DANIEL SIMMONS, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Review of Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Senate Membership

Dear Dan,

The University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) has discussed and endorsed the report of the Task Force on Senate Membership. There were 9 votes in favor, one opposed and one abstention.

Some on the committee (particularly representatives from campuses with medical schools) felt that the charge to the Task Force, and, therefore, the report itself, did not address an important issue: whether non-Senate faculty members are treated fairly and respectfully by colleagues and campus administrators.

The Task Force report provided very helpful historical commentary regarding definitions of faculty, the role of the Academic Senate, and changes over time since the “1868 organic act of the University of California.” Over the years there has been a shift from defining Senate membership in terms of duties and responsibilities to a definition based on title codes. During the course of our extensive discussions, members of the Committee observed that many faculty members’ duties are not aligned with their titles. The Committee was unsure how to address this problem. While the task force recommendation number two is on point and should be implemented (to encourage local review of individuals who believe that they are in the wrong classification), there may be many obstacles in the local context, which work against appropriate classification. For instance, there may be concerns whether the department is able to make a commitment of support to increased numbers of In Residence faculty or whether a department or division is comfortable with increasing the numbers of the Clinical X faculty beyond the threshold of 1/6 of Health Science Senate members.

Our committee spent some time deliberating whether there was an action item that Academic Council might consider to address this problem. Ultimately, we concluded that the issues may stem not so much from Senate policies as internal management difficulties which are better addressed by the management on campuses and in the departments. We hope that the Academic Senate will encourage the Health Sciences campuses to review their appointment and promotion criteria and to be open to individual faculty members’ requests for a review of their faculty series appointments.

Sincerely,
Joel E. Dimsdale, UCFW Chair

Copy: UCFW
Martha Winnacker, Executive Director, Academic Senate
As members of UCFW who did not endorse the Task Force report, we submit this minority report. In short, we feel that this is a very important matter for the future of the University, and that it needs further analysis.

There are increasing numbers of “provisional faculty” throughout the University of California—in engineering, in the national labs, and in our health sciences schools. We feel that these faculty members are not being treated respectfully by the system and that their demeaned status demoralizes them and weakens the Academic Senate’s mission of shared governance. They have little recourse for grievances and as a result are subject to ever more powerful departmental chairs and administrators. As the University shrinks in the face of budgetary exigencies, it is likely that we will increasingly be relying on such contingent faculty. How the University treats them can become a template for how the University subsequently attempts to treat Academic Senate faculty members.

We agree with the task force’s recommendation #2 that if faculty members in these series are misclassified, they should be allowed to request a local CAP review. However, the task force does not address concerns that faculty may be retaliated against by their own department for requesting such a review. The departments themselves are uneasy about taking on additional obligations (even for only the one-year guaranteed salary for an in residence professor), and yet many of these faculty members, particularly adjunct faculty, are functionally indiscernible from FTE or in residence faculty: They have support from NIH; they teach extensively; they see patients; they serve on committees. In other words, these faculty members are valuable faculty members who perform the same duties as ladder rank faculty. Some campuses have made significant strides to correct this situation, but the problem is that at some locations faculty members requesting such a review subject themselves to possible retaliation by their department. Rather than make the faculty member request such a change in series review, a better practice should be developed. For instance, at the time of a career review, CAP could automatically assess files for the appropriateness of a change of series.

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1 We acknowledge that the adjunct series in particular differs in its use throughout the UC system, so that when we speak of Adjuncts in the Health Sciences Schools, we hope reviewers will differentiate from the other uses of the adjunct series.
We are pleased that the task force began work on this topic and feel that some of the recommendations may help us reach some traction. The taskforce report concludes that if faculty members are fulfilling the roles and expectations of a Senate member, they should be assigned a faculty series that is in line with their functioning. We agree, but we feel it would be a mistake not to see this effort to its logical conclusion. We have faculty members who are Academic Senate caliber in every way except in name and privilege. They should be enfranchised as Senate members and, we would argue, their membership would not only benefit themselves but would strengthen the Senate.

We suggest that Academic Council reconvene the task force or else a new task force be constituted to continue to address these issues so that we might move forward.

Sincerely,

Joel E. Dimsdale, UCFW Chair
Grayson Marshall, UCSF Representative

Copy: UCFW
Martha Winnacker, Executive Director, Academic Senate