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April 7, 2014

TO: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Akula Venkatram, Chair
Executive Committee, Bourns College of Engineering

RE: Systemwide Review of Revised Proposal to Amend Senate Bylaw 55

The BCOE Executive Committee had no objection to version 1 of the Amendment to Senate Bylaw 55 only because it applied exclusively to a department or school in the Health Sciences. The amendment is designed to “address the disenfranchisement felt by a large and growing number of contingent faculty who support UC’s teaching mission substantially, but lack the privileges and protections of Senate membership”. The Exec. Committee observed that while teaching is an important component of the personnel file of a faculty member, other factors such as research productivity play an equally important role in the evaluation of faculty members being considered for appointments, merits, and promotions. A person whose primary responsibility is teaching is unlikely to be in position to evaluate these other factors in casting a vote in the personnel action of a faculty member. The justification offered by Health Sciences to extend voting privileges on personnel matters to non-senate faculty members has limited relevance to the BCOE. The committee is concerned that a positive vote on version 1 of the amendment might create the momentum for requesting similar voting privileges in other colleges.

We do not support version 2 of the amendment for the reasons given the previous paragraph. Once voting privileges are granted, it will be difficult to withdraw them. Removal of these privileges, for some reason, after 12 months will lead to severe morale problems in addition to the “feeling” of disenfranchisement this amendment is supposed to address. Separating the votes of Senate and non-senate faculty members in reporting them creates a situation in which some members are considered to be “more equal” than the others, and defeats the objective of enfranchising non-Senate faculty.