

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Updated August 2017

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## 1. Introduction.

The Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (Budget Committee) is a committee of Berkeley’s Academic Senate. Despite its official name, a leftover from its initial incarnation, it is an academic-personnel committee, not a fiscal-oversight committee. It is the most potent expression of the egalitarian philosophy of “faculty governance,” which has fostered and safeguarded the academic distinction of our institution for almost a century.

## 2. History.

The Budget Committee was founded on the principle that the credentials and accomplishments of faculty members should be reviewed primarily by their peers. This principle was first established in the early twentieth century in the wake of a faculty revolt against an autocratic administration. Prior to this revolt, the University of California (UC) President appointed all deans and department chairs, as well as the members of Academic Senate committees. Consultation with deans and chairs was usually perfunctory, and faculty salaries were set by the campus 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, as well as the creation of a standing committee to confer with the President “concerning appointments, promotions, tenure decisions, salaries and related matters.”<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Academic Senate, October 2, 1919, p. 358.

him [sic] respecting promotions, salaries, equipment, and related matters.”<sup>2</sup> 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 layered process of broad-based peer review.

As the UC system grew and more campuses were established, each campus developed its own version of the Budget Committee. On other campuses, these now bear the name Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), but Berkeley has retained the original designation. The precise responsibilities of these committees vary from campus to campus. Elsewhere, ultimate decisions about faculty members may be made by deans or other administrators without Senate advice, but the Budget Committee continues to play a central role in reviewing appointments, merit increases, reappointments, continuing appointments, threshold advancements, promotions, and retentions for Berkeley faculty members.

### **3. What the Budget Committee is.**

The members of the Budget Committee are appointed by the Committee on Committees (COMS), which is elected by the Academic Senate. The Budget Committee has nine members, who normally serve for overlapping terms of 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 similarly situated faculty across campus.

The Budget Committee works year-round, usually meeting once a week from July through December, and twice a week from January through June. The Committee makes recommendations to the campus Administration about hiring, advancing, and promoting ladder-rank faculty members; the salary component of retention cases; and the authorization or continuation of searches for new faculty members. It also considers some cases of non-ladder-rank colleagues, such as Lecturers and Adjunct Professors. In addition, the Committee makes recommendations to both the campus Administration and the Senate about a variety of policy issues, and it comments on the academic-program reviews coordinated by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic & Space Planning. The Budget Committee arrives at its recommendations through collective deliberation and consensus. The Committee tries to deal with all cases as expeditiously as possible, although often ones marked “urgent” jump the queue. (As a result, if a case is considered less rapidly, no negative inference about the results should be drawn.)

### **4. The process of academic review.**

The lion’s share of the Budget Committee’s work involves the analysis of academic-personnel cases. (In recent years, the Committee has reviewed approximately 900 cases per year.) Cases for appointment, merit increases, reappointments, threshold advancements, promotions, and retentions come forward from departments or Schools, along with supporting materials,

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<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the Academic Senate, April 19, 1920, p. 424.

including information provided by the candidates, such as self-statements and updated curricula vitae. If the case was prepared by a department, the relevant Dean then reviews the case; writes an assessment and recommendation (or supports that of the department, when applicable); 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 to Associate Professor or full Professor, or for a tenure-level appointment, the Budget Committee typically recommends members for a Campus Ad Hoc Review Committee (CAHRC), comprised of three to five faculty members, which is formally chosen by the Vice Provost for the Faculty. The CAHRC is carefully selected on the basis of the relevance of its members' research interests, and includes both members of the candidate's Department and colleagues from across the campus. When solicited, membership on such committees is an expected responsibility of ladder-rank appointees and is a cornerstone of the "faculty governance" tradition. The CAHRC reviews 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 candidate's submitted materials, the Department's recommendation (if applicable) and supporting materials, the Dean's recommendation, and (when applicable) an internal ad hoc report and /or the CAHRC report. Based on these case materials, the Budget Committee prepares a written analysis and assessment of the faculty member's record of achievement in research, teaching, service, and contributions to diversity. Only after the Committee has carefully discussed the case—the occasional exception being "consent" cases that require no collective discussion—and reached a consensus does it prepare the final written version of its analysis and recommendation.

This written assessment (called a "minute") communicates the Committee's reasoning to the campus Administration, which normally incorporates much of the minute into the letter to the Dean in which the Administration conveys its decision. This letter refers generically to "reviewers," a term that can mean the Budget Committee, the Chair, the Dean, the internal ad hoc committee, the CAHRC, the Vice Provost for the Faculty, the Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost, people who wrote external letters, and even the Chancellor, or some combination of the above.

Reconsideration of a case may be requested by a dean or department chair, or by the faculty member whose record has been reviewed. The Vice Provost for the Faculty may also request more information or clarification of the grounds for a recommendation. When the Budget Committee receives such a request, it will carefully review the new information that has been provided, or the Vice Provost's invitation to clarify its recommendation, and then offer an assessment and/or clarification; on that basis it will either make a new recommendation or

reaffirm its prior one. After reviewing the request for reconsideration and the Budget Committee's recommendation, the campus Administration may then alter its original decision.

In either an initial review or a reconsideration, the Administration may reach a different conclusion than the Budget Committee; such differences occur in a handful of cases each year.

Further information about the review process is available from the [Academic Personnel Office](#) and the [Academic Senate](#) website, as well as from the on-line [Berkeley Manual of Academic Personnel](#).

## **5. Merit increases and promotion.**

The Budget Committee is guided by the University of California's [Academic Personnel Manual](#). Merit increases for faculty members ("steps," or "increments" in Above Scale cases) are normally awarded for strong and balanced achievements in three areas during the review period: research, teaching/mentoring, and service. (A review period almost always begins one year before the effective date of the candidate's most recent review, and—except in rare instances, including some promotion and retention cases—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. Advancement to full Professor, Steps VI through IX, requires (in the words of the Academic Personnel Manual) "great academic distinction, recognized nationally ... in scholarly or creative achievement or teaching." Advancement to Professor, Above Scale, according to the Academic Personnel Manual, requires that the candidate's work "... has attained national and international recognition and broad acclaim reflective of its significant impact." More responsibility in University and campus service is also required for advancements to full Professor, Steps VI through IX, and to Professor, Above Scale.

Reviews of promotions to tenure or to full Professor, as well as Mid-Career Appraisals and advancement to Professor, Step VI, or to the Above Scale level, also focus on the three areas of evaluation since the last review, but they additionally consider the faculty member's achievements since her/his last threshold review. Three of these "milestone" reviews—promotion to tenured Associate Professor and full Professor, and advancement to the Above Scale level—require external letters of evaluation; such letters are optional for advancement to Step VI. (An internal ad hoc committee report, however, is required for advancement across the Step VI threshold.) The Budget Committee takes into account the source of the letters—those from recognized scholars at peer institutions tend to receive greater weight than those from others—and the thoughtfulness of their assessment of the candidate's qualifications for appointment or advancement. ([See the campus's external letters guidelines.](#)) As noted above, promotions to tenure and to Professor, as well as tenure-level appointments, also almost always require review by a CAHRC.

**Research:** In ordinary merit reviews, the record of research will comprise the accomplishments since the last merit review. Although standards may differ from field to field, normally the Budget Committee will consider the publication and reception of books (single-authored, co-authored, edited, translated, etc.); articles in refereed journals; articles in

non-refereed venues; creative accomplishments; and other kinds of publications, taking into account the reputation in the field of those venues and the citations of the work published (should the relevant citation counts be reported in the case materials). Conference papers, invited lectures, awards, fellowships, grants, and other indications of scholarly merit are also taken into account when judging the achievements of a particular period. The Budget Committee takes seriously the expert judgment of reviewers at earlier stages, including, when necessary, external letters from authorities in the field.

Teaching/Mentoring: Ideally, assessment of classroom teaching during the review period is based on a wide range of information. (See the campus's [policy for evaluation of teaching](#).) Student evaluations, as summarized and assessed by previous reviewers, are essential, including both quantitative scores (with relevant departmental benchmarks) and qualitative comments of students (or a synopsis thereof). Other information may be equally important when made available, for example, teaching materials, peer evaluation and self-assessment. Lack of success in a single metric 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 developing new courses and course materials. Prizes for distinguished teaching are also part of the record. In addition to regular classroom teaching, the Committee evaluates the frequency and success of student mentoring (for example, service as an undergraduate advisor or a member of master's and doctoral dissertation committees). Concerted efforts to improve teaching and/or mentoring also have an impact on the general assessment of this area of review.

Service: Berkeley faculty members are expected to perform many kinds of service, including service to their departments and, after they are tenured, to the campus (such as the Academic Senate). They also perform outreach service and service to governments, professional organizations, scholarly journals, and the community. In this as in other areas of evaluation, more is expected from more senior-level faculty, and full Professors are often asked to shoulder responsibilities for leadership in their departments or on campus. A description of campus guidelines regarding the evaluation of service may be found here: [http://bmap.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/Guidelines\\_for\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_Service1.pdf](http://bmap.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/Guidelines_for_Evaluation_of_Service1.pdf)

In reviewing each of the above categories, the Budget Committee also strives to acknowledge contributions to diversity the candidate has made during the relevant review period(s).

## **6. FTE allocation.**

Every year, the Budget Committee offers advice to the campus Administration about allocating faculty FTE ("full-time equivalents," i.e., faculty positions) to campus units. Requests concerning new 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 campus Administration's determination of the maximum number of new FTE slots available.

In considering FTE issues, the Budget Committee takes many factors into account, including the

strategic goals established by the campus, Chairs' and Deans' prioritized recommendations, the general distinction and trajectory of the Department, the Department's programmatic needs and workloads, and its contribution to the campus's overall research and teaching missions. In deliberating its recommendations, 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 sufficient FTE authorized to satisfy all of the reasonable FTE requests that come forward. The campus's call for FTE requests specifies the kinds of strategic planning information that units should provide, and units will want to supply all the requested information to make their requests as effective as possible.

## **7. Issues of concern to the Budget Committee.**

**Prompt Case Processing:** Faculty members often wonder why they usually do not hear about the results of their merit, reappointment, threshold advancement, or promotion cases until the spring, or even the summer or fall. Although the campus review 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. Several factors affect the timing of the final decisions. Timeliness in the original submission of materials by the candidate is an important first step, and in 2015 the campus instituted an [Automatic Deferral Policy](#) for non-mandatory review in which the candidate has not signed off on the Candidate Summary in AP Bears by February 1 of the year in question.

After a case is reviewed by a chair and/or an internal ad hoc committee, it leaves the department (if applicable) and goes to a dean. (In professional schools, the case ordinarily goes directly to the Dean.) Depending on a dean's workload, decanal review may take from several days to several months. The case is then forwarded to the Academic Personnel Office, which may need time to consult with the Dean's office about various details of and/or omissions from the case. Review by a CAHRC, when necessary, will delay matters further, often by several months. These committees can be difficult to convene (particularly during break periods), and their work may involve time-consuming preparation and deliberation. Only then is a case put into the Budget Committee's queue, with a turnaround time that can vary from a few days to several months (depending on the type of case, overall caseload, and time of year). After the committee issues its recommendation, the case proceeds to the Vice Provost's office, which can sometimes introduce additional delays.

The Budget Committee gives priority to urgent appointment and retention cases, to any other cases marked urgent by the Academic Personnel Office, to promotions and threshold advancements, and to non-urgent cases that are submitted by the relevant academic-personnel deadlines. (In recent years, the committee has successfully pursued the goal of processing all on-time cases in sufficient time to generate a tentative decision from the Vice Provost by the end of the fiscal year—June 30.) (See the campus's "[APO Deadlines for Deans](#)" calendar.) Routine merit cases submitted after the relevant academic-personnel deadlines receive attention only after urgent cases have been cleared from the agenda.

The Budget Committee continually strives to expedite its own processes, and to encourage

similar measures at other layers of review.

**Salary Inequities:** Given its unique position in processing personnel cases across all departments, the Budget Committee has long been concerned by broad issues affecting faculty salaries, and it has worked closely with the campus Administration to try to keep Berkeley competitive in faculty recruitment and retention. In a frequently market-driven environment, the Committee seeks to strike the right balance between thwarting efforts to lure away valued colleagues and maintaining equity with those on the faculty who may not, often because of loyalty to the institution, solicit or entertain such offers. Working with the Administration, the Budget Committee considers departmental and decanal requests for Targeted Decoupling Initiative salary increments, when they are available, to help address these concerns. The Committee is also concerned with inequities between the salaries of faculty members who have recently been recruited and retained and the salaries of faculty members who have not. Without ignoring the disparities between in salaries that may have emerged over time in different units, the Committee seeks to redress inequities within disciplines as much as it can.

**Committee Composition and Membership:** For some time, the Budget Committee's membership has generally consisted of three overlapping cohorts, with one cohort rotating off the committee in each of three successive years. This "staggered" structure helps to ensure both procedural continuity and dynamic consistency, while also renewing and replenishing membership in a manner faithful to the spirit of shared faculty governance. Each year, the Committee on Committees (COMS) works collaboratively with the current Budget Committee membership to identify promising new candidates. COMS then makes nominations for new Budget Committee members, and these candidates are subsequently reviewed by the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Academic Senate.