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UC SANTA BARBARA

Academic Personnel

Fall 2023 Newsletter

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October 18, 2023

Words from AVC Dana Mastro

Assessing Our Merit and Advancement Process

The merit and advancement system at UC Santa Barbara, and across the University of California, is unique in its emphasis on regular peer review and advancements in rank, step, and salary based on the quality of the academic record. This system is instrumental to encouraging and supporting achievements in all areas of review throughout a faculty member's career. Given the importance of this process, the procedures and practices should themselves be reviewed periodically to ensure they are consistent, equitable, and efficient.

Although the benefits of our merit and advancement system for both individual faculty and for the institution justify the labor-intensive review and assessment process, concerns have been raised about undue administrative burdens for faculty, staff, departments, and committees. These have been exacerbated by strains on staff in an environment of frequent turnover and a large number of newly hired faculty who have joined the campus in recent years and are learning the AP system for the first time. Further, concerns have been raised about the lateness

of cases, the lack of routine cases, variations in procedures across campus, and inconsistencies in recommendations from reviewing agencies.

To respond to these issues, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor undertook a comprehensive review of the merit and advancement procedures on our campus, alongside a comparative analysis of our practices with the Academic Personnel processes on the other nine UC campuses. The review focused on: (1) merit and advancement appraisals; (2) the review process and procedures; and (3) issues related to training and workload at all levels. To this end, interviews and discussions were conducted with Deans, Committee on Academic Personnel leadership, Academic Personnel analysts, Divisional analysts, and Senate analysts. A survey of department chairs and department AP analysts was also implemented; and advancement data, over time, from AP Folio, were analyzed. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the central Academic Personnel Offices from all but one of the UC campuses, and the advancement materials from all UC campuses were also assessed.

This systematic assessment revealed several themes and numerous insights into our campus practices and perspectives, as well as those across the UC system. Broadly speaking, the results from this study indicate that despite the acknowledged value and benefits of the review system, our current campus practices are perceived to be: (a) unduly time-consuming and burdensome for faculty and staff, particularly with regard to managing the biobibliography, (b) overly complex, micro-focused, and concentrated on rules rather than on a comprehensive evaluation of the scholarly record, and (c) increasingly unclear with regard to expectations, with uncertainties about the consistency and alignment of expectations throughout the process, in terms of both case preparation and outcomes. There is widespread consensus that we can and should improve our processes to reduce labor, complexity, and inconsistency, although there are many different opinions about what sort of changes we should consider.

Fortunately, we can glean insights into potential approaches to these challenges by looking at the successful practices that are widely employed by our counterparts in the UC system. Although the Academic Personnel Manual (APM), upon which our Red Binder is based, is uniform across the UC system, the local practices at other campuses are often less complicated and onerous than our own. Indeed, most of the other UC campuses are in general alignment in their approach to faculty advancement. Although there are differences in the details, the majority: (1) utilize a limited set of options for accelerated advancement, based on a holistic review, (2) consider three comprehensive categories of activity in merit and advancement reviews, rather than separating accomplishments into four areas, (3) have normalized the use of all the overlapping steps (e.g., Assistant Professor V), with no special criteria for their use in order to provide more flexibility for faculty at barrier steps, and (4) prioritize consistency and agreement across reviewing agency recommendations. These common practices have been enacted successfully throughout the UC system based on a balance between the fundamental AP principles of assessing and rewarding individual academic records and the need for a consistent and manageable set of review procedures.

These findings inform the follow-up discussions we are now having. Over the course of the academic year, in consultation with the Academic Senate, Deans, departments, as well as departmental, college, and AP staff, we will consider refinements to our current procedures, and evaluate the most effective practices across the other UC campuses, to determine if modifications to our processes would offer advantages over our current system. By analyzing areas of concern, as well as options learned from other campuses, we can develop a roadmap for potential improvements. Of course, any potential alternatives will be discussed widely and centered on maintaining the integrity of the merit and advancement process, increasing consistency and understanding at all levels, ensuring equitable outcomes, reducing the amount of time and effort required, and improving the overall environment surrounding the review process.

There is one area in which there is broad agreement: we need an efficient, online, automated biobib system. Academic Personnel and Academic Affairs Information Technology are currently developing an application and we hope to pilot test this system in the coming months.

The reliability, transparency, efficiency, and equity of our merit and advancement practices are integral to the excellence of our campus faculty. We welcome your ideas about how we can continue to improve the merit and review system. Thank you.

Appointment of Dean Umesh Mishra

College of Engineering

Umesh Mishra, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been named Dean of the College of Engineering. The appointment comes with the Richard A. Auhll Professorship and Dean's Chair of Engineering. He stepped into his new role July 1st. Details on Dr. Mishra's new appointment are available in the [Office of the Chancellor's announcement](#).

Please join us in congratulating Dean Mishra on his new appointment.

Welcome New Faculty

We extend a warm welcome to our new faculty colleagues.

Andrew Alexander, Psychological and Brain Sciences

Colin Allen, Philosophy

Lucy Arellano, Education

Nicole Cerpa-Vielma, Global Studies

Howard Chiang, East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies
Jigna Desai, Feminist Studies, Asian American Studies
Marley Dewey, Biological Engineering
Max Farrell, Economics
Amy Frazier, Geography
Wenbo Guo, Computer Science
Amanda J. Hall, History
John Hartman, Economics
Mitchell Hoffman, Economics
Iris Holzer, Environmental Studies Program
Victoria Houser, Writing Program
Renee Houston, Communication
Matt Jacobs, Mathematics
Clifford Johnson, Physics
Sukhun Kang, Technology Management
Peter Kedron, Geography
Ousmane Kodio, Mechanical Engineering
Petra Kranzfelder, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology
Amalendu Krishna, Mathematics
Nolan Krueger, Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology
Nadia Leonard, Chemistry and Biochemistry
Jiaying Liu, Communication
Jessica Lopez-Espino, Sociology
Caleb Luna, Feminist Studies
Candice Lyons, Black Studies
Maryam Majedi, Computer Science
Dahlia Malkhi, Computer Science
Cesar Benshuni Martinez-Alvarez, Political Science
Tyler Mefford, Chemical Engineering
Carolyn Mills, Biological Engineering
Murphy Niu, Computer Science
William Nomikos, Political Science
Daniel Oropeza Gomez, Materials
Kanu Pandey, Communication
David Pietraszewski, Psychological and Brain Sciences
Mayra Puente, Gevirtze Graduate School of Education
Jorge Omar Ramirez-Pimienta, Spanish and Portuguese
Adina Roskies, Philosophy
Elizabeth Rubio, Asian American Studies
Jeff Sakamoto, Materials, Mechanical Engineering
Samantha Scudder, Psychological and Brain Sciences
Shola Shodiya-Zeumault, Graduate School of Education
David Silver, Economics

Tagart Sobotka, Sociology
Sabrina Strings, Black Studies
Tara Tober, Sociology
Niels Volkmann, Biomolecular Science and Engineering, Biological
Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Jean-Marie Volland, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology
Althea Wasow, Film and Media Studies
Annie Wertz, Psychological and Brain Sciences
Qian Yu, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Recognition of Retired Faculty

We thank the following faculty who retired during the 2022-23 academic year, for their service to UCSB.

Allison Anders, Film and Media Studies
Robert Antonucci, Physics
Stanley Awramik, Earth Science
Michael Brown, Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology
Jose Cabezon, Religious Studies
Frank Davis, Bren School of Environmental Science and Management
John Du Bois, Linguistics
Colin Gardner, Art
Michael Gazzaniga, Psychological and Brain Sciences
Mary Hancock, Anthropology, History
Gary Hansen, Technology Management
Barbara Herr Harthorn, Anthropology
Sally Holbrook, Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology
Evelyne Laurent-Perrault, History
George Marcoulides, Education
Martin Moskovits, Chemistry and Biochemistry
Yukari Okamoto, Education
Jean Schultz, French and Italian
Eric Smith, Political Science
Paul Sonnino, History
Verta Taylor, Sociology
Charles Wolfe, Film and Media Studies

Congratulations Newly Tenured Faculty

We are delighted to recognize our newly tenured colleagues

Liz Ackert, Geography

Heather Badamo, History of Art and Architecture

Timothy Brandt, Physics

Liz Carlisle, Environmental Studies Program

Katy Craig, Mathematics

Yufei Ding, Computer Science

Somayeh Dodge, Geography

Xi Dong, Physics

E. Sonny Elizondo, Philosophy

William Fleming, East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies

Alex Franks, Statistics and Applied Probability

Vamsi Ganti, Geography

Eduardo Gonzalez Nino, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology

Sriram Krishnamoorthy, Materials

Lei Li, Computer Science

Bolin Liao, Mechanical Engineering

Paolo Luzzatto-Fegiz, Mechanical Engineering

Fedya Manin, Mathematics

Jen Martin, Environmental Studies Program

Tom Mazanec, East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies

Galan Moody, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Debra Perrone, Environmental Studies Program

Giuliana Perrone, History

Kyle Ratner, Psychological and Brain Sciences

Laila Shereen Sakr, Film and Media Studies

Amit Shilo, Classics

Samantha Stevenson-Michener, Bren School of Environmental Science and Management

Sebastian Streichan, Biomolecular Science and Engineering and Physics

Anna Trugman, Geography

Yu-Xiang Wang, Computer Science

Mike Wilton, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology

Hannah Wohl, Sociology

Sevgi Yuksel, Economics

Zheng Zhang, Electrical and Computer Engineering

2023-24 Hellman Family Fellowship Award Winners

The purpose of the Hellman Fellows program is to provide substantial support for the research of promising Assistant Professors who show capacity for great distinction in their research. The award is designed to aid targeted faculty near the middle of their pre-tenure period in developing a strong research record in preparation for tenure review.

We congratulate this year's award recipients:

Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, Department of Global Studies: "*Global Hijra: Muslim Refugee Migration Since 1850*"

Dana Kornberg, Department of Sociology: "*Fighting for Capital(ism): Black-owned Businesses and the Politics of Liberation*"

Nina Malone, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering: "*Higher-Order Correlations in Human Brains*"

Teja Nerella, Department of Physics: "*Cosmological recombination on small-scales, and implications for the Hubble constant*"

Mishra Sra, Department of Computer Science: "*A Low-cost Actuator for the Design of Programmable Matter*"

Ryan Stowers, Department of Mechanical Engineering: "*Engineered 3D platform for ex vivo patient-derived tumoroid culture*"

Alisa Tazhitdinova, Department of Economics: "*Understanding Capital Gains Responses to Taxes Using Transaction-Level Data*"

Cathy Thomas, Department of English: "*Unruly Genealogies of Afrodiasporic Women and Girls*"

Yangying Zhu, Department of Mechanical Engineering: "*Blood-vessel-inspired cooling of batteries using internal convective flow*"

2023-24 Career Development Awards and Fellowships

Career Development Awards and Fellowships are designed to provide faculty with time to strengthen their record of research/creative activities by providing course release funds or summer research support. The three Award and Fellowship designations include:

- Faculty Career Development Award (FCDA)
- Regents' Junior Faculty Fellowship (RJFF)
- Regents' Humanities Faculty Fellowship (RHFF)

Congratulations to the recipients below:

Brandon Greene, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and Biomolecular Science and Engineering: *FCDA, Narrow spectrum antibiotic development targeting radical central metabolism in C. difficile*

Eleanor Caves, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology: *FCDA, The Context-Dependency of Interaction Outcome in the Cleaner Shrimp *Ancylomenes pedersoni**

Cathy Thomas, Department of English: *FCDA, Unruly: On a Genealogy of Afrodiasporic Women and Girls*

Summer Gray, Environmental Studies Program: *FCDA, Coastal Futures: Justice, Equity, and Divergent Pathways of Climate Action*

Gen Li, Department of Earth Science: *FCDA, Reactivity of Organic Carbon Measured from Ramped Pyrolysis Oxidation*

Verónica Castillo-Muñoz, Department of History: *RHFF, Women and Revolution: A Tale of Violence and Deception Across the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands*

Heidi Amin-Hong, Department of English: *FCDA, Transpacific Contaminations: Ecological Afterlives of the Vietnam War*

Sarah Rosalena Brady, Department of Art: *RJFF, In All Directions*

Emilie Dressaire, Department of Mechanical Engineering: *FCDA, Soft printing: can liquid structures hold their shape in microgels?*

Sui Tang, Department of Mathematics: *FCDA, Robust model recovery of partial differential equations*

McNair Scholars Program

Are you eager to mentor highly motivated first-gen, low-income, and/or underrepresented minority students pursuing graduate school? If so, contact the [McNair](#)

[Scholars Program](#) and join our pool of potential faculty mentors!

Please join us for an online McNair Faculty Mentor Info Session on any of the following days/times:

Wednesday, Oct. 25, 3-3:45 pm

Thursday, Nov. 2, 3-3:45 pm

Tues., Nov. 14, 1-1:45 pm

Zoom Link: <https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/3146417082>

Or contact us: mcnair@mcnair.ucsb.edu

Faculty Mentor Expectations

■ Work with scholars to develop a schedule for their research goals and establish guidelines for them to follow on a quarterly basis.

■ Meet with scholars regularly to assist them with carrying out research and completing assignments, including major projects.

■ Commit to mentoring scholars during the 8-week summer program.

■ Acquaint scholars with the “culture” of research and discuss career opportunities in academia as well as industry, government, and the public and private sector.

■ Interact frequently and develop a professional relationship with the scholar and expect to write letters of recommendation for graduate school.

Visit: <https://mcnair.ucsb.edu/>

Or, contact Faculty Director Miroslava Chavez-Garcia @ chavezgarcia@ucsb.edu or Program Director, Dr. Veronica Fematt @ vfematt@ucsb.edu for more information.



UCSB Annual Required Trainings

Are you up to date?

Did you know that most employees must complete several compliance activities annually? To check your status, visit learningcenter.ucsb.edu/login and click on "Required Training"

Upcoming Training and Workshops

Dates and times for upcoming AP training and workshops for both faculty and staff are posted on our [website](#).

Upcoming **Faculty Workshops** include

- Open-forum office hours with the AVC every quarter
- Bio-bib workshop session
- M&P workshop for Department Chairs

Upcoming **Staff Training** includes:

- AP Certificate Classes
- AP Workshops on specific topics

As a reminder, staff who work with AP are expected to attend the relevant topic workshops every year to ensure that they are up to date on policy, procedure, and best practice. These workshops are also meant to be interactive sessions, so please bring your questions and discussion points.

Please visit the [Training and Workshop Registration page](#) to register.

Contacting the AP Office

Do you have questions but aren't sure whom to contact?

- UCPath questions should be sent to ap-path@ucsb.edu
- Leave questions should be sent to ap-leave@ucsb.edu
- Policy questions should be directed to the policy analyst that supports that population: ap.ucsb.edu/contacts

Still not sure who the right contact is? Start with: inquiry@ap.ucsb.edu

AP Office Hours

The AP Office continues to host Zoom office hours for staff and faculty who have AP-related questions.

Office Hours are held on **Mondays from 1:00-2:00pm**

<https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/82238434575>

Meeting ID: 822 3843 4575

If you have a question or topic to suggest for the next newsletter, please contact [Helly Kwee](#) at helly.kwee@ucsb.edu.

The Academic Personnel office is currently open and operating on a hybrid schedule. Contact via email is recommended. See the [AP Office staff list](#) for more information.



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