



OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502
TELEPHONE: (530) 752-2231

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Virginia Hinshaw
Provost

Barbara Horwitz
Vice Provost Academic Personnel

Connie Melendy
Assistant Vice Provost Academic Personnel

RE: Multi-Departmental Hiring Guidelines

Dear Colleagues:

I have circulated to Senate standing committee chairs the table designated “Initiative Recruitment Overview” dated April 4, 2006, and draft exhibits to Academic Personnel Manual UCD –500 with sample checklists for multi-department and home/lead department initiative recruitments. The responses from Senate committees were discussed on May 15, 2006, by the Senate Executive Council, which has reviewed and endorsed this letter. In addition, the initiative process has been discussed within several standing committees plus the special committees on Faculty Personnel Issues and the Executive Committee Chairs. I have received specific comments from the Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, Committee on Faculty Welfare, Committee on Planning and Budget, Committee on Academic Personnel, the Executive Committees of the School of Education and the College of Biological Sciences, and from a couple of individual members of the Executive Council. I enclose the committee comments.

At the outset, we recognize that the move to academic planning via the initiative process is an evolving endeavor for the campus. We acknowledge your efforts to work with the Senate to construct flexible approaches to the many questions that are raised by the initiative process (both identified and unidentified). Our goal is to coordinate the administration’s expressed desire for flexibility with the voting rights of faculty to manage the membership of their departments and the historic role of departments as the key to the maintenance of quality, both in the appointment of members of the faculty and as the principal locus for academic planning.

All of the comments express a concern about the relationship between the initiative process in general and the role of departments. Specifically, several comments note that the initiative process does not take into account departmental academic plans in assigning and recruiting faculty positions. The Undergraduate Council notes that the initiative proposals may become the predominant mode of hiring on the campus and expresses its concern that “the consequent de-emphasis of departmental needs as determined by academic plans, anticipated retirements, and student demand for courses within

particular undergraduate degree programs could have detrimental, even disastrous, effects on the quality of undergraduate education on our campus.” The Undergraduate Council adds that teaching needs will not be adequately addressed in the selection of new faculty if interdepartmental initiative hiring becomes prevalent, since most courses and majors are offered by departments. The Committee on Planning and Budget opines that hiring issues are addressed too late in the initiative approval process and recommends that initiative proposals themselves should address hiring details, including the location of the home department of faculty members recruited into initiative positions.

In a similar vein, the Graduate Council suggests that, “the initiative process itself should incorporate consideration of graduate education at the beginning of the search and recruitment process.” The Graduate Council adds that, “If our academic planning is to be successful, our new hires have to have appropriately prepared graduate students who are working on their research area—our plans should include sending out graduates trained in these important new topics.”

The Committee on Faculty Welfare notes the potential replacement of departmental academic plans with initiative proposals and states:

The implicit belief is that interdisciplinary work, and cooperation by faculty across departments, will not occur unless faculty are hired by search committees that span disciplines, with the participation of centers or institutes, and, in some cases, with the joint participation of multiple departments. This belief seems to be unsupported by any factual evidence. In fact, interdisciplinary work happens because of individual faculty interests and cooperation, not because the administration plans it, and the best work neither requires nor follows from such intervention by the administration.

Similar sentiments about the initiative process are expressed by many others.

At least one commentator pointed to the benefits of the cluster hire concept by stating that “the initiative cluster hires have occurred mainly in departments whose faculty members are frequently oriented towards the solution of problems as opposed to individual disciplinary research. . . . These faculty are somewhat more concerned with how that individual will help the department achieve a solution to a complex problem involving more than one academic/scientist, and probably involving different disciplines.” This individual adds that, “Proposers of cluster hires are likely to be more interested in putting together groups of faculty that can work in a loose fashion toward some common aim. Cluster hires are thus more likely to be found in some types of departments rather than in others.”

Clearly the initiative proposal and FTE allocation process needs to be coordinated with departmental academic planning, and *vice versa*. All of this suggests that at the outset proposals for initiative positions should address the role of the position with respect to teaching responsibilities and indicate the relationship between the initiative proposal and campus academic plans. In this context, the proponents of initiative/cluster hires can and should work with potentially affected departments in the planning stage both to assure departmental participation in the proposal and to develop in advance plans for recruitment of suitable faculty to fill the positions.

We have some questions regarding the precise status of the proposed exhibits to UCD 500. Existing UCD-500 contains policies directed at recruitments initiated by departments. As the Planning and Budget Committee points out, the proposed new guidelines “are not about initiative hires, but about interdepartment or multi-department searches/hires and the title should reflect that fact. The guidelines are needed for non-initiative, multi-department searches, and are not needed for department based, initiative hires.” We believe that existing campus search guidelines are adequate to cover searches for initiative driven positions that are assigned to a single department (and perhaps searches where the percentage appointment to more than one department is specified in advance). We anticipate that the campus administration will work with the Senate in the development of formal policy, and not just informal guidelines, for conducting searches that involve more than a single department.

Clearly, existing campus policies do not provide adequate guidance for recruitments that involve more than one department. A campus policy for multi-departmental searches, whether part of an initiative or otherwise, is required. The Executive Council applauds the effort reflected in the proposed guidelines to recognize the primacy of departmental participation in the recruitment process. We concur with requirements that in the case of a search involving more than a single department that

- at least two members of potentially affected departments participate on the search committee,
- that potentially affected departments have a role in formulating the position description and search plan, and
- that an appointment may be made only into departments that have participated in the search.

We also concur in the approach of the current guidelines that call for the presentation of a slate of candidates to each potential home department. Note, however, that, while departmental input is important in identifying candidates to be interviewed, the provision of the guidelines calling for departmental recommendations regarding the suitability of candidates for appointment should follow interviews of the candidates and be incorporated in the final hiring decision, rather than as a recommendation of potential interviewees.

The Committee on Planning and Budget reiterates its position that “a lead department should be identified in nearly all searches that involve multiple departments, and that the guidelines should state this expectation. Exception to this policy should be made by the Provost only after justification, specific to the given position, is advanced.” I add, consistent with the view of Planning and Budget mentioned above, that if a search without a lead department is contemplated, that fact should be noted in the original initiative proposal.

The Committee on Planning and Budget also points to the fact that new administrative entities and administrative positions are being created as initiative steering committees with initiative directors, which was not discussed during the initiative proposal and planning process. We do not anticipate the need for guidelines that interpose an undefined initiative steering committee or initiative director (both of which involve phantom academic units that are not approved by any campus process) on to departmental searches. To the extent that a position is allocated to a department in response to an initiative proposal, the departmental search plan and recruitment are subject to oversight by the deans in order to assure that the position being recruited, and the ultimate hire, are consistent with the purpose for which the position is created and allocated. Deans are, of course, free to consult with an initiative

steering group in allocating positions and in developing search plans. This seems to be in accord with almost all search plans for initiative driven faculty positions and positions reserved by deans to match initiative allocations.

A principal concern with the draft guidelines, as outlined in detail by the Committee on Faculty Welfare, is the absence of provisions dealing with final decision making when multiple departments have a different opinion regarding the best candidates. Faculty Welfare asserts that a competition for positions will provide negative incentives with respect to quality. A department that is hungry for positions that are available to it only through the initiative process may be willing to accept faculty members who are rejected by others in order to obtain the positions. A potential recruit may be in a position to negotiate reduced teaching loads or other benefits by playing one department against another for the position allocation. For these reasons, the Executive Council believes that recruitment guidelines must require specificity at the outset regarding the nature of the appointment, requirements as to teaching and other general service to the University, and the percentage of the appointment to identified departments.

The Committee on Academic Personnel raises a number of questions that arise from its experience with the evaluation of faculty who currently hold appointments in more than one department. CAP's concerns involve the appropriate evaluation of creative activities across departments, evaluation of teaching effectiveness across departments, soliciting appropriate outside evaluation letters, the additional complexity of creating *ad hoc* committees that include membership from relevant departments, the possibility of ineffective evaluation of marginal faculty because of the lack of accountability to a single department, and the possibility that faculty without identification with a home department will suffer a loss of mentoring and participation in the academic life of the campus that is organized through departments. CAP recommends "a review of personnel policies with attention to articulation of a clear personnel process for cross departmental faculty by members of the Senate and University Personnel administrators be undertaken concurrently with this initiative process."

In conclusion, the initiative process and accompanying multi-department and cluster hires raise significant policy questions that should be resolved before the absence of clear policies presents significant problems in both the appointment and subsequent evaluation of faculty appointments. The Executive Council calls for a joint administration/Senate task-force to development recruitment procedures that encompass recruitments that involve more than a single department

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Simmons
Professor of Law
Chair of the Davis Division
of the Academic Senate

Elec. C: Members of the Executive Council