

## Academic assembly council meeting

August 3, 2021

Meeting adjourned approximately at 9:05 AM

- Introductions for new members and a brief overview as to how the AAC functions
- County Director Executive Committee Report: Devii Rao
  - The CDEC has been discussing how to evaluate DEI efforts and is requesting help from the personnel committee. The representative of the PC will take this request to their committee. A suggestion was made for the CDEC/PC to solicit input from the DEI Alliance
- Academic Assembly Council Budget updates: Van Busic
  - 90% of travel funds, 90% of previous budget, and 100% of awards were funded this year. Unlikely to go back to four in-person meetings a year, and it is suggested that the travel savings be used to cover budget shortfalls
- Academic exit interview report: Jim Downer
  - Exit interviews composed only of career employees, primarily consisting of advisors and specialists; too few academic coordinators participated to determine trends.
  - Two primary reasons for leaving UCANR: resignations and retirements. Retired academics, particularly retired specialists, were happy with their career and had few complaints aside from insufficient/missing early career mentoring
  - Most resigning academics were advisors, and there were several reasons for leaving UCANR. One common theme was advisors departing for better jobs. “Better,” could include better defined jobs with better pay or less overwhelming responsibilities. Another reason for departure was issues with senior leadership
  - Recommendations for senior leadership:
    - Better orient and mentor new academics
    - Write Position Vacancy Announcements (PVAs) in a more uniform manner that will better illustrate the scope of responsibilities and assignments – this will hopefully result in better candidate selection
    - Stop spreading new positions across multiple counties and/or commodities to fill gaps in coverage – this is likely a factor in burnout and job dissatisfaction
  - The AAC decided to continue conducting exit interviews to collect more data instead of asking academic HR to do this. It was tentatively decided to delegate this task to the Welfare and Benefits committee, and to work with Vikram Koundinya to improve the survey
- Personnel Committee Report: Brenna Aegerter
  - The Personnel committee provided insights on the merits and promotions process, including a change in accelerations – this action should now be very rare
  - There is an increase in the number of cases where the peer review committee and AVP disagree on a merit or promotion actions, though this is partly due to the inability of the PRC to recommend an alternative action than what is requested by the academic. If the PRC can recommend alternative actions (merit rather than promotion, e.g.) it is likely that the two will be more in line.

- An observation was made that the criteria for successful merit and promotion actions have been unclear under the new AVP -
- New AAC members and responsibilities
  - Surendra Dara is the new president elect
  - The AAC representation in the Vice President's council will now change: this will rotate between the president elect, as well as the AAC president (but only in the AAC President's second year) – requires a change in the bylaws
- Welfare and Benefits Committee Update: Rebecca Ozeran
  - The W&BC has been exploring the cost of a cost of living adjustment for academics living in expensive urban areas. The committee requested input on obtaining salary information from Academic HR to calculate the cost of a cost of living adjustment based on federal standards (based on current footprint only)
  - The committee is also working on updating instructions for taking an extended leave of absence. Currently the process requires numerous logistical hurdles (physical forms, access to DUO protected applications, e.g.)
- Advisor Representative Committee: Devii Rao
  - The ARC is requesting input from senior leadership, no other updates
- Employee Resource Groups: Elaine Lander (POC ERG)
  - ANR now has several ERGs, process shared and request for help in increasing awareness. More information can be found at: [https://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/About\\_Us\\_705/Employee\\_Resource\\_Groups/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/About_Us_705/Employee_Resource_Groups/) or from contacting Bethanie Brown ([brbbrown@ucanr.edu](mailto:brbbrown@ucanr.edu))
- Multiple Academic Title Committee: Annemeik Schilder
  - This committee is still waiting on a list of all academics this committee represents
- Academic Coordinator Committee: Marisa Coyne
  - Onboarding is not always uniform and often reliant upon local counties/offices. The committee is working on formalizing this
- Berkeley Specialists Committee: Susana M.
  - Still waiting on working title change
  - Concern about restoration of program development funds
- Davis Specialists Committee: Vikram K.
  - Still waiting on working title change
- Riverside Specialists Committee: Unknown
  - This committee has not yet sent a representative to the AAC
- Program Committee Update: Van Busic
  - Award funds at 100%, still waiting on word about travel

Questions and answers with Mark Bell and Glenda Humiston

### **Hiring questions:**

**Can you provide an update on the Vice Provost Searches?**

Mark: David F. has accepted and will be on board August 15. Roles and responsibilities: overseeing the RECs and CDs. VP of DEI and RE has been readvertised.

### **Can you provide an update on the timeline for the new batch of hires?**

Mark: huge hiring push (80 positions!), need to carefully pick positions to maximize impact, based on a guide that Glenda submitted to the legislature. 7 positions released soon, 7 more next year. Possibly looking at an Emeritus academic to chair several committee to increase consistency and help handle the workload. There is a need to move quickly to prove that ANR needs the funds. Maybe 10 positions every other month

Glenda: we need to hire folks to meet today's and tomorrow's needs. HR people need to be hired immediately. If someone can't make the timeline for a committee, they're out. Bring back emeriti. Get campus based AES folks.

### **What is the internal plan to handle the workload for search committees?**

Mark: hope to find emeriti to chair multiple committees. Val (missed last name) has been rehired to help.

### **How soon will a call come out for new positions? How will these positions be selected, what is the process?**

answered in previous two questions

### **It took 2 years to identify 40 positions, how are you going to speed this process up?**

Mark: don't know yet

Glenda: We will ask for a mini call for positions, and will be strict about hiring timelines – academics who cannot meet the hiring timeframe will be replaced from committees

### **Are you going to work with county directors to put new hires into counties that have a lot of county support or a low ANR footprint?**

Mark: Yes, there are metrics for placing these

### **Position is important, but so is the person. Is there a thought about trying to hire more experienced, mid-career recruits?**

Mark: Not sure if that has been discussed, need to be careful how job advertising is done, as you cannot pay someone more if the position is described at a certain pay scale. (Jim Downer comments: hard to imagine an advisor being able to do this - not as much cross pollination in advisor ranks)

Glenda: Great question, no answer.

### **Improving DEI?**

Mark: (tangent from another question) when hiring, redacted statements for first round, training for hiring committee to avoid implicit bias, advertising the positions better. Write better questions that reflect the position. Candidates need to have DEI statements.

## **Budget questions (non-compensation):**

### **Will CE Specialists funds be restored to pre-pandemic levels? If not, why?**

Glenda's: It was the campus' decision to reduce CE Specialist funds, after ANR reduced per Specialist funding to campus from \$43,000 to \$39,000 – specialists don't see most of this money and campuses will not tell ANR where the extra money goes. Currently ANR is negotiating MOU with campus (only Berkeley?) and requesting more clarity on how those funds are spent.

~~The draft ACC budget is for 90% of travel funds. We anticipate a very high number of people wanting to travel for research conferences. Why is this not being restored to 100% or more?~~

~~Are specialists travel funds for collaboration with advisors and AC's still funded?~~

### **Will Academic Coordinator professional development funds be restored?**

Glenda: absolutely, this was part of the 13% covid cut

Will Academic coordinators be eligible for salary savings?

Working from home has come with costs to some UC employees. Is there anyway these costs can be recouped by Academics? Devii

Glenda: discussion is happening systemwide - may not want to open this can of worms and probably won't happen. May also be political - legislature is keeping a close eye on UC.

Are there plans to re-instate the ANR competitive grants process? Susana

A: Intent is to have something. (Mark's opinion) the process was colleague pitted against colleague, and he questions the use of that money and time for that kind of process. At this stage, it's still abstract discussions.

## **Budget questions (compensation):**

Does ANR currently have any plans to increase compensation for AC, Advisor and Specialists positions.

### **Will advisor finish 4<sup>th</sup> part of equity adjustment?**

Mark and Glenda (answers combined): Yes there is an intent, but there is an optics issue: can't fight for a budget increase for more advisors and give ourselves a payraise right off the bat. Legislature has made that clear. \$32 mil is growth fund, another pot of funds to restore funding cuts, then another \$5 mil on top. This second pot is for salary increases. Advisors will never make as much as specialists, partly because the job requires a master's degree, not a Ph.D.

### **Will Specialists be put back on-scale with faculty?**

Glenda: If referring to the 3% for specialists and 4% for faculty, this is unknown. Unlikely to happen for past decisions, efforts to be made to make payments equal to faculty in the future. Originally ANR and campuses agreed on a 3% increase, then campuses decided to increase to 4%

~~Is there any plan to address AC salaries?~~

**Salary savings for ACs? Possible if an AC has a program director title, can you extend that to all ACs?**

Mark: Submit question more formally, Mark has thought about that before - this process was used on campus.

**Travel funds, professional society funds, etc?**

Mark: Being discussed with other things.

**Specialist funds?**

Glenda: This should be directed to campus - they're the ones who reduced the funds. Glenda says that campuses take a bunch of the money going to specialists - wants to find out where the funds are going, and does not want to increase funds until ANR find out where the funds are going.

**Non-budget questions:**

~~Are there plans to improve BOC?~~

**Is ANR going to lose employees due to Covid-19 policies?**

Mark: expectation is yes.

**PVA and PD questions: Are there plans to improve this process to better reflect the position?**

Mark: yes. Mark has worked to improve the process to try to identify key skills that will make a candidate successful at the job. Improve committees selecting candidates, improving PVA accurately describing the job.

**Is out of state travel going to still be permissible in the future?**

Mark: hard to say, things change on a week to week basis.

Mark updates:

August 16: Wendy will be doing a training on performance

Working to standardize way that new advisors/ACs are alerted to programmatic responsibilities - more direct interaction with Mark when onboarding

Town Halls seem to be going well, creating guidelines for using the chat. Attendees enjoy the stories from the field.

Integrated Web Platform: moving in the right direction, rollout won't be as quick as hoped, but because Jon Wilson has been reaching out to individuals to get a needs assessment

Glenda updates:

Multiple things that led to huge funding increase:

1. Getting rid of the gag order preventing ANR from talking to legislature
2. Getting stakeholders to complain to the legislature instead of us
3. Changing how we talk about what we do (outcomes and impacts)
4. Senator John Laird - came from ag and natural resources, knows and cares about what we do
5. Karen Ross - champion of UCANR. Gave us the line item, which allowed John Laird to put the funds directly into UCANR

Budget overview:

1. Systemwide restoration to pre-covid levels (campuses and counties)
2. 5% increase on general funds (doesn't cover the last few years of steady budget) but can cover the salary equity program
3. \$32.133 million in ongoing funds - came from Senator Laird asking how many positions were missing, rather than asking for random funding increase, *then* asking for program support needs

Can't rely on state funds - will likely be several years before ANR gets another boost. Federal funds are at risk for being moved to competitive grants. Need to get endowments, donations, etc.

ANR got an 8% increase in funds development – this process is working