

March 24, 2021

To: Ladder Faculty and Lecturer SOE Series

From: Dana Mastro, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel
Ruth Finkelstein, Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Covid-19 Impact and use of the 'special steps' (Assistant Professor/
Lecturer PSOE V & Associate Professor/LSOE IV) in the upcoming review
cycle

As the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis continues to unfold, our campus remains committed to adapting policy and practice to address faculty need. Accordingly, after consultation, we are broadening existing practice regarding use of the "special steps" of Assistant Professor/Lecturer PSOE V and Associate Professor/LSOE IV to include cases in which a faculty member's research progress has been temporarily delayed as a result of COVID-19.

As stated in Red Binder I-37, one justification for use of the special steps in advancement cases is "when a member of the faculty shows evidence of work that is likely to lead to promotion in the near future when completed, but whose established record of accomplishment has not yet attained sufficient strength to warrant promotion." Impacts of the pandemic that have slowed the progress of a faculty member's otherwise successful and promising research trajectory may make advancement to a special step appropriate under Red Binder 1-37. This use of the special steps is further justified by APM 210-18 b (2) & (3), which states that the special steps can be used "in exceptional situations and with proper justification."

Because the special steps are overlapping with the first step of the next rank (Associate Professor I and Professor I) and have nearly the same salary, use of this step will allow faculty members to continue to earn full step advances, when appropriate, if they need more time before a career review or promotion. Advancement and promotion from Assistant Professor V normally would lead to Associate Professor II. Advancement from Associate Professor V normally would lead to Professor II, therefore maintaining the faculty member's overall career progress.

The use of special steps for this purpose does not imply a deficiency in the record and is not considered as such by reviewing agencies, including CAP. Instead, these steps allow faculty to maintain their forward trajectory in step and salary, as they finalize work that is likely to lead to promotion in the near future. If advanced to the special step the expectations regarding time at step, as stated in Red Binder I-37, would apply.