

Communication from the Academic Planning and Budget Committee
Sharmila Majumdar, PhD, Chair

April 28, 2015

TO: Farid Chehab, Chair of the San Francisco Division and Coordinating Committee

FROM: Sharmila Majumdar, Chair of the Academic Planning and Budget Committee

CC: Todd Giedt, Executive Director of the UCSF Academic Senate Office

RE: Mission Hall Post-Occupancy Study Review and Recommendation

Dear Chair Chehab:

The Academic Planning and Budget (APB) Committee and its Campus Planning Subcommittee have reviewed and discussed the draft Mission Hall Post-Occupancy survey. Based on the feedback provided, members have noted considerable concern not only with the survey questions, but also with the oversight of the study and whether the evaluation will produce meaningful and useful results. Committee members have the following comments and recommendations for the Coordinating Committee to consider.

Reduction in the Survey Length

In regards to the survey itself, all members noted concern with the length of the draft. If left in its current state, APB believes that the survey will undoubtedly be cumbersome and time-consuming for respondents wishing to participate. If not made shorter, committee members believe that faculty will not take or complete the survey and that this will lead to a low response rate and incomplete results. To help resolve this issue, APB suggests that the Senate agree upon several core objectives for the study and then evaluate the survey again to determine which questions are necessary. It has also been suggested that if the Senate would like to retain all the questions, then the survey should be broken out into several smaller surveys. However, concerns were raised that multiple surveys might create fatigue, and again lead to a lower response rate. Overall, members believe the survey should take no more than 5 to 10 minutes to complete. More detailed comments on the survey questions can be found attached.

Address Concerns With Survey Oversight

Although an independent research firm is conducting the Mission Hall survey, APB members are concerned with the fact that the chief campus architect is responsible for the final approval, implementation and evaluation of the survey. With significant future workspace design decisions resting on the results of evaluation, members feel that the campus architect cannot be unbiased in the implementation and evaluation of the study. APB recommends that the Senate consider a request that another member of the campus leadership be given oversight responsibilities for the study.

Ensure Meaningful and Useful Results

APB members acknowledge that the proposed draft is a validated instrument and that it is one of many tools commonly used to evaluate new workspace. Nevertheless, after review of the questions, members believe that the survey, as is, will not provide meaningful or useful results. Members believe there should be fewer questions evaluating office furnishings, temperature control, and personal location, and more questions that will help us understand changes in faculty work behavior and productivity. Furthermore, questions should include rigorous metrics that can inform decisions. For example, the survey's use of a red to green lickert scale to measure faculty effectiveness does not provide much information that can be acted upon.

Reaffirm Intended Purpose

In 2013, when APB first asked that a Mission Hall survey be performed, members requested a study be conducted that would evaluate the efficacy of the activity-based workspace (ABW) in an academic health science environment. In addition, the study would inform the Senate and campus leadership on whether the ABW model compromised any parts of UCSF's mission. Previously, no similar studies had been done, and our institution had a unique opportunity to add to the literature in the area of academic workspace. Based on the survey questions provided, members feel the evaluation has strayed too far away from the committee's original intent. APB recommends that the Academic Senate determine core objectives for the survey that align with the committee's original goals and that survey be designed in away that can lead to actionable recommendations, not only for the current Mission Hall workspace, but also for Clinical Sciences and future workspace designs.

If you have any questions please contact me, or Academic Senate analyst Artemio Cardenas artemio.cardenas@ucsf.edu.

Sincerely,

Sharmila Majumdar, PhD
Chair, Academic Planning and Budget Committee