



Graduate Council

January 25, 2018

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Christiane Weirauch, Chair
Graduate Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christiane Weirauch".

Re: Cluster Hiring Initiative: Status and Future Plans

The Council appreciates the status updates on the cluster hiring initiative. It also agrees that stepping back and evaluating both the hiring process and the current accomplishments of this initiative are important first steps.

During the discussion, some faculty noted that additional data and a more in depth evaluation of the cluster hire outcomes would be desirable to formulate a better informed response. This evaluation would ideally include an assessment of the impact on graduate educations. Possible points of interest are: the impact on graduate student recruitment and mentoring (e.g., has the increase in faculty resulted in a greater number of grad student applications and graduate students?), classroom teaching of graduate level classes (e.g., are more graduate level courses being offered?), interdisciplinarity of graduate education (e.g., have student committees and their dissertation topics become more interdisciplinary?), and graduate student diversity (e.g., is increased faculty diversity reflected in increased graduate student diversity?). Other faculty noted that while impact on some measures can take time to materialize in a significant way, they are noticing faculty hired through clusters collaborating across departments and schools and graduate students applying to do research on cluster topics. Another faculty noted that new courses are being offered in topics related to cluster hiring. Thus, while there is anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from cluster hiring, it would helpful to collect data on related outcomes to evaluate the cluster hire process on an ongoing basis.

With regard to the three possible future models, many members of the Council rejected Model 1 for many of the reasons outlined in the Academic Senate report summarizing the outcomes of the recent senate surveys. Many members of the Council agree with components of Model 3, i.e. stepping back and reconsidering some of the clusters and the

potential of redirecting funds. However, the Council is concerned that under Model 3 funding allocated to this initiative would simply be returned to the Chancellor's office and could then be redirected to unspecified initiatives without faculty input. Should Model 3 be the ultimately selected option, the Council stresses that graduate education is one of the corner stones of this campus, but graduate funding is limited. Should funds be re-allocated from the cluster initiative, some of these resources should be devoted to graduate student funding.

Some members of the Council felt that Model 2 would be an improvement over Model 1, and would also be preferable to Model 3, while others rejected Model 2 with the concern that the initial cluster selection was not transparent and not faculty-driven. Some of the members who rejected Model 2 favored a modified version of Model 2 in which the deans involve the faculty and the department chairs in deciding the cluster hiring plans. This potential Model 4 would retain unfilled FTEs, but allocate them in an interdisciplinary, transparent, and faculty-driven process. The Council discussed a process in which two or more department chairs, even from different colleges, could propose a cluster hire that can allow them to establish a new but permanent interdepartmental collaboration or interdisciplinary program. The proposal should emphasize potential research and educational impact (such as the development of new graduate courses) as well as impact on graduate student recruitment and faculty diversity. The proposal should first be approved and fully supported by the dean(s) before being submitted to the Chancellor. Additional incentives might be funding for classroom technology and at least one graduate student research or teaching assistantship directly related to the new collaboration/program. Overall, the Council feels that Model 2 suitably modified to incorporate a more transparent, faculty-driven process (such as the proposed Model 4) is more likely to be successful.