

From: U.C. Academic Senate
To: President of the University of California, for transmission to the Regents
Re: Adjunct Faculty Series Academic Senate Membership Memorial to the Regents

The U.C. Academic Senate petitions the University of California Board of Regents to amend Standing Order 105.1.a to add to the Academic Senate each person giving instruction in any curriculum under the control of the Academic Senate whose academic title is ... Assistant Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time; Associate Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time; and Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time.

History of the Memorial to the Regents

On April 18, 2024, the San Francisco Division of the Academic Senate considered the Memorial at its annual Division meeting.

On October 25, 2024, the UCSF Academic Senate Executive Council held a vote to approve the language of the two Memorials to the Regents. The language of these Memorials were approved.

Explanation of the Provisions of the Memorial to the Regents

“The U.C. Academic Senate petitions the University of California Board of Regents to amend Standing Order 105.1.a to add to the Academic Senate each person giving instruction in any curriculum under the control of the Academic Senate whose academic title is ... Assistant Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time; Associate Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time; and Adjunct Professor appointed at more than 50% time.”

Background

The University of California (UC) has an ongoing debate about the potential expansion of the Academic Senate membership to include Adjunct faculty. The discussion has been facilitated by UCSF standing committees and systemwide committees such as the UC Health Special Committee on Health Sciences and Clinical Affairs (SCHSCA).

Argument Summary

The main argument for expanding Academic Senate membership centers around the need for inclusivity and representation of all faculty members in university governance, regardless of their series or appointment type. Proponents argue that Adjunct faculty, despite their different job roles and contributions, fulfill crucial aspects of UC's mission through teaching and mentoring, research and creative activities, professional competence, and university and public service. Their voices should be welcomed in the Senate.

When UCSF faculty vote on systemwide issues, UCSF gathers and reports votes from all faculty, but UCSF must report those votes by series because the only votes that count are from the Ladder Rank, In Residence, and Clinical X faculty. In addition, systemwide restrictions prevent UCSF from appointing faculty in the Adjunct series to its Privilege and Tenure (P&T) Committee or from sending faculty from these series to serve on systemwide committees or task forces.

Key Points

- *Equitable Contribution and Value of Inclusion:* Adjunct faculty meet high academic standards and significantly contribute to UC's missions. Their exclusion from the Senate represents an inequity that diminishes the university's diverse intellectual community. Including Adjunct faculty in the Senate would enhance governance by (1) integrating diverse perspectives relevant to the expanding focus on health sciences—where many of these faculty are appointed, (2) addressing feelings of marginalization, and (3) promoting equity. The excluded faculty series are disproportionately female and disproportionately young. By expanding Senate membership to include faculty in the Adjunct series, the University would break a structural barrier that unintentionally excludes women and younger faculty from governance.
- *Systemwide Benefits and Strategic Response:* Inclusion of Adjunct faculty in the Senate could improve morale, enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensure better representation on a variety of systemwide committees and task forces whose decisions affect all faculty. Incorporating a broader range of faculty expertise would enable the Senate to more effectively tackle modern challenges such as public health crises and educational disparities, boosting UC's leadership in these areas.
- *Building the Senate of the Future:* The Senate of the future should do more, and it needs to be bigger and more representative of the faculty to do it. This is not about Adjunct faculty taking over the Senate. This is about the entire faculty building a more robust and influential Senate. That Senate needs more health sciences expertise, volunteers, and voices to partner with, challenge, and influence one of the largest academic health systems in the world. With broader membership, the Senate can do what it already does, and more.
- *Strengthening University Governance & Decision-Making:* A more inclusive Senate would strengthen governance by working closely with health sciences leaders and enhance decision-making by bringing a wider array of experiences and perspectives. This diversity can reduce biases, increase inclusivity, and foster creative solutions, improving overall governance effectiveness.
- *Combatting Burnout and Enhancing Faculty Retention:* Active participation in shared governance shows institutional value and respect, vital for boosting morale, reducing burnout, and enhancing engagement. Reports highlight significant disenfranchisement and high turnover rates among non-Senate faculty, particularly women, underscoring the need for their inclusion to mitigate cultural and financial risks

associated with recruitment and retention.

- *Local vs. Systemwide Representation and Institutional Alignment:* While local participation structures like the non-Senate academic federation at UC Davis exist, the absence of systemwide voting rights silences significant voices, impacting their influence over university policies. Aligning with progressive practices at institutions like Ohio State University, University of Utah, and the University of Michigan — which include adjunct faculty in governance — can position UC as a leader in academic governance.

Conclusion

The argument to expand the Academic Senate membership to include Adjunct faculty is fundamentally about recognizing their contributions, addressing inequities in representation, and enhancing the governance of the university to reflect its increasingly diverse academic community.

Arguments in Favor of the Memorial to the Regents

Adjunct Professors fulfill the tripartite mission of the University, and do the same high-quality work as teachers, researchers, and clinicians as faculty in the Ladder Rank, In Residence, and Clinical X series and are accordingly deserving of Senate membership.

The “three pillars” of the tripartite university mission are: teaching, research, and university or public service. Committees on Academic Personnel (CAPs) evaluate all faculty in all series based on five categories: teaching and mentoring, research and creative activities, university or public service, professional competence, and contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion. All faculty are evaluated in all five categories, but have differing degrees of contribution to each of the five pillars of excellence and these percentages may change over the course of their careers. Great achievement in one pillar and favorable contribution in the others is as deserving of recognition as equal distribution of accomplishment in all five. Adjunct faculty have significant teaching, research, and service responsibilities. A large fraction of teaching clinical trainees (professional students, residents, fellows) is carried out by faculty in these series.

Characteristics of Academic Professor Series and MSP

	Ladder Rank APM 220	In Residence APM 270	Clinical X APM 275	Health Sciences Clinical APM 278	Adjunct APM 280	Management & Senior Professional
Senate Academic Review: CAP using APM 210	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Research / Creative Work	Yes	Yes	Yes: Dissemination	Yes: Creative Activity	Varies	No
Teaching / Mentoring	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	No
Professional Competence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Yes
University / Public Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	No
Eligible for Tenure	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Senate Membership	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Percent Time	100%	100%	100%	0-100%	0-100%	0-100%
Primary Source of Comp	State FTE + Grants	Grants + Clinical	Clinical + Grants	Clinical	Varies	Varies
Appointment Length	Open-ended	Open-ended	Termed	Termed	Termed	Termed

Adapted from the [*UCSF Faculty Handbook*](#).

Note: “Varies” indicates that, depending on their role in the University, Adjunct faculty may focus principally on research/creative work, teaching and mentoring, professional activities, or service activities. The product of that focus is subject to the same standards as that of the other academic professorial series.

There is evidence that grant funding rates within the Adjunct faculty series are outpacing grant funding in some Senate series, like In-Residence and Ladder Rank faculty.

At least at UCSF, grant funding trends from 2017 to 2023 show Adjunct faculty experiencing robust growth, Adjunct Memorial

increasing from \$17.53 million to \$34.01 million. This growth outpaces that of Ladder Rank faculty, whose funding rose from \$112.29 million to \$151.38 million; In-Residence faculty, with funding increasing from \$91.51 million to \$137.52 million; and Clinical X faculty funding, which rose from \$15.06 million to \$27.63 million. The higher growth rate for Adjunct faculty suggests their increasing importance in securing research grants compared to traditional academic series.

Retaining the status quo disenfranchises two faculty series.

Systemwide Senate Bylaw 55 outlines the voting rights within university departments, emphasizing the rights of non-emeritae/i faculty who are voting members of the Academic Senate. Key provisions include voting on new departmental appointments that confer Senate membership, and promotions of faculty colleagues. Non-emeritae/i Senate members are not typically entitled to vote, except by a two-thirds majority secret ballot, which can be reassessed annually. This is excessively burdensome. In addition, non-Senate faculty members are excluded from voting on critical matters that have traditionally been delegated to faculty, such as academic freedom, as well as votes of confidence in the University administration.

Enlarging Senate membership will improve gender equity within the Senate.

Adjunct faculty are disproportionately women and represent the most racially diverse group within the faculty. Currently, these faculty members are underrepresented in the Academic Senate, which limits their influence over decisions that critically affect their professional environment and career advancement. This move towards inclusivity not only supports gender equity but also enhances the decision-making process by integrating a broader range of viewpoints, thereby fostering a more balanced and fair academic community.

There are safeguards against Adjunct faculty overwhelming the current Senate structure already written into Regents Standing Rule 105.1.

Standing Rule 105.1 already states: “Members of the faculties of professional schools offering courses at the graduate level only shall be members also of the Academic Senate, but, in the discretion of the Academic Senate, may be excluded from participation in activities of the Senate that relate to curricula of other schools and colleges of the University.” Such provisions could be included in the Standing Rule to prohibit an Adjunct faculty member from commenting on certain curricula that they are not qualified to review.

Enlarging Senate membership may increase costs, but not significantly so, and can/should be supported by individual campuses.

A systemwide benefit of Senate membership is eligibility for the Mortgage Origination Program. While this is an important Senate benefit and valuable recruitment tool, it impacts a small number of faculty. It is not an entitlement; it is an opportunity to apply for a loan under specific recruitment and retention circumstances. If Adjunct faculty became eligible for MOP loans, it would not require the university to increase funding for MOP loans. However, the MOP office may need more administrative support if expanding Senate membership increases applications. Regardless of whether Senate membership is expanded, the MOP loan program may need restructuring, given its recent financial challenges.

Change in Series (CIS) actions, while possible, are administratively burdensome, and not always possible for some faculty.

One way to rectify situations when faculty find themselves in the wrong series is through a change-in-series (CIS) process and action. However, there are certain barriers that prevent faculty from utilizing this remedy. Issues such as space, sources of funding, departmental funds, and programmatic needs may affect a Department Chair's consideration of requests for changes in series. Because departments may vary in their criteria for such changes, individual faculty members may need to negotiate the proper series at the time of their initial appointment. Finally, departmental clinical revenue may also have a bearing on the decision to enter into the process for a CIS.

Increases the pool of faculty eligible to serve in the Senate.

The Memorial responds to the Systemwide Senate Service Strategic Plan, which calls for increasing the visibility of the Senate and an expansion of Senate service to ensure inclusivity as well as identifying and nominating candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Rebuttal to Argument in Favor to the Memorial to the Regents

“Adjunct Professors fulfill the tripartite mission of the University, and do the same high-quality work as faculty in other series.”

The [standard](#) at UCSF with respect to teaching, research and university service is: “The criteria for promotion of faculty in the Adjunct series **can vary** depending on the individual’s expected role.” Adjuncts must excel in one area but not all three. Consistent with this, at UCSF, most faculty in this series are engaged solely in research with no teaching (and little to no service). Beyond UCSF, in many departments it is customary for adjunct professors to be selected for their applied or industrial expertise relevant to student development; while these faculty contribute to courses of instruction, they may have little or no scholarly experience and do not perform service.

“Grant funding rates for Adjuncts are outpacing those for Senate faculty.”

This is misleading, and in pitting the Series against one another so starkly accomplishes something we had hoped to avoid. Adjunct research faculty unsuccessful at obtaining grant funding are dismissed, and percent growth is always larger when starting from a small number. Such survivorship bias makes comparison with the Ladder rank and In Residence series invalid. Nonetheless, Adjunct faculty at UCSF on average bring in \$72000 per person (pp) in research funding per year, far below the average for In Residence (\$224000pp) and Ladder Rank (\$460000pp) faculty.

“Retaining the status quo disenfranchises two faculty series.”

We understand, but believe these limitations are valid for several reasons:

- Concern for balanced representation across the Schools and the many disciplines across the entire academic mission of the University.
- Flexibility of Adjunct appointments may lead to mismatch between voting rights and faculty competencies.
- Many in these series have less than full time commitments to the University, retain significant commitments to outside institutions, or will return to the same following a brief stint on the UC faculty.
- Confers significant new authority on department chairs to change the composition of the voting faculty in their departments (through appointments and especially non-renewals).

“Will improve gender equity within the Senate.”

Adjunct faculty do not receive the same protections as ladder-rank and in residence faculty and are generally not given the same (or necessarily any) resources to support their scholarship. Thus including adjuncts would create the illusion of improved diversity of the UC faculty without effecting substantial change. **Meaningful improvements in faculty equity will require UC to hire and invest in permanently-appointed and well-resourced URM and female faculty**, not merely reclassify a group of poorly supported employees.

“Regents Standing Rule 105.1 provides safeguards.”

105.1 describes limited circumstances where, at Senate discretion, professional school faculty may be excluded from certain Senate activities. This rule would not apply to the Adjunct faculty outside of

professional schools.

“Change in Series (CIS) actions are administratively burdensome, and not always possible.”

CIS's are similar in review burden to promotions or accelerated advancements: i.e. multiple levels of review, including by CAP. Care should be taken in choosing the most suitable series at the time of initial appointment. Appointments to the non-Senate series followed by CIS should not be used to evade the requirements that Senate members be appointed via national and equal opportunity searches.

“Increases the pool of faculty eligible to serve in the Senate.”

We do not share any concern that Senate membership today (N = 14,477) is too small to ensure its adequate functioning.

Arguments in Opposition to the Memorial to the Regents

Brief summary of the Adjunct faculty series and roles. APM 280 states that titles in the Adjunct Professor series “may be assigned (1) to individuals who are predominantly engaged in research or other creative work and who participate in teaching, or (2) to individuals who contribute primarily to teaching and have a limited responsibility for research or other creative work.” Importantly, Adjunct Professors are not required, as a matter of policy in the APM, to possess the full range of research and teaching competencies that the APM requires other types of faculty appointments must possess. Though many adjunct professors do possess this range of expertise, this is by no means standard across the UC system. In many departments at other campuses, it is customary for adjunct professors to have no scholarly experience or expertise. Instead, they may bring applied or industrial expertise that is crucial for student development - justifying their contributions to courses of instruction - but that is not applicable to the evaluation of scholarship, curricular structure, or directions of future research. For example, in a Department of Economics, adjunct professors may be practicing finance or real estate professionals. In a Department of Political Science, they may be campaign consultants or government officials. In a Department of Computer Science, they may be practicing information technology professionals. **These professionals bring important expertise to their programs, but it is not necessarily scholarly expertise.** Thus at present, the Adjunct Professor series is (and must be) flexible in its procedures for appointment. There is no requirement that adjunct professors hold the highest degree in their field, or that they hold their primary employment at the University of California. In some departments, adjunct professors may be full-time faculty members at another university. At most campuses, adjunct appointments may be specified for a fixed term and do not require a department vote or Senate review. These are important aspects of the flexibility of this series, but differ from the qualifications and commitment to the University expected of faculty in Senate series.

Brief summary of Academic Senate membership and duties. When debating whether to include Adjunct faculty in the Senate systemwide, it is important to understand what rights are conferred by Senate membership. Regents order 105.2.c states, “The Academic Senate shall determine the membership of the several faculties and councils.” Bylaw 55.A.1 states that all non-emeritus Senate members have “the right to vote on substantial departmental questions.” What counts as a “substantial department question” varies by department and campus. Across the UC system, this may include, e.g., (1) faculty search priorities for the following year, (2) curriculum, (3) strategic plans that define long-term research and curricular goals, (4) department policies on the structure of the Ph.D. or other doctoral dissertation and dissertation prospectus, (5) evaluation of doctoral students. Bylaw 55.B ensures that tenured faculty may vote on appointments to series that confer Senate membership, and on tenure cases; and that full professors possess the right to vote on cases of promotion to full professor. Bylaw 55.C allows individual departments to extend voting rights to other classes of faculty at their discretion, as appropriate for their specific circumstances. For example, in departments where Clinical Professors possess substantial expertise relevant to the evaluation of department faculty, the department may confer voting rights in appointment and tenure cases. Thus **departments currently have flexibility to confer voting rights on non-Senate faculty in a manner that is appropriate for their specific circumstances.**

Including Adjunct Professors in the Senate would, in some departments, confer voting rights on matters for which adjunct professors are not required to possess competence or expertise. Because of the flexibility of the Adjunct series, Adjunct Professors have widely varying expertise throughout the UC system. By Senate Bylaw 55.A.1, this memorial will require all departments to confer voting rights on all adjunct professors for all “substantial department questions.” In some departments in the system, this would mean that a large share of voting faculty on matters such as faculty search priorities and evaluation of graduate students need never have published scholarly research in their field.

Including Adjunct Professors in the Senate would reduce the flexibility of the Adjunct series. By Bylaw 55.B.1, this memorial would require a vote of at least all tenured faculty in a department for appointment of an adjunct professor. Department chairs and divisional deans would no longer be able to enter into adjunct contracts at their discretion quickly and flexibly to advance the objectives of their unit.

Including Adjunct Professors in the Senate would concentrate power over substantial department issues in the hands of department chairs. Adjunct contracts often specify fixed terms, which this memorial would not change. The decision to seek reappointment is at the discretion of a department chair (or dean in the case of non-departmentalized schools). In most departments across the UC system, standard practice is that department chairs select nominees for adjunct positions. While Senate Bylaw 55.B.1 would (as noted) require a faculty vote on adjunct appointments if this memorial passed, this memorial would not change the authority of chairs to nominate candidates. Such a change would not be possible without further eroding the flexibility of the Adjunct series. Therefore, this memorial would confer significant new authority on department chairs to change the composition of the voting faculty in their departments, both through nomination and non-reappointment of adjunct professors. **Such concentration is a significant departure from the customary and historical practice across the UC system**, which confers control of both appointment and dismissal of voting faculty on voting faculty. Existing practice ensures that departments collectively choose their direction in research and curriculum instead of concentrating authority in any one person.

Including Adjunct Professors in the Senate would create an illusion of equity. A stated reason for expanding the Senate membership to include adjuncts is that, compared to ladder-rank or in residence faculty, adjuncts are more likely to be female or members of underrepresented minority groups (URM). Thus including adjuncts would, at first look, improve the diversity of the UC Senate faculty. However, adjunct faculty do not receive the same protections as ladder-rank and in-residence faculty and are generally not given the same (or necessarily any) resources to support their scholarship. **Meaningful improvements in faculty equity at UC will require UC to hire and invest in permanently-appointed and well-resourced URM and female faculty**, not merely reclassify a group of poorly-supported employees.

Summary. This memorial imposes a one-size-fits-all approach that does not work across the entire UC system. It will reduce the flexibility of the adjunct series, create a mismatch of voting rights and faculty competencies in many departments, and concentrate authority in department chairs. Further, while faculty diversity is an important objective, the memorial will not meaningfully diversity the UC faculty.

Rebuttal to Arguments in Opposition to the Memorial to the Regents?

“Many in these series have less than full time commitments to the University, retain significant commitments to outside institutions, or will return to the same following a brief stint on the UC faculty.”

The Memorial is focused on faculty who are appointed at more than 50% time, the typical threshold for benefits, and an acknowledgement that they cannot have a large time commitment to any other institution than to UC. Many adjunct professors are career appointees who spend decades at UC, not transients. Transients would typically be appointed in Visiting Professor roles, not Adjunct roles. By placing a floor on the percentage time appointment, this approach would include dedicated Adjunct faculty who, for example, choose an appointment of less than 100% time for childcare responsibilities or other reasons, but do not have a larger commitment to any other institution. Balance of commitments in one’s life is particularly important to our younger faculty. Generational change requires the faculty to take work-life balance into consideration; having voices from the younger generation is key to the long-term health of shared governance.

“These professionals bring important expertise to their programs, but it is not necessarily scholarly expertise.”

Members of the Adjunct series have more flexibility in their roles and often focused roles. That focus, however, does not diminish the expertise that they bring to their positions nor the importance of those roles to the faculty writ large or University as a whole. For Adjunct faculty with an emphasis on research, that research is assessed as to whether it is of the highest scholarly caliber by their departments and by the Academic Senate Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP). Similar evaluations are made for Adjunct faculty whose focus is primarily on teaching, professional competence, or service. Nonfaculty academic (NFA) job titles such as Specialist are available for individuals whose jobs might not entail the same academic rigor required of faculty.

“Meaningful improvements in faculty equity at UC will require UC to hire and invest in permanently-appointed and well-resourced URM and female faculty, not merely reclassify a group of poorly-supported employees.”

This is a noble goal, but not realistic given the model of funding for UC. State-supported full time equivalent (FTE) professorial positions grow slowly or not at all and are insufficient for the widening goals of UC. For example, in the Department of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging at UCSF, there are fewer than 10 Ladder Rank Professor FTEs (the same number for decades) but the faculty has grown to over 150 professors in the other four academic lines (In Residence, Clinical X, Health Sciences Clinical, and Adjunct) to meet the demand for clinical, teaching, research and service roles. Adjunct professors serve critical roles without which departments could not function. As such, their voices should be heard in the governance of those departments and UC writ large.

Adding Adjunct faculty to the Academic Senate would not prevent the University from providing Adjunct faculty with greater support. To the contrary, giving excluded Adjunct faculty a voice in the Senate may increase pressure to provide that support. Currently, disenfranchised Adjunct faculty do not have the ability to participate in shared governance and advocate and educate leaders about their role and needs. The Senate should not be for only the most well-resourced and supported faculty. It should be for all faculty, especially those who could benefit from the Senate’s advocacy and protections.