PROPOSAL TO MOVE THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL BACK TO THE SENATE

TO BE ADOPTED:

Approved by the Committee on Academic Personnel: November 20, 2006
Approved by the Committee on Planning and Budget: November 17, 2006
Endorsed by the Advisory Committee: December 11, 2006
The Return of a Wandering Committee:  
The Academic Senate and CAP

i. Background

Following the best principles of shared governance within the University of California, both the Administration and the Academic Senate, through its Committee on Academic Personnel [CAP], review all personnel actions including appointments, merit increases and promotions. This system is one of the distinctive hallmarks of the UC administrative style, and it has long served all parties well. Nevertheless, the fact remains that at Riverside, this vital Senate committee – rather anomalously -- operates not out of the Senate, but rather out of Administration’s own Academic Personnel Office and with support from the staff there.

This situation has long made some faculty members uneasy. At the end of the 1997-98 year, the members of CAP themselves confessed that “the UCR Academic Personnel review process is perceived by many faculty as being organized and administered principally by the Administration.” Therefore, it was in their view scarcely surprising that “the UCR faculty perceive the Academic Personnel review process to be one that is largely an Administration process.”

Further compounding the uneasiness is the fact that all other Divisions of the UC Academic Senate have moved to correct this unfortunate perception by assuming full responsibility for the care and maintenance of their CAPs.

The last division to take full control of its CAP was that at UC Davis, and its deliberations in 1999-2000 are highly instructive. The process there began when the Academic Senate charged a Special Committee to investigate the following:

how do Academic Personnel practices at Davis compare with those at the other eight general campuses? Are there best practices from other campuses that could be used to improve the effectiveness of the Academic Personnel process at Davis?

When the answer came back that “at other campuses, CAP is more independent of the Administration than that at UC Davis,” the Division began focusing on the committee’s relationship with the Administration.

The Special Committee’s final report underscored that “we believe that CAP needs to be the voice of the faculty in the personnel process.” Yet although CAP “is, first and foremost, a committee of the Academic Senate,” the Special Committee found “widespread concern that the Committee on Academic Personnel and the Office of the Vice-Provost work too closely together.” Therefore, while it hymned the benefits of “a cordial working relationship” between the Administration and CAP, the Special Committee called for CAP to be “moved to a space contiguous with the remainder of the Academic Senate offices.”

This move, the Special committee conceded, was “largely symbolic,” but it was necessary to “reinforce the notion that CAP is a committee of the Academic Senate, that it offers advice to the Chancellor on behalf of the Academic Senate, and that it is responsible to the Academic
Senate.”3 The Davis Division formally accepted these recommendations late in 2000, and after thorough consultations with the Administrations, its CAP made its move into the Senate in time for the Fall 2001 personnel reviews.

Given this precedent -- and many others within the system -- it is not at all surprising that when UC Merced recently came to establish its first committees, it took care to make sure that its CAP was located within, and administered by, the Senate.

Consequently UC Riverside is the last outlier in the system. In July 2006, the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Advancement revived CAP’s 1997-1998 report, emphasizing the fact that “all other campuses have the CAP staff within the Academic Senate office.”4

Indeed, the logic for moving CAP is so persuasive that both EVC Wartella and Vice Provost Lord have agreed in principle to cooperate in the shift -- if the Senate should wish to do so. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the time is now ripe to bring CAP back to its original administrative home -- the Senate.

Consider the first report in 1959 from the Division’s new Budget Committee, the predecessor of CAP. All personnel actions in those earlier days proceeded from the Departments and through the Deans to the Budget Committee which held its own deliberations and composed its own reports without outside assistance before sending them onto the Chancellor’s office. But the 1966-67 Annual Report of the Budget Committee reveals that in the interests of “improved efficiency,” this vital committee’s “supporting operations … were transferred almost wholly to the Chancellor’s office.”5

Hence, in reassuming full control of CAP, the Academic Senate would be in no small part welcoming back a wandering committee. In pondering this move, it is worth recalling that the initial 1959 report admitted that the UC process was guaranteed to produce a peculiarly thick personnel file. By way of consolation, the committee members observed that:

> Its virtue is the range of advice provided and the safeguard this constitutes both for the candidate and the University. Your Committee knows of no other system which offers the same degree of protection to both parties. 6

Consequently in the current effort to bring CAP back to the Senate, we need to thank the administration for its long and faithful stewardship of this all-important committee and for its willingness to acquiesce to this transfer.

**ii. The Proposal**

It is proposed that the Academic Senate take over responsibility for CAP’s support. If the Division approves this action in the February meeting, then the Senate Chair will immediately begin negotiations with the Administration. Ideally, after extensive discussions -- and staff training -- over the Spring, the actual shift will take place in the Summer so that CAP will be settled into its new quarters by the beginning of the Fall term.
Currently all faculty files, after their preparation in the department, are routed from the appropriate Dean’s office to the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel (VPAP) in the Surge Building. There the CAP Analyst and a 50% Administrative Assistant [AA] are responsible for scheduling all CAP meetings and all *ad hoc* meetings as well as typing all reports. The files themselves are kept in a secure storage room protected with “state of the art” touchpad entry system in the VPAP’s suite of offices, which also contain the offices of the CAP Analyst and AA. CAP’s actual conference room is currently located in the Surge Building but outside of the VPAP suite.

If this proposal passes, the Senate will assume the following duties with regard to CAP:

- Tracking and receiving all files from the Academic Personnel Office;
- Appointing and scheduling all *ad hoc* committee meetings; preparing files for *ad hoc* review, and coordinating *ad hoc* reports and correspondence;
- Preparing files for review by CAP;
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate meeting space for CAP meetings;
- Preparing the CAP annual report and other related correspondence (i.e. CAP requests for information on personnel files, CAP recommendations for changes to the CALL, etc.)
- Forwarding of CAP minutes to the AP office for administrative review.

Admittedly the development of a robust and secure “eFile” system will simplify the problem of moving personnel files around campus. Until that happy day, we will move the files around as the other campuses do – the old-fashioned way via a special courier service.

Given the critical importance of ensuring that this vital committee continues to function smoothly, this move is *only* possible if the Senate can receive the following additional staff, office support and office space:

- One full time staff member at the level of a Principal Analyst
- One fulltime Administrative Assistant II/III
- One time start up funds of $7,000 and permanent S & E funds of $10,000 (related to staff support)
- One time additional start-up funds of $5,000 for miscellaneous purchases for CAP (laptop, projector, alarm pads, etc)
- Three additional offices, two for these staff members and a third for ad hoc committee meetings
- The two staff offices must be secured with a touchpad alarm system

Precisely where these offices will be located is of course impossible to tell at this time. But there is one constant in this discussion -- the CAP offices should ideally be adjacent to the Senate offices. If space can be found in the University Office Building [UOB], the shift will only require three offices; CAP itself can meet in one of the Senate’s two conference rooms. But if there is no room in UOB, then the shift will require three offices as well as a conference room.
Quite simply, absent these levels of staffing, office support and space, the Senate cannot possibly assume responsibility for CAP without degrading this committee’s currently high levels of efficiency.

This new attention on CAP has also thrown into stark relief the increasingly obvious problems about staffing this committee. Not at all surprisingly, it is exceedingly difficult to persuade faculty members, who are themselves busy making their own merits, to serve on a committee that met in 2005-06 for a total of 47 times for some three to four hours in addition to at least as many hours outside of the committee spent reviewing files and writing reports. When set against these formidable demands, a summer 1/9th, or a course release and a 1/18th, seems trivial indeed. Thus a significant number of CAP members decline to serve their full three year term. For example, in the four years between 2001 and 2004, six of the thirty six CAP members only served one year, and three bailed out after two years. In all, only 66% of the CAP members in these years actually served their full term.

Other campuses have noticeable higher levels of compensation. At Irvine, for example, CAP members receive a two course release and $6,000. Admittedly on other campuses, the official compensation is more modest, but these seemed to be linked to further course releases arranged at the department level. Therefore, it is now high time to ensure a steady flow of ready and willing committee members by augmenting the compensation for CAP members to a course release and a 1/9th.

iii. Conclusion

To be sure, the task at hand is far from trivial; in fact it represents arguably the most important development in the Division’s history over the past few decades. Fortunately, in this delicate process of bringing CAP back to the Senate, we can look for support from the Administration and from the other Divisions across the system. In executing this shift, we will not only bring Riverside into line with the other UC campuses, but we will also keep the faith with our colleagues who nearly a half a century ago established the Academic Senate, and the predecessor of CAP within it.

1 http://senate.ucr.edu/agenda/981105/pdf/capreporttext.pdf
2 Brief Response to the Charge, Davis Division,
3 Special Committee Report on Personnel Processes Reform, Davis Division, 10 July 2000
4 Ad Hoc Committee Report on Faculty Advancement, Riverside Division, 5 July 2006
5 Annual Report of the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, Riverside Division, 25 May 1967
6 Annual Report of the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, Riverside Division, 28 May 1959