



Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

900 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92521-0101

November 6, 2017

To: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

cc: Kim Wilcox, Chancellor
Ameae Walker, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel
Deans of the Colleges and Schools

Fr: Cynthia K. Larive, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Re: Cluster Hiring Initiative: Status and Future Plans

Dear Professor Rodriguez and Members of the Academic Senate:

I write to provide an update on the status of the cluster hiring initiative and to start our promised conversation about planning for the future of the initiative after the current 2017-18 hiring cycle. I appreciate the work already done by the senate to survey and synthesize faculty perspectives on the hiring effort. This information has helped my office think about ways we might move forward that would be beneficial for everyone. I look forward to discussing future models for cluster hiring with the Senate Executive Council, preferably at our next scheduled meeting on November 27.

Accomplishments To-Date

Table 1 summarizes our hiring efforts since 2013. During this time, UCR has hired 309 senate faculty members according to the Human Resources Data Warehouse (HRDW), which includes administrators with underlying faculty appointments. Of those 309 hires, 68 have been hired through cluster searches, 200 through departmental searches, and 41 through search waivers (TOE, partner hire, etc.). During this time, UCR also has had 140 separations making the net gain in senate faculty members 169. The total senate faculty headcount as of September 2017 is 842. This number is very likely to go up for the current cycle as it does not take into account pending 2016-17 searches, of which there are currently 16.

The annual percentages of new hires who identify as women and underrepresented minorities have also grown noticeably since 2013. From 2013-15 UCR hired approximately 10-13% URM faculty and 32-37% women faculty annually. In the 2015-16 hiring cycle, our new faculty hires included 21.8% underrepresented minorities and 34.7% women. In the 2016-17 cycle, we have seen those numbers improve even more: 22.8% underrepresented minorities and 43.9% women (notwithstanding pending hires). The 2016-17 percentages align very closely with the proportions of underrepresented minorities and women in the national availability pools across the research areas representing our searches.

Summary of the Current Hiring Program

In terms of process, cluster hiring is very similar to the departmental hiring but with some key differences. Table 2 provides a detailed comparison. Cluster hiring begins with each academic dean nominating a steering committee member (usually an associate dean) to represent the school. This steering committee, chaired by the Associate Provost, reviews and revises the cluster hiring process at the beginning of each hiring cycle. For each active cluster search, the dean of the lead college nominates a search committee chair to the Associate Provost. Upon appointment, the search chair collaborates with steering committee members from the participating colleges to nominate a search committee that is appropriately representative of the units into which the new faculty member may be hired. This interdisciplinary committee is appointed by the Associate Provost and then proceeds through the hiring process: writing an advertisement, building a diverse pool, reviewing applications, and recommending a short list in consultation with potential home departments. At this point, before the Associate Provost reviews the shortlist, the committee chair also confirms that the potential home departments have appropriate space to house a successful candidate. The remainder of the process proceeds much like a departmental search, aside from the need for the search committee to ensure that interested departments remain engaged and have opportunities to participate in and provide feedback on the campus visits.

More broadly, the current approach to cluster hiring exhibits multiple benefits worth mentioning. Foremost, it continues building capacity in high priority research areas previously identified through a competitive campus-wide peer review process. The current approach also emphasizes interdisciplinarity in the hiring process, which helps position our campus to address the complex problems facing modern society and makes us more competitive for extramural funding sources that place increasingly greater emphasis on interdisciplinary teams. As mentioned above, cluster hiring also has helped to further diversify our faculty, and should continue to do so, although departmental hiring has contributed to our recent progress in this area as well. And last, we have made many outstanding hires through the cluster initiative, some of whom report that the initiative itself helped to attract them to UCR.

Remaining Resources

A budget for 139 cluster positions across 34 thematic areas originally was established in 2015. Subsequently, three clusters utilized campus incentives (now expired) to hire candidates from the UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, increasing the total number of cluster positions to 142. With 68 cluster hires completed, 16 positions currently pending, and 11 positions approved for searches in 2017-18, there should be at least 47 unfilled positions remaining after the current hiring cycle.

Persistent Challenges

Collectively, the campus has undertaken multiple efforts to understand how the campus community, and in particular our faculty colleagues, have been affected by cluster hiring. The senate has conducted two surveys and provided helpful summaries. My office has reviewed these summaries and has met with search committee chairs, department chairs, senate leadership, faculty and deans. Based on all this feedback, I offer four main challenges that I believe we have not yet addressed effectively through the

current approach to cluster hiring. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather these are the key issues that are most in need of attention as we move forward.

First, there is concern that cluster initiative is not adequately aligned with departmental hiring plans and teaching needs. Part of this is by design: the initiative is deliberately both research-based and interdisciplinary. Furthermore, cluster hiring has proceeded in parallel with an even larger number of departmental hires that tend to be better aligned with departmental plans and needs. But despite our focus on implementing procedures and oversight to enhance the role of departments in the cluster searches, there is still a strong consensus that better alignment is needed.

Second, some cluster committees have struggled to reach consensus on candidates, both within their own deliberations and with potential home departments. Part of this is a welcome challenge: too many highly qualified candidates in the applicant pools. But there also have been cases where departmental preferences have differed so substantially from committee preferences that searches have failed despite the high caliber candidates brought to campus. This leads to frustration among all involved and delays the arrival of the fresh ideas and energy that new hires bring to our campus.

Third, we must acknowledge that the desire for cross-departmental collaboration in the current cluster hiring process can be at odds with the realities that our campus remains largely department-based and that our resources are limited. While most search committee members have brought with them a spirit of cooperation to the committees, it is sometimes hard to escape the tendency of faculty to put our departmental interests first. This tension has been another source of frustration that in some cases has undermined the search process and in others has caused some committee members to become detached from the search.

Fourth, cluster hiring entails additional work beyond the demands of departmental hiring. Each search involves more approvals, more stakeholders, and more candidates from a wider variety of backgrounds. The large and diverse candidate pools are welcome, but generally it is more challenging to effectively manage a cluster search and more time consuming to participate at any level. This also contributes to frustration with the process and reduces the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Some Possible Future Models

With the preceding as background, I offer some possible paths forward that would address our persistent challenges.

Model 1 retains the current cluster hiring program and the unfilled positions, but introduces additional changes to make the process easier to implement. Benefits of this approach include consistency and the relative ease of implementing marginal rather than wholesale changes. However, we have already made multiple adjustments to improve the process over the past two years, so it may be difficult to find significant remaining opportunities. Recent marginal changes also have proved to be more confusing than anticipated for faculty and staff running the searches who naturally tend to rely on past experience as a guide rather than combing through new policy announcements.

Model 2 retains the cluster themes and the unfilled positions but requires deans to submit proposals to my office for cluster positions as part of their college hiring plans. Approved positions are then allocated to departments and run as departmental searches. This model has several advantages. It continues to build critical mass in previously identified interdisciplinary research areas, it has better alignment with departmental plans and college needs including teaching, and it should be easier to implement because hiring is accomplished through the familiar departmental approach. This model also should be more responsive to our space constraints because it is more closely integrated with department plans.

Model 3 involves foregoing some or all the unfilled positions and redirecting the resources to initiatives that may or may not be focused on growing the faculty. This model is potentially responsive to some concerns, expressed through the senate surveys, that the cluster themes should be reconsidered. In this case we might close some existing clusters and open up others or shift more resources to the deans for departmental hiring. It is also potentially responsive to a variety of other campus needs, in which case proposals for the remaining resources could be submitted through the annual campus budget process. However, many of our clusters are building teams of researchers who complement one another's specific expertise, so stopping short of the original hiring goals in these areas could leave them with incomplete and thus less effective teams. It is also inconsistent with our stated goal to add 300 net new faculty, and with past assurances that cluster positions would not be lost if hiring took longer than expected.

Thank you again for your recent efforts to help assess the cluster hiring initiative. I look forward to meeting with the senate and other stakeholders to discuss the way forward, and to reaching a resolution in the next few months.

Table 1: Senate faculty hiring summary, October 2013 - September 2017

Department	College	Senate Faculty Headcounts					Senate Faculty Hires Oct-13 - Sep-17				Separations	Net Change
		Sep-17	Oct-16	Oct-15	Oct-14	Oct-13	Total	Cluster	Dept.	Waivers		
Bioengineering	BCOE	15	12	12	11	12	5	1	4	0	2	3
Chemical/Environ. Engineering	BCOE	19	20	17	17	16	8	3	4	1	5	3
Computer Science & Engineering	BCOE	32	31	25	25	23	12	4	8	0	3	9
Electrical & Computer Eng	BCOE	29	28	25	23	23	8	4	4	0	2	6
Mechanical Engineering	BCOE	23	22	20	17	16	8	2	6	0	1	7
Anthropology	CHASS	15	15	16	14	15	7	2	5	0	7	0
Art	CHASS	7	6	6	7	8	1	0	1	0	2	-1
Comp Lit & Foreign Languages	CHASS	13	14	15	13	15	2	0	1	1	4	-2
Creative Writing	CHASS	16	16	14	15	11	8	1	4	3	3	5
Dance	CHASS	11	8	8	8	5	7	3	4	0	1	6
Economics	CHASS	22	19	17	20	20	10	0	10	0	8	2
English	CHASS	28	28	28	28	26	5	2	2	1	3	2
Ethnic Studies	CHASS	11	15	14	13	13	6	3	1	2	8	-2
Gender & Sexuality Studies	CHASS	11	9	9	8	6	3	1	1	1	-2	5
Hispanic Studies	CHASS	9	7	7	9	8	4	0	3	1	3	1
History	CHASS	32	31	29	29	29	7	1	5	1	4	3
History of Art	CHASS	11	11	11	11	10	2	0	1	1	1	1
Media & Cultural Studies	CHASS	18	15	13	13	11	4	1	0	3	-3	7
Music	CHASS	11	12	11	10	10	2	0	1	1	1	1
Philosophy	CHASS	18	18	16	17	16	3	0	3	0	1	2
Political Science	CHASS	24	24	22	17	18	11	1	8	2	5	6
Psychology	CHASS	39	39	34	33	31	9	4	3	2	1	8
Religious Studies	CHASS	8	7	6	5	6	4	0	4	0	2	2
Sociology	CHASS	16	16	18	20	21	5	0	1	4	10	-5
Theatre	CHASS	11	9	10	9	8	4	0	4	0	1	3
Biochemistry	CNAS	15	13	11	13	14	5	0	5	0	4	1
Biology	CNAS	19	20	18	21	21	4	1	3	0	6	-2
Botany and Plant Sciences	CNAS	34	34	30	28	28	13	2	7	4	7	6
Cell Biology & Neuroscience	CNAS	22	20	18	17	16	6	3	3	0	0	6
Chemistry	CNAS	34	34	34	30	29	11	2	8	1	6	5
Earth Sciences	CNAS	19	18	15	13	11	9	0	9	0	1	8
Entomology	CNAS	25	27	27	24	23	9	2	6	1	7	2
Environmental Sciences	CNAS	18	17	16	13	16	8	2	6	0	6	2
Mathematics	CNAS	27	27	24	23	22	11	1	10	0	6	5
Nematology	CNAS	5	5	4	3	4	2	0	2	0	1	1
Physics and Astronomy	CNAS	39	40	33	30	31	15	5	8	2	7	8
Plant Pathology & Microbiology	CNAS	19	18	17	14	15	6	1	4	1	2	4
Statistics	CNAS	12	12	10	8	7	5	2	3	0	0	5
Graduate School of Education	GSOE	30	30	20	22	21	19	5	9	5	10	9
School of Business	SOBA	32	32	32	27	23	17	1	16	0	8	9
Biomedical Sciences	SOM	18	17	20	21	15	9	2	6	1	6	3
Center for Healthy Communities	SOM	6	6	5	0	0	1	0	1	0	-5	6
Internal Medicine	SOM	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	-1	2
Neuroscience	SOM	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	-1	2
OB/GYN	SOM	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
School of Public Policy	SPP	14	11	5	1	0	11	6	4	1	-3	14
		842	817	745	701	673	309	68	200	41	140	169
	Mean	18.3	17.8	16.2	15.2	14.6	6.7	1.5	4.3	0.9	3.0	3.7
	Std. Dev.	9.8	10.0	9.1	8.9	8.7	4.3	1.6	3.3	1.5	3.5	3.6

Notes:

Data source: HR/AP Data Warehouse, ACAPER, AP Recruit and College AP Dean's Staff (dm: 9/20/2017).

Faculty with joint appointments are counted based on home department affiliation.

Separations are calculated as [Hired - Net Change], so negative values imply net transfers into the unit.

Recent departmental name changes are not reflected here, given historical nature of the data.

Table 2: Hiring process chart showing unique cluster hiring elements.

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	Nominate Steering Comm Members	Deans
	Evaluate Cluster Hiring Process	Steering Comm & Assoc Provost
	Select Committee Chair	Dean or Dept Chair, Steering Comm & Assoc Provost
	Send Chair Appointment Letter	Assoc Provost
	Reach out to Supporting HR Analyst	Committee Chair
	Select Committee Members	Steering Comm & Committee Chair
	Approve Committee Members	Assoc Provost
	Send Committee Letters/Update Web	Special Assistant
	Chair Meetings with Associate Provost	Committee Chairs & Assoc Provost
	Attend Diversity Training	Committee Members
	Develop Recruitment Plan	Committee
	Write Advertisement	Committee
	Upload Ad & Recruitment Plan to AP Recruit	Committee Chair & HR Analyst
	Update Ads on Web	Special Assistant
	Build Candidate Pool	Committee & Departments
	Review Applications	Committee
	First Round Interviews	Committee
	Shortlist Candidates	Committee
	Consult Depts on Shortlisted Candidates	Committee Chair
	Confirm Space for Candidates	Committee Chair
	Approve Shortlist	Dean, Dept Chair, EEAA, VPAP, Assoc Provost
	Communicate/Consult on Campus Visit Schedule with Departments	Committee Chair
	Schedule Campus Visits	Committee Chair and Department Analyst
	Submit Campus Visit Information	Department Analyst
	Update Campus Visit Information on Web	Special Assistant
	Consult Depts on Final Candidates	Committee Chair
	Recommend Candidate(s) for Hiring	Committee
	Vote to Hire Candidate(s)	Home Department(s)
	Negotiate Offer	Department/Committee Chair
	Approve Hire	Dean/Provost (depending on level)

Activities in **bold** are for cluster searches only. All other activities are part of both departmental and cluster searches. Some activities occur in both departmental and cluster searches, but include additional responsible parties. For those activities, the parties that are only included in cluster searches are listed in **bold**.