

INTRODUCTION TO THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Updated February, 2006

The Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations is a committee of Berkeley's Academic Senate. Its name is misleading: it is an academic personnel committee, not a fiscal oversight committee.

1. History.

The founding principle of the Budget Committee is that faculty members' records should be reviewed by their peers. This is a principle that was first articulated in the early twentieth century during a faculty revolt against an autocratic administration. Prior to this revolt, the UC president appointed all deans and department chairs, as well as the members of the Academic Senate's committees. Consultation with deans and chairs was usually perfunctory, and faculty salaries were set by the central administration. Spurred by national agitation for academic reform and by the creation of the American Association of University Professors, the UC faculty called a meeting of the Academic Senate to demand faculty election of all deans and chairs and creation of a standing committee to confer with the president concerning appointment, promotions, tenure, salaries, and related matters.

The resulting Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations was created in 1920 "to confer with the President concerning the University budget, and to make recommendations to him respecting promotions, salaries, equipment, and related matters."¹ The Budget Committee in turn created the institution of confidential ad hoc faculty committees to review promotion cases, because it believed that the records of faculty members should be frankly assessed through a process of broad-based peer review.

As the UC system grew and more campuses were established, each campus developed its own Budget Committee. Other campuses now call their Budget Committee the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), but Berkeley has kept the original name. The responsibilities of these committees vary from campus to campus: on other campuses, some decisions about faculty members may be made by deans or other administrators without Senate advice, but the Berkeley Budget Committee continues to offer advice on all appointments, promotions, and merit increases for faculty members.

2. What the Budget Committee is.

The members of the Budget Committee are appointed by the Committee on Committees, which is elected by the Senate's members. The Budget Committee has nine members, and each one usually serves for three years. In its work, the Budget Committee is guided by two general mandates from the Senate: to maintain the excellence of the Berkeley faculty, and to promote the equal treatment of the faculty across campus.

¹ Minutes of the Academic Senate, April 19, 1920, p. 424.

The Budget Committee works year-round, usually meeting once or twice a week. The committee makes recommendations to the campus administration about hiring and advancing faculty members and about authorizing searches for new faculty members. It also makes recommendations to both the administration and the Senate about a variety of policy issues. The Budget Committee arrives at its recommendations through consensus.

The UC system is unusual in allowing faculty members to share this campus-wide perspective on academic personnel matters with the central administration; this enables the Senate to have a strong and independent voice in this important arena.

3. The process of academic review.

Much of the Budget Committee's work involves the analysis of academic personnel cases. (In recent years, the committee has reviewed over 900 cases per year.) Cases for appointment, merit increases, and promotion come forward from departments along with supporting materials, including information provided by the candidate. The relevant dean then reviews the case, writes an analysis and recommendation, and sends the case to the Academic Personnel Office, which reviews it and then forwards it to the Budget Committee. If the case is for promotion or for a tenure-level appointment, the Budget Committee will recommend appointment of a campus ad hoc review committee of three to five faculty members. This committee will review the entire case, including the dean's recommendation, before preparing its analysis and recommendation.

When the Budget Committee receives a case for review, then, it has before it the department's recommendation and supporting materials, the dean's recommendation, and (if there is one) the campus ad hoc committee's report. Based on these case materials, the Budget Committee prepares an analysis of the faculty member's record of achievement in research, teaching, and service. Only after the entire committee has discussed the case and reached a consensus does it prepare the final written version of its analysis and recommendation.

This "minute" communicates the committee's reasoning to the central administration, which by long tradition incorporates much of the minute into the letter to the dean in which the administration conveys its decision. That letter may be slightly modified by the dean before being readdressed and sent to the chair, who may then share it with the faculty member whose record of achievement has been reviewed. These letters refer generically to "reviewers": that term can mean the Budget Committee, the chair, the dean, the ad hoc review committee, people who wrote external letters, or some combination of these.

Reconsideration of a case may be requested by the central administration, by a dean or department chair, or by the faculty member whose record has been reviewed. When the Budget Committee receives such a request, it will carefully review the new information that has been provided and then make a recommendation on that basis. After reviewing the request for reconsideration and the Budget Committee's recommendation, the administration may then alter its original decision. After a process of reconsideration,

the administration may in the end reach a decision different from the one that the Budget Committee ultimately recommended; such differences occur in a handful of cases each year.

Further information about the review process is available from the Academic Personnel Office [<http://apo.chance.berkeley.edu/>] and from the Academic Senate's Committee on the Status of Ethnic Minorities and Women [http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/SWEM_guide_AP.html].

4. Merit increases and promotion.

The Budget Committee is guided by the University of California's Academic Personnel Manual. [<http://www.ucop.edu/acadadv/acadpers/apm/apm-220.pdf>] Merit increases for faculty members ("steps") are normally awarded for excellent records during the review period in three areas of evaluation: research, teaching, and service. (A review period almost always ends one year before the effective date of the proposed advancement.) In general, the ladder gets steeper as it gets higher: in all three areas of review, more is expected of faculty in the upper reaches of the professoriate than of those at lower steps.

Reviews of promotions to tenure or to full professor, or of advancement to Professor Step VI or Special Salary, also focus on the three areas of evaluation, but they consider the faculty member's career achievements as well as the specific achievements since the last merit review. These four "milestone" reviews require external letters of evaluation; promotions to tenure or to full professor also require review by a campus ad hoc review committee. (A campus ad hoc review committee may also be required for a tenure-level appointment.)

Research: In ordinary merit reviews, the record of research will comprise the accomplishments since the last merit review. Factors taken into consideration may include the quality, number, and impact of refereed and non-refereed papers or books, the venues of publication, presentation of conference papers or talks, and awards. Completed chapters of a book in progress [https://mossberg.berkeley.edu/CALmessages/display_message.asp?d=9/10/2004&s=101] may in some circumstances be considered as part of the research record. In some disciplines, the research record may comprise other forms of creative accomplishment.

Teaching: Ideally, assessment of classroom teaching [<http://apo.chance.berkeley.edu/evaluation.html>] is based on a wide range of information. While student evaluations are essential, other information may be equally important, for example, peer evaluation and self-assessment. Lack of success in a single class will not ordinarily be a cause for concern, but a pattern of declining teaching or poor teaching may slow or halt advancement. A teaching record also includes information about such accomplishments as writing a textbook or mentoring students (for example, by serving as an undergraduate advisor or a member of master's and dissertation committees). Once in

a career, a step may be awarded primarily for teaching that is exceptional in its quality and quantity, if the advancement is to a step that is below the level of Professor, Step VI.

Service: Berkeley faculty members offer many kinds of service, including service to their departments and to the Academic Senate. They also perform outreach service and service to governments, academia, and the community. Once in a career, a step may be awarded primarily for service that is exceptional in its quality and quantity, if the advancement is to a step that is below the level of Professor, Step VI. In this as in other areas of evaluation, more is expected from more senior faculty, and full professors are expected to shoulder responsibilities for leadership in their departments or on campus.

5. FTE allocation.

Every year, the Budget Committee offers advice to the central administration about allocating faculty FTE (“full-time equivalents,” i.e., faculty positions) to campus units; and when the campus resets FTE targets, the Budget Committee also offers advice about the target size of each campus unit. Requests concerning FTE come forward from departments, are analyzed and reviewed by deans, and then are analyzed and reviewed by the Budget Committee. In making its recommendations, the Budget Committee is constrained by the central administration’s determination of the maximum number of FTE available.

In considering FTE issues, the Budget Committee takes many factors into account, including the general distinction and trajectory of the department, the relation of the department’s current size to its target size, the department’s programmatic needs, and its success in carrying out its teaching missions. In thinking about what to recommend, the Budget Committee must always weigh a given department’s needs against the needs of other units across the whole campus, because there are never enough FTE to satisfy all of the reasonable FTE requests that come forward.

6. Issues of concern to the Budget Committee.

Long waits for news: Faculty members often wonder why they usually do not hear about the results of their merit or promotion cases until the spring, or even the summer or fall. Several factors affect the timing of the final decisions.

After a case leaves a department, it goes to the dean; depending on the dean’s workload, decanal review may take from several days to several months. The case is then received by the Academic Personnel Office, which may need time to consult with the dean’s office about various details of the case. Review by a campus ad hoc review committee, when that is necessary, will delay matters further, often by several months. These committees consist of three to five faculty members with relevant expertise from a number of different departments; campus ad hoc committees can be difficult to convene, and their work may involve time-consuming preparation and deliberation.

The Budget Committee gives priority to urgent appointment and retention cases, to promotions, and to any other cases marked as urgent by the Academic Personnel Office. Routine merit cases and requests for reconsideration receive attention only after urgent cases have been cleared from the agenda. The turnaround time for cases in the Budget Committee varies from a few days to several months, depending on its caseload.

Everyone involved in academic personnel review wishes the process were a faster one. Still, although the campus process is time-consuming, the many layers of assessment allow the campus administration to solicit informed opinion from many quarters and to ensure that the opinion of no one individual has undue weight in the decision making process.

Salary inequities: In recent years, the Budget Committee has been very concerned by broad issues concerning faculty salaries, and it has worked closely with the administration to try to keep Berkeley competitive in faculty recruitment and retention. Of equal concern to the committee, however, are inequities between the salaries of faculty members who have recently been recruited and retained and the salaries of faculty members who have not.

Several members of the Budget Committee served in 2003-04 on the Chancellor's Task Force on Faculty Compensation. The Task Force's recommendations [<http://evcp.chance.berkeley.edu/documents/Reports/documents/FacCompTaskForcefinalreport.pdf>] received the support of the Academic Senate's Divisional Council in the fall of 2004, and the Budget Committee hopes the campus administration will begin to phase in the Report's recommendations as soon as possible. As these new policies are phased in, the campus will be adopting a new way of thinking about salary equity: while the campus-wide ideal will still be that faculty members of equal accomplishment will be at the same rank and step, it will no longer be a campus-wide ideal for all faculty members at the same rank and step to receive the same salary. Rather, the ideal will be for faculty members at the same rank and step *within the same discipline* to receive the same salary. This is probably the best way for Berkeley to conceive of equity while preserving the rank-and-step system, remaining competitive, and decreasing inequities within disciplines.