

Academic Assembly Council President's Report: November 2022

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

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*Michelle Leinfelder-Miles
Personnel Committee Chair*

November 30th, 2022

Dear UC ANR Academic Assembly:

This quarter's report consists of the short committee reports and a summary of the findings of "Exit Interview" conducted by the Welfare & Benefits Committee over the last two years. Over the period, the team has developed exit interview questions and conducted interviews with 36 of our former colleagues to better understand why they left UCANR. This report, combined with continued exit interviews in the future, will provide UCANR with important information that can help us keep our best employees. A big thank you to the AAC members who have worked on the exit interview project over these years.

I am very pleased to inform you that AAC will hold the assembly meeting during the 2023 ANR statewide conference in the upcoming April. More information about the meeting will be shared in February 2023.

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,

Ali Montazar

Ali Montazar
President
Academic Assembly Council

For more information about the UC ANR Academic Assembly Council, including travel awards, committees, and publications, visit our website at:

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/>

Rules and Elections Committee

Currently there are seven vacant seats on AAC committees that need to be filled. They are:

- Advisor Representative Committee – 1 vacancy
- Program Committee – 1 vacancy
- Personnel Committee – 1 vacancy
- Rules and Elections Committee – 2 vacancies
- Academic Coordinator Representative Committee – 1 vacancy
- Multiple Academic Titles Representative Committee – 1 vacancy

In mid-November, Rules and Election Committee co-chair Brim-DeForest distributed surveys asking for interested parties to self-nominate to committees on which they were interested in serving. Two Advisors are interested in serving on the Advisor Representative Committee, four Advisors are interested in serving on Program Committee, and two Advisors interested in serving on the Rules and Elections Committee. There were no nominations to fill the vacancy on the personnel committee. An election survey will be distributed on December 12th to elect Advisors to the vacant seats. Results of the election will be posted no later than January 9, 2023, to allow adequate response time to the survey and processing time for the Rules and Election Committee.

Nominations are still open for the committees that received no nominations including Personnel Committee, Academic Coordinator Representative Committee, and the Multiple Academic Titles Representative Committee. Please contact Julie Finzel (jafinzel@ucanr.edu), Whitney Brim-DeForest (wbrimdeforest@ucanr.edu), or the committee chair directly if you are interested.

More information about the committees and contact information for committee chairs can be found on the AAC website.

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/>

https://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/AAC_Committee_Membership/

~ Whitney Brim-DeForest & Julie Finzel

Advisor Representative Committee

In the past, ARC has tried to answer every individual concern that came through the ARC survey. This quarter we received more concerns than we had time to address. Therefore, the committee prioritized concerns to discuss during our call. While we were not able to address every concern, we will be incorporating all concerns into a long-term analysis, which will help us prioritize concerns to tackle. In fact, Daniel Obrist joined our ARC call on 10/26/2022. During the call, ARC committee member Natalie Price presented a summary and prioritization of the past 5-years of concerns that came through the ARC

survey. We will continue to discuss these priority issues with Daniel Obrist to see which of them we can collaborate with him on addressing.

~ Devii Rao

Welfare & Benefits Committee

From August 2020 to August 2022, there were 36 academic retirements and resignations from UC ANR. The Welfare and Benefits Committee reached out to those academics to invite exit interviews; of the 36 separations, 19 individuals participated. Interviews were conducted from March to October 2022 using the survey in [Attachment 1](#). Five of those interviewed were retirements and fourteen were resignations. Positions represented in this summary include 9 Advisors, 4 Academic Coordinators, 3 Academic Administrators & Directors, and 3 Specialists & Project Scientists. The interview participants covered all subject areas, so they are a generic reflection of experiences to academic UC ANR employment. Within the 14 topical areas of questions, those interviewed could give multiple responses.

At least two of the retirements were accelerated because of disappointment with their employment situation. Of those resigning, a quarter left for a better fitting position. Over half felt that they were better appreciated in their new position and that their new position was a better fit. Only 10-15% left for better pay or better promotional opportunities. Considering UC ANR pay, about half felt they were adequately compensated (47% agreed salary was commensurate with their experience, 58% agreed salary met their financial needs). About half felt that their new salary was better fit to the cost of living in their area. Most respondents commented that benefits were good, but in rural areas, health care was limited and expensive.

When asked whether the position met their expectations, half said that it did, but a third felt that there was much more administrative burden and work required than expected, and 20% thought too much effort was spent in fundraising. A quarter felt that the job met all their expectations, but several commented that over time, responsibilities had increased beyond the original position description. About half felt there was adequate mentoring and training and nearly 80% felt they came into the position with adequate background.

About half of respondents felt that the merit/promotion process was both clear and fair and that they understood what was expected and what went into the dossier. About half got support from peers or supervisors for putting it together. Some comments are included below for additional context:

- Regarding the merit/promotion process...
 - *They kept changing the rules*
 - *Not clear for my academic title*

- *Unfairly judged*
- *I thought I did (understood what was needed for merit) but my questions were ignored or passed off*
- *Not clear for ACs and certainly not AC IIIs hence the continued sending of APM 375 to the AVPs*

Most respondents felt that the workplace was safe and that it was generally positive and collaborative. A third felt it was a stressful workplace. Nearly 100% of respondents felt appreciated by clientele and colleagues. Over half felt appreciated by supervisors, but only 20% felt appreciated by senior leadership. Over half said that leadership was a factor in their decision to leave and that the main reasons were disagreements on budget decisions, general lack of support, and lack of top-level support for staff retention.

When asked if they would recommend a friend to work for ANR, almost a third said they would not because of the job expectations and lack of support, but half said there is a high potential for success in the job and two respondents had already encouraged peers to apply to ANR jobs.

When asked if they had any additional comments, several respondents shared perspectives not covered by our common questions. Below are some excerpts:

- If we can't hire and retain staff (reforming the promotion process, compensation, etc.), we will never be able to support all of the academic positions currently being hired.
- Consider power balance between county-based programs and campuses...some specialists influenced younger/newer county folks and they could be pulled into running only the programs the campus folks want to do. How does that influence merit/promotion? Who is creating the outputs?
- We need accountability for harassment, discrimination, hate, and bias. Workers aren't safe if the UC isn't going to hold people accountable for hateful behavior. ...need real discipline for behavior [including volunteer behavior] that is hostile to ANR personnel and community. Need better policy and education for what needs to be reported, and follow-through on reports.
- When I left, there were no resources for what to do after. What about my benefits? What about my retirement money?
- I worked at multiple institutions and can say that ANR colleagues were the best. Miss them.

In most respects, the responses to this survey followed the results from a previous survey done in 2021.

~ Rebecca Ozeran & Ben Faber

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee has been working with Daniel Obrist, Tina Jordan, and Deanne Meyer on E-book revisions. The most substantial change will be in the process for confidential letters of evaluation. The revised Ebook is posted to the AHR website:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Personnel_Benefits/Academic_Personnel/PR_Dossier_Examples/.

The Personnel Committee provides trainings ahead of the Academic Advancement calendar deadline (February 1, 2023). Please mark your calendar for the Academic Advancement Trainings ([attachment 2](#)).

~ Michelle Leinfelder-Miles

Attachment 1 (Welfare & Benefits Committee)

Exit Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to leave your position? Please explain. You may wish to discuss what a new position offered. *Questions a) through i) are follow up questions that could be asked depending on response of the interviewee.*

- a) Do you think you will feel more appreciated in the new position?
 - b) Do you think your work will be more appreciated in the new position?
 - c) Do you expect you will have greater interactions with colleagues and opportunities to participate in meaningful projects?
 - d) Is the new environment more conducive to the kind of work you wish to pursue? What kind of work is that? (e.g. focus on teaching, research, interaction with students or graduate students, etc.)
 - e) Do you expect to have more control over your schedule at the new position?
 - f) How important to you is the salary at the new position, relative to other considerations?
 - g) Will the salary at the new position have greater congruence with cost of living in your upcoming location?
 - h) Is the new position ladder faculty at UC or another university? If so, are you being granted tenure upon taking the position?
 - i) Will the new position allow you to participate in the academic senate of a university, and how important is that to you?
2. Did your ANR position meet your expectations? Please explain.
- a) How did the kind and amount of work in your position meet your expectations for the position when you started at ANR?
3. Was your compensation fair?

- a) Do you believe the level at which you were hired was commensurate with your academic background and experience?
 - b) Was your salary adequate to meet your financial needs?
 - c) Were pay increases satisfactory in the 2 years prior to your separation from ANR?
 - d) Did the overall benefits package meet your needs? (e.g. healthcare, insurance options, retirement options, academic privileges)
4. Thinking back to when you first started your position, is there anything you would change about any training or mentoring you received?
5. Do you feel you had access to adequate support, training, and mentorship from ANR in order to be successful in your position?
- a) Was your prior academic background sufficient, or were there areas you strengthened during your time with ANR?
 - b) Did you have access to the equipment and instrumentation or other resources that you may have needed for your work?
 - c) If you had a visa issue when hired, did ANR help you resolve it? Did this issue contribute to your resignation?
6. Did you understand the expectations of your job?
- a) How were expectations communicated to you?
 - b) Did position objectives seem realistic?
 - c) Was it possible to do the job satisfactorily with the resources available to you?
7. Was the merit and promotion system clear and fair?
- a) Did you understand what was expected to achieve merit or promotion?
 - b) Did you understand what should go into a merit or promotion dossier?
 - c) Did you know how to get the support you needed from supervisors and/or peers to assemble a successful merit or promotion dossier?
8. Did you have sufficient opportunity to collaborate and build networks with UC and non-UC academics?
9. How would you describe your work environment in your county/campus/statewide program? Do you have suggestions for improvement?
10. Did you feel comfortable, safe, and accepted in your local environment, including the community(ies) where you lived and worked?

- a)
 - b) If not, was this a factor in your decision to leave your ANR position?
11. Did you feel appreciated for the work you did?
- a) By clientele?
 - b) By colleagues?
 - c) By your supervisor?
 - d) By ANR leadership?
12. Overall, was the leadership of ANR at any level a factor in your decision to leave the organization? If so, how?
13. Would you recommend a friend work at ANR? Why or why not?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Attachment 2 (Personnel Committee)

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 (1:30-3pm): **Training for Brand New Academics.** *New to UC ANR? Welcome! Let the Personnel Committee help orient you on the alphabet soup of the advancement cycle. What's an AE? What's a PR? When are the deadlines, and what are the requirements? Come to this training to learn more.*

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/93524368566?pwd=cmpVQnhoeWxsaWxZUWZjNUInbm1yZz09>

Meeting ID: 935 2436 8566

Passcode: 683893

One tap mobile

+16694449171,,93524368566# US

+16699006833,,93524368566# US (San Jose)

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 (1:30-3pm): **Training for first-time PR writers.** *You've written an Annual Evaluation, but now it's time to tackle a Program Review dossier. Come to this training and take a deep dive into the Ebook – your guide to writing effective PRs.*

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/91808999869?pwd=TDITMXBZNTVHbU1lckJwQitkU3pLQT09>

Meeting ID: 918 0899 9869

Passcode: 747758

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Tuesday, January 17, 2023 (2-3pm) AND Wednesday, January 25, 2023 (2-3pm):
Advancement Cycle Q&A Sessions. *At this training, the Personnel Committee will provide a short presentation on Ebook updates, and then the floor will be opened to Q&A. Please come with your questions!*

Session 1 (January 17) Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/98208484537?pwd=Vy9kSSStvUmdtV0pEaG9KL0tOQVBiQT09>

Meeting ID: 982 0848 4537

Passcode: 067676

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Session 2 (January 25) Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ucanr.zoom.us/j/92383562641?pwd=WEpkZUZZYTIOQUh4dFZlWm9TcmtjZz09>

Meeting ID: 923 8356 2641

Passcode: 836098

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