on the January 28, 2016 Senate [Division Meeting](#). Chancellor Hawgood will also speak. The meeting will be held in Rock Hall at Mission Bay and lunch will be provided. The meeting will be simulcast to over the Internet.