



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 9, 2018

PAUL ALIVISATOS
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Subject: Modifying our norms for decanal searches

Dear Paul,

On November 5, 2018, Divisional Council (DIVCO) discussed your letter of October 12, 2018 regarding your ideas for modifying campus norms for decanal searches. Our discussion was informed by commentary from the committees on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (BIR) and Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate (DECC). The committee commentary is attached in its entirety for your consideration.

We appreciate the opportunity to opine on the matter of how decanal searches should be conducted. While DIVCO sees the value of adopting a single set of practices for conducting searches as discussed in your letter, we believe that the diversity of decanal units, and their individual leadership needs, supports a more tailored approach.

Open search process

DIVCO discussed the question of whether all decanal searches should be open. On this point, we find BIR's argument persuasive. We believe that there are instances in which an open search is warranted. For some professional schools, for example, an open search process may be indicated in order to identify a broad, diverse pool of applicants. Other decanal units, such as divisions of Letters and Science, may well have the requisite leadership and diversity within their ranks.

Confidentiality

With respect to maintaining confidentiality throughout the search process, DIVCO was generally supportive. We did note, however, that this will entail a change in culture and tradition for some units, and will be perceived by some faculty as contributing to a lack of transparency in the search process.

Use of search firms

DIVCO's consideration of the use of search firms for all decanal searches is in line with our discussion of open searches. Again, we believe that the decision to use a search firm

should be determined by the needs and unique circumstances of the decanal unit. We agree with DECC:

In general, we are not dogmatically opposed to consulting with search firms---we agree that the potential for identifying off-radar candidates, especially those that might improve the diversity of leadership, certainly could not be hurt by having more candidates brought to the search committee's attention. In general, broader searches for faculty searches seem to produce more diverse pools of candidates; it seems natural that the improvement would also extend to the decanal level.

At the same time, we believe that the status of the search, that is, internal or open, should drive whether or not a search firm is engaged.

We also underscore the importance of Senate consultation in the establishment of search committees through the committees on Committees, and Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, to ensure that thoughtfully constituted search committees remains a constant in all searches.

Diversity and leadership on campus

DIVCO agrees and supports your interest in having diverse pools of candidates for deans. Our discussion underscored the importance of developing leadership on campus. We noted that the Faculty Leadership Academy will contribute to developing a pool of diverse campus leaders. We encourage campus administration to expand such efforts, and look for additional means of supporting and developing diverse candidates for leadership on campus. We echo BIR: "the evident success of Berkeley's practice of "growing its own" professors (hiring the best new PhDs and mentoring them through tenure) might be extended to thinking about the appointment of deans as well."

In sum, DIVCO does not support a single set of practices for conducting decanal searches. Instead, we believe that campus administration, in consultation with the Senate, should establish a process for units to determine the parameters of decanal searches.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Barbara Spackman
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Cecchetti Professor of Italian Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature

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cc: Carol T. Christ, Chancellor
Oscar Dubón, Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion
Benjamin E. Hermalin, Vice Provost for the Faculty
Raka Ray, Chair, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
David Ahn, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Will Lynch, Senate Analyst, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Linda Corley, Senate Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Phyllis Hoffman, Associate Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

October 25, 2018

BARBARA SPACKMAN, CHAIR
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Modifying our norms for decanal searches

You have asked us to comment on the recent memo from A. Paul Alivisatos, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVCP), regarding suggested modifications to campus practices for conducting searches for deans. Those suggestions touch on three issues: 1) internal vs. open searches; 2) the extent of confidentiality of the process; and 3) the desirability of engaging search firms.

Although we see the logic of instituting a single set of practices for dean searches across the campus, we also observe that the campus houses a range of decanal units whose attributes and needs vary widely. It is possible that the gains in clarity and efficiency of adopting a single model for decanal searches could be outweighed by the losses—in excellence, and potentially in morale—of imposing a Procrustean practice across the board.

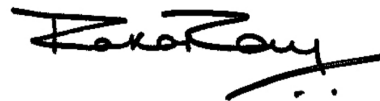
Given the relatively small size of Berkeley’s professional schools, we are persuaded that open searches are a good avenue for securing a broad, excellent, and diverse pool of applicants for decanal searches in these schools. However, the situation is different elsewhere on campus. We submit that in areas such as the biological sciences, social sciences, engineering, or the humanities, the campus already has among its faculty a large pool of top-rank potential applicants for any decanal position. As EVCP Alivisatos notes, Berkeley is a unique institution with distinct administrative structures, and administrators without experience of the campus sometimes require considerable time to become fully effective. This period of adaptation can entail a loss of functionality for the unit over a few years, a loss that might outweigh any advantages that come with hiring an outside candidate. Finally on this point, we would suggest that the evident success of Berkeley’s practice of “growing its own” professors (hiring the best new PhDs and mentoring them through tenure) might be extended to thinking about the appointment of deans as well. The institutional knowledge and intellectual affinities built over time can be great advantages for a dean, at least as valuable as the fresh perspectives that an outside appointment can afford. One answer to this might be that open searches allow for candidates with that institutional history to be considered alongside those with experience elsewhere, but we feel that such a change in policy would send a message that the upper administration lacks faith in the ability of the faculty to assume leadership positions.

We find the question of transparency and confidentiality to be a complex one with strong arguments on both sides. On balance, though, we agree with the EVCP that a process that maintains confidentiality at all stages while also actively consulting with the relevant constituencies will yield the best results for applicants and for the hiring decanal units.

In keeping with our views on internal vs. open searches, we are not persuaded of the need to engage search firms for all decanal searches. These firms can be helpful in situations where an open search is desirable and it appears especially difficult to identify and attract a strong and diverse pool of applicants. In many (perhaps even most) decanal searches, however, the additional expense of using a search firm would not appear to be repaid with a substantially different or better outcome than a search conducted entirely by the campus. It is possible for search committees to develop energetic programs of outreach to diverse candidates without the aid of a search firm, and we would hope that the campus would provide extensive support for such efforts.

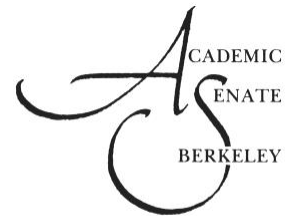
What emerges most clearly for us from reflecting on these three questions about search practices is the cardinal importance of deciding on the most appropriate process at the outset of any decanal search. We would welcome the articulation of a set of procedures for setting the course for each decanal search, and would be pleased to work with the Senate on this. Such procedures might include a vote by all faculty in the unit on the question of open vs. internal search, a transparent and consultative process for constituting search committees, and a plan for assessing the diversity of the pool in a given area (within and beyond Berkeley) in advance.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these suggestions for revising practices for decanal searches. We appreciate these efforts to bring clarity and consistency to this important dimension of campus hiring.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raka Ray", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Raka Ray
Chair

RR/wl



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

October 31, 2018

PROFESSOR BARBARA SPACKMAN
Chair, 2018-2019 Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: DECC's Comments on the Open Decanal Searches Proposal

DECC read and discussed the EVCP's proposal for adjusting decanal searches. Most of us do not have enough experience or expertise to have strong enough opinions to advocate for or against the proposed changes. Instead, we have some concerns and considerations that we would like to bring up.

Some of us agree that synchronizing search procedures across units is desirable. In general, ad hoc searches without guidelines seem less amenable to generating a diverse pool of candidates. Having accountability to a universal procedure seems intuitive. Many of us also agree that internal searches promote power dynamics and network effect that seem contrary to having a fair and open search, instead becoming an anointing of leadership that was already decided by powerful faculty within these units. That all said, other members do value the ability of units to tailor their decanal searches to their own idiosyncratic needs. However, even those with reservations seem open to the process of having a search firm help identify external candidates at the preliminary, "pool-gathering" steps of the search. That is, the main disagreement seems to be the extent and timing of the consultation with the search firm: some would prefer it be involved only very initially, while others prefer more involvement at all stages of the search.

About the costs, DECC feel like we do not have enough information about the costs of private searches to make an informed recommendation about the financial cost-benefit piece of the proposal. We imagine most faculty do not. If the hope is to generate faculty consensus around these new search procedures, we imagine many of us would like some more information about the typical cost for a search, with the understanding that these costs will vary across different units.

In general, we are not dogmatically opposed to consulting with search firms---we agree that the potential for identifying off-radar candidates, especially those that might improve the diversity of leadership, certainly could not be hurt by having more candidates brought to the search committee's attention. In general, broader searches for

faculty searches seem to produce more diverse pools of candidates; it seems natural that the improvement would also extend to the decanal level.

Members raised some concerns about how confidentiality would interact with the search committee's ability to gather information about the candidate. For example, would the search committee be able to contact the candidate's home institution to get a sense of her standing at her home institution? Some of us imagine these exercises could be managed while maintaining confidentiality, but perhaps some more detail on what "confidentiality" means in this context may help clarify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DAhn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "D" being large and the "A" and "hn" following in a connected script.

David Ahn
Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate

DA/lc