

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Emily Carter
Murphy Hall

Dear Prof. Carter,

We write as the combined chairs of UCLA's Faculty Executive Committees to express our profound concern about policy, communication, and transparency around issues of searches and hiring of ladder track faculty, and especially the replacements of FTEs after retirements or other losses of faculty. We are cc'ing Chancellor Gene Block, Mike Levine, VC for Academic Personnel, and Shane White, chair of the Academic Senate, to keep them informed of our thoughts on these issues.

Specifically, we have been hearing from our deans that it is your office which is holding up approval for searches, and from the VC for AP we have been told that the deans control approval. From some of our deans, we have been told that all communication about these issues with the office of the EVC/P has been primarily verbal, and that the only searches currently authorized for 20/21 are carryovers approved last year that weren't concluded on schedule. In numerous of our schools, requests for searches have been declined at this time.

One of the first things we are looking for is transparency in communication with all stakeholders in this process, and specifically with the faculty. The UC is built on shared governance, and we feel that the question of searches and replacing lost FTEs is central to the University's mission and to the academic programs over which senate faculty have authority. Senate faculty must have a say in long term planning, even, or perhaps most strenuously, in the worst of times. With multiple retirements in multiple departments we are worried about maintaining ladder faculty strength. Furthermore, given the momentous social movements of 2020 and the repeated insistence by UCLA's administrators that anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion are central to our mission in the 21st century, the importance of hiring new, full time, tenured and tenure track faculty from a wide and diverse pool is absolutely vital.

The UCLA FECs need to hear directly and in writing from the Chancellor and the EVC/P that ladder faculty strength and AEDI initiatives will not be sacrificed in coming budgetary decisions in relation to COVID-19 and the economic devastation the pandemic has wrought on American higher education. Those of us who were at UCLA before and after the Great Recession of more than a decade ago remember that slowing/stopping the replacement of departing and retired faculty had a deleterious impact on diversity, and that opportunities to change the composition of the faculty to reflect the student body could and will stall out under similar austerity.

We list here just a few of the reasons that we are adamantly opposed to balancing the budget in coming years by cutting back on replacement hires, or shifting FTEs to soft monies for visiting lecturers and adjuncts. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Losing several colleagues in a particular area group within a department has a structural impact on majority votes, quorums, ad hoc committee letters and their qualitative assessments for merit and promotion.
- Retiring colleagues are often among the most experienced and knowledgeable leaders in departments. Without them being able to serve on executive committees or other leadership roles, that labor falls on the mid-level faculty disproportionately.
- Those are the same faculty who will be teaching core courses, and handling more advising. Their research trajectories will be severely impacted, and this is in addition to service load imbalances exacerbated by recent initiative to decrease the service load of faculty with dependents.
- The new budget model assumes an increasing reliance on activity-based funding. These activities require faculty administration and curricular support, functions overwhelmingly performed by senate faculty due to labor agreements with represented teaching faculty. Both the financial stability and the research commitment of the university assumes there will be sufficient senate faculty to carry out this work.
- Without FTE replenishment and indeed, expansion of senate faculty ranks beyond present levels, we will not have the manpower to maintain research outcomes and expand academic activities

One of the primary reasons we are facing such a raft of retirements all at once is because faculty were incentivized last spring by central campus, through offers of shorter application periods, without providing any safety nets for departments. While the retirements bring an influx of soft FTE monies, the non-roster personnel that the soft-FTE pay for cannot sit on graduate committees, sit on service committees, and do not strongly maintain our ability to recruit top students. Attempts to increase diversity through visiting lecturer and adjunct hires will create a racialized two-tiered caste system abhorrent to our community. In other words, we must maintain faculty strength through this brutal period if we hope to remain a great university and to become an even more just and inclusive one.

For clarity and transparency, we ask that you begin by doing the following in a timely manner:

- Release a written policy about searches and hiring
- Make public a list of all searches approved by the EVC/P's office in the last six months
- Issue regular, monthly updates on searches and hiring.

To conclude, we feel that the University of California and UCLA made a terrible decision in the last recession to simply cancel new searches and hires, and that the choice to do so reduced our competitiveness and AEDI efforts. The imperatives of shared governance and our hopes for a stronger, more inclusive, and diverse UCLA demand that we as faculty are included in all decision making from here moving forward.

Thank you,
Chairs of the UCLA Faculty Executive Committees