

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL RELATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18
December 2018

The Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations—popularly known as the Budget Committee, or simply the “BC”—is a committee of the Berkeley Division of the University of California Academic Senate. It is made up of nine senior-level faculty members, representing different academic disciplines and scholarly cultures.

The BC acts as a high-level academic-personnel committee for the Berkeley campus, among other functions. It considers a wide range of issues relating to Berkeley faculty, taking into account recommendations on these issues from Chairs and Deans, and making recommendations of its own to Campus Administration. There are five main clusters of issues that fall within the normal purview of the committee: (1) issues concerning the appointment, promotion, and advancement of individual members of the Berkeley faculty; (2) issues concerning the allocation of FTE positions to Berkeley departments and other academic units; (3) participation in the review of units and programs, as well as analysis and comment concerning their creation, elimination, renaming, and reorganization; (4) recommendations concerning search committees for Deans and other high-level administrative positions; and (5) issues concerning general policies and practices, including system-wide policies, that affect Berkeley faculty and the allocation of FTE positions. In addition, there are sometimes extraordinary academic-personnel-related questions that the BC is called on to address.

The following report describes the activities of the BC during the period from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018.

1. Personnel Reviews

1.1 Overview

Here is a summary of the cases processed in 2017-18:

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| Total Cases Received in 2016-17 and Carried Forward to 2017-18 | 61 |
| Total Ladder Rank Cases Transferred in 2017-18 | 808 |
| Total Non-Ladder Rank Cases Transferred in 2017-18 | 118 |
| Total Cases Transferred in 2017-18 | 926 |
| Total Cases Received in 2017-18 and Carried Forward to 2018-19 | 74 |

The total number of cases transferred to the Academic Personnel Office (APO) in 2017-18 was slightly higher than the number transferred in 2016-17 (890) and in 2015-16 (899), totals that had already been slightly higher than 2014-15 (808) and 2013-14 (843). Of the 926 cases transferred,

841 were AP Bears cases and 85 were non-digital, hard-copy—or “paper”—cases. The number of paper cases has been steadily declining in recent years (from around 220 in 2015-16). Endowed-chair cases have been moved to AP Bears recently. The remaining paper cases consist mostly of excellence reviews for Continuing Lecturers and threshold cases in the Researcher series.

87 were cases marked urgent, as opposed to 71 from the preceding year, and 100 in 2015-16. During the course of the academic year, the BC responded to 80 requests for reconsideration of our recommendations (the same number as last year), and the BC itself formally requested additional information in a total of 31 cases (vs. 67 last year and 34 the year prior).

A total of 111 Campus Ad Hoc Review Committees (CAHRCs) were appointed to consider new tenure appointments (26), promotions to tenure and final appraisals (42), and promotions to full professor (43). These breakdowns are roughly consistent with the numbers from previous years. (Last year there were fewer tenured appointments than in the past. This year, the figure has returned to a more usual level.) We and APO experienced continued difficulty in recruiting faculty members to serve in this important role (to be members of a CAHRC).

As is customary, BC recommendations in 2017-18 were accepted by the Berkeley Administration in nearly all cases. There were numerous cases in which the Vice Provost for the Faculty (VPF) requested clarification or additional information from us about a recommendation we had made. In some of these cases, the VPF visited the committee to discuss an aspect of our recommendation in more detail, a process that typically led to agreement between the committee and the Administration.

1.2 Timeliness policies

The BC continues to honor its commitment to transfer all on-time cases to APO expeditiously, so that decisions in these cases can be communicated to candidates by June 30th.

At this point, delays in notifying faculty about the outcome of reviews are due exclusively to failures on the part of faculty, departments, and decanal units to meet the posted deadlines for submission of case materials. We note that many cases with July 1, 2017, effective dates reached the committee only after that date; indeed, we received many more than 100 cases of this kind throughout the fall semester of 2017 and into the spring of 2018; we also dealt with a handful of cases (approximately 7) with effective dates from early years (2014-2016).

1.3 Process Innovations

The BC Annual Report for 2015-16 noted the completion of an electronic case-tracking system as well as the use of Box for online preparation of case minutes. The entire process has now been documented in the “Life Cycle of a BC Case,” which forms part of the orientation materials for new BC members.

The overall online process continued to function extremely well throughout the year. BC members have much greater flexibility in allocating time for case preparation, including while traveling. Case materials are easily and securely accessible both before and during meetings to

all committee members. Corrections can be made to minutes more easily during meetings. Staff spend less time on managing paper and more time on substantive issues.

One downside is a reduction in the collegial interactions among BC members that naturally occurred when all materials and minutes resided in California Hall. These interactions were particularly useful in enabling new BC members to tap into the expertise of their more experienced colleagues. To compensate, we allocate each new member a mentor to provide advice and feedback, and encourage new members to work on minutes in California Hall as much as possible in their first months on the committee, in order to benefit from consultation with the BC Chair, staff, and other committee members who may be present. A second drawback of the online system is that paper cases tend to be neglected. A good solution would be to move as many as possible of these online, as has slowly been happening with endowed chairs and other categories of cases.

2. Targeted Decoupling Initiative

The UC Office of the President (UCOP) allocated 3% of the total faculty salary pool for salary increases effective July 1, 2017. A certain portion of that amount was used to provide a 1.5% increase to the salary scales, effective July 1, 2017. The campus also raised the minimum level of decoupling for assistant professors to \$15,000. Larger-than-normal merit increases were also funded from these monies. What remained (about \$2.3 million) was applied to a one-year Targeted Decoupling Initiative (TDI). Similar one-year TDI allocation schemes were implemented in each of the prior two years, involving review processes that were labor intensive for Deans, the BC, and the Administration. For this year's program, the VPF, in consultation with the BC, developed a process that was less labor intensive, still with the goal of addressing inequities in the salaries of deserving faculty. This year's process was more automated, but all results were carefully reviewed. A procedure was developed for including Above Scale faculty in this year's exercise as well. The overall process of year-by-year TDI allocation exercises that has occurred for three years now is not one the BC finds sustainable, but the final results were satisfactory in the sense that the awards made further substantial contributions to correcting salary inequities within departments.

As we did last year, we note the strong consensus among BC members and staff that it would be preferable for UCOP to make multi-year commitments to the campuses concerning the pools available for salary increases in those years, so that a robust TDI program could be designed and implemented in a more thoughtful and deliberative process; one that is better coordinated with the ordinary schedule of faculty reviews. (No TDI program was implemented for salary increases effective July 1, 2018.)

3. FTE Allocations and Process

3.1 Overview

In 2017-18, the Berkeley Administration initially authorized a total of 54.00 new positions for target year (TY) 2019-20, as compared to 50.00 for TY 2018-19, and 45.00 for the two previous years. In addition, more than 20 searches were continued from TY 2017-18 to TY 2018-19, providing reasonable scope for departments to replenish faculty in most cases. We feel that this was a positive outcome, given the dire budget circumstances, and reflected the Administration's stated intent to redirect resources towards the campus's core missions of teaching and research.

Given the Administration's goal of expanding Berkeley's ladder-rank faculty by 100 FTE through fundraising, the BC incorporated discussions of how this expansion could best serve the multiple needs of the campus into its review process and communicated a set of thoughts and principles to the Administration at the end of the FTE Allocation Review Process this year.

3.2 Process Innovations

In the spring of 2015, a joint BC-Administration committee developed a new call letter in order to solicit FTE requests from departments and deans for TY 2017-18, as well as a new template for writing up such requests. That call letter has been further revised in an effort to emphasize long-term FTE planning. For the TY 2018-19 process, and again for TY 2019-20, we developed and refined sample narratives that would facilitate the creation by BC members of consistent and structured analyses and recommendations in response to each department's request. Where possible, our recommendations included an evaluation of the departments' long-term FTE plans.

3.3 FTE Recommendations

In its deliberations about FTE allocations for TY 2019-20, the BC proceeded in several stages. First, pre-committed FTE were identified; these included FTE "borrowed" against TY 2019-20 to support additional hires made in TY 2018-19 (particularly so-called "two-fer" and "three-fer" hires where a unit with one approved search identified more than one excellent candidate), as well as FTE promised to specific units as part of decanal hiring agreements. The remaining FTE were then allocated to decanal units (or to a cluster of similar decanal units, in cases where the units were comparatively small), roughly pro-rated according to size, with a substantial reserve of approximately 11.50 FTE retained to allow a flexible response to changing circumstances and urgent needs. Within each decanal unit or cluster of units, FTE were allocated according to the strength of each department's request. After that, the reserve FTE were allocated to individual departments based on needs that were identified in the first phase, regardless of decanal unit.

This process enables the BC to strike a reasonable balance between the need to maintain Berkeley's comprehensive academic strength across a wide range of very different disciplines and the importance of responding to new academic challenges and opportunities as they arise. The two-stage procedure is consistent with the general approach taken by the committee to FTE allocation in recent years. Once again, we found it helpful to increase slightly the size of the FTE reserve allocated in the second phase, which helped to ensure that all FTE allocations were well justified by reference to the academic values to which such decisions are properly responsive.

Despite the increase in the size of the flexible reserve, there remain enormous imbalances in faculty workloads across campus. The scale of these imbalances is such that they cannot be rectified through the normal process of FTE allocation.

One set of special circumstances is worthy of note: the Administration decided, in pursuit of the campus's diversity goals, to allocate 5.00 FTE to the College of Engineering in order to enhance the diversity of its faculty, with the searches conducted during 2017-18. The allocation of these FTE and their relation to the regular FTE allocation process was the source of a certain amount of miscommunication, and added complexity to the regular allocation process for TY 2019-20. After discussions with the Administration, it was decided that these 5.00 FTE would be considered part of the FTE allocation to the College over a three-year period. The BC has a strong commitment to expanding the diversity of Berkeley's ladder-rank faculty, and hopes that lessons can be learned from the way the process unfolded this year, so that future efforts can proceed more smoothly and within a framework that is clearly understood by all involved parties (e.g. departments, deans, the BC, the higher administration).

Before, during, and after this year's FTE process we saw an alarmingly large number of requests for off-cycle allocations of a number of kinds. (The most common categories are requests for spousal hires and requests for "two-fers.") We are concerned that Deans and Chairs, in making such requests, are not always as cognizant as they should be of the impact of off-cycle authorizations on future regular authorizations. No off-cycle authorization is free; such authorizations always replace what would have been a future regular authorization. We see a need for fuller discussion and policy in this area, with the goal of restraining as much as possible impulses to make off-cycle requests for FTE.

4. Academic Personnel Policies

The BC is customarily called on to provide advice about matters of policy pertaining to academic personnel on the Berkeley campus, and 2017-18 was no exception. We prepared written memoranda for the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate and for the Vice Provost for the Faculty (VPF) about a series of issues related to policy and practice that arose throughout the academic year.

Some of these memoranda contributed to revisions and clarifications of policies appearing on the Berkeley Manual of Academic Personnel (BMAP), which now serves as a transparent and canonical repository of policies to which faculty members, department chairs, deans, and others may refer.

Concerning academic-personnel policies and procedures for ladder-rank faculty, the BC contributed to clarifications to the policy for crediting work on books in progress within book-based disciplines. It also discussed with the VPF equity issues that arise from and among retention cases. There were continuing discussions with the VPF regarding the recognition of so-called "lifetime achievement" awards and other substantial forms of recognition. We spent a good deal of time on the question of the potential for racial and gender bias in student evaluations of teaching, and, in consultation with the Committee on Teaching, made a proposal to the administration on modifications to the required questions on end-of-semester evaluations.

The BC also discussed with the VPF forms of bias that creep into recommendations for accelerations from Chairs and Deans. We were pleased that the data shows that recommendations from the BC have been effective in reducing the amount of bias introduced at earlier review stages, but we remain deeply concerned about the general problem. The BC and the VPF also discussed the issues arising from requests for accelerated advancement to Above Scale. We also, in consultation with the VPF, refined and clarified the criteria for normal and larger-than-normal increases in Above Scale reviews. Finally, we collaborated with the VPF to develop a new policy to replace “excess of merit” with increases to the decoupled increment in certain cases.

The BC wrote memos to Divisional Council (DIVCO) on a number of academic-personnel issues, including the question of a policy on bullying by members of the faculty, the issue of systemwide revisions to the sections of the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) dealing with the Lecturer with Security of Employment (LSOE) series, and the UC system’s Negotiated Salary Trial Program.

5. Campus budgetary and planning issues

During 2017-18, the BC Chair participated, as usual, in the Gimlet Group, a joint Senate–Administration working group devoted to detailed analysis of budget matters.

On the academic-planning side, the BC wrote memos to DIVCO regarding the reports of the Incentives Working Group, the Task Force on Self-Supporting Graduate Professional Degree Programs (SSGPDP), the proposal to establish a SSGPDP within the College of Chemistry, and the proposal to establish a BA in Data Science.

6. BC Membership

The BC consulted with the leadership of the Academic Senate and the Administration, and collaborated with the Committee on Privileges and Tenure (P&T) and the Committee on Committees (COMS) regarding the make-up of an In-Lieu Budget Committee for the small class of cases from which the BC as a whole recuses itself. These include cases of current Committee members; faculty whose service on the Committee ended one year previously; and spouses, partners, and relatives of faculty who are currently serving as Committee members. Previously, the VPF had appointed an ad hoc committee of one former BC member to make a recommendation in such cases. It was felt that, in the interest of fairness, this class of cases deserves consideration equivalent, as far as practically possible, to that given to the cases of other Berkeley faculty. COMS now appoints a Standing In-Lieu Budget Committee composed of six former BC members that will meet once or twice each year to consider the relevant cases.

7. Topics of Continuing Discussion or Concern

Discussions or actions on several major issues were initiated or ongoing during the year but remain incomplete. In the interests of continuity, we list them here, with additional comments on a few of them.

7.1 Implementation of new questions on end of the semester student evaluations

7.2 Discussion of hiring modalities aimed at increasing faculty diversity

7.3 Discussion of principles behind the proposed expansion in size of the ladder faculty

The Administration has asked that the BC consider taking a more active role in the provision of strategic advice to the campus concerning long-range FTE planning, drawing on the BC's unique overview of the entire range of research directions being pursued by the Berkeley faculty. We began providing such advice in 2017-18. Coordination with Academic Senate leadership and with the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation on this front might be helpfully pursued in the coming years.

7.4 Ongoing concerns about equity issues related to faculty compensation

7.5 Ongoing concerns both about the cost of retention cases and about the adequacy of faculty compensation

Widening salary differentials between Berkeley and its private peer institutions have been a concern for many years. Based on the admittedly anecdotal information available to the BC in the form of outside offers received by Berkeley faculty members, the situation seems to be becoming more extreme in certain disciplines, including Economics, Statistics, Law, Molecular & Cell Biology, and some areas of Computer Science and related disciplines. Symptoms include external offers more than 100% higher than current salaries, as well as salary inversions between early-career faculty members and highly distinguished Professors, Above Scale. These discipline-specific disparities are largely buried in the periodic, campus-wide peer group comparisons that guide policy on salaries.

7.6 Self-supporting programs

The proliferation of SSGPDPs raises a number of academic-personnel issues: how much time faculty members may commit to such programs and how that affects their other teaching obligations; how such work is compensated; and the extent to which teaching in SSGPDPs forms part of the faculty member's teaching record for the purposes of merit increases.

7.7 Non-State-funded FTE

Both endowment funds and income streams from SSGPDPs may be used to establish non-State-funded (NSF) faculty positions. A long-standing principle at Berkeley is that the distinction be invisible to faculty members. There are, nonetheless, other important questions that remain open. Thanks to the VPF, good progress has been made in understanding what would constitute the sufficiency of income streams or endowment amounts for such positions at the new Assistant Professor level. Questions remain about the cost of hiring at more senior levels and about how the campus might deal with the very different costs of faculty positions (including start-up costs) in different units. Finally, further discussion is required regarding how NSF FTE in a given unit are to be counted when deciding on allocations of new, state-funded FTE to that unit. In answering this latter question, one must keep in mind that counting them fully removes any incentive for the unit to expend substantial efforts for NSF FTE fund raising. On the other hand, discounting them fully eliminates any fiscal benefit to the campus as a whole and results in unit workload-per-faculty that is strongly dependent on the unit's ability to raise funds.

7.8 Issues related to the size of units, and planning and budgeting for unit teaching needs

Several chairs and deans have requested, with some support from the administration, that the BC consider recommending multi-year commitments of new FTE, rather than just allocating FTE for

the next target year. Units have also asked for long-term guarantees of some minimum unit size in terms of the total number of FTE. Such guarantees might help reduce the excessive number of off-cycle requests seen recently. These kinds of forward commitments would allow units to make plans over longer time scales for matters such as space and curriculum with greater certainty. On the other hand, making hard FTE commitments in the absence of hard data on future teaching requirements risks misallocating resources and reduces flexibility in responding to changes in student demand and new intellectual directions.

In the most recent calls for FTE requests from units, the campus Administration has asked for an overall assessment of teaching needs and how they are to be met by a combination of ladder-rank and non-ladder-rank faculty and lecturers. The goal is that units should be able to decide on the best such combination within overall budget constraints that correlate with the unit's teaching needs. Of course, the hiring of a ladder-rank faculty member and the hiring of a lecturer, even with identical salaries, represent very different long-term financial commitments and incur very different levels of financial risk. Thus, the two kinds of money are not completely fungible. Units are also asked to think strategically about the intellectual shape of their disciplines in making their hiring plans, and to communicate this thinking as part of the strategic plan accompanying their FTE requests.

7.9 Academic-personnel processes in the Adjunct and Researcher series

The BC is called on to evaluate appointments and promotions in the Adjunct series, as well as promotions in the Researcher series. (We do not opine on regular merit increases in these series.) It is our experience that adherence to APM requirements regarding standards, duties, and assessment for individuals in these series is considerably less rigorous than it is for ladder-rank faculty, leading to frequent inequities and widespread confusion.

8. BC Staff

The BC is heavily dependent on the many contributions of its supremely dedicated, effective, and good-humored staff. BC staff see to it that committee members stay on top of their workloads, provide invaluable advice and analysis about crucial matters of academic-personnel policy and precedent, and meticulously review and correct all documents that leave the BC offices. They function as the committee's institutional memory, ensuring continuity in the committee's activities from year to year. Without them, it would be impossible for us to cope with the massive volume of cases that we are called on to review.

2017-18 saw a major staffing change as long-term BC manager Aimee Larsen left the unit to take up a position elsewhere on campus. The two other members of the BC staff, William Lynch and Amy Gonsalves, worked heroically to make sure the BC was able to fulfill all its functions during a transitional period. A search for a new manager led to Will Lynch's appointment to that position. A further search for someone to fill his earlier HR Analyst position was in the works at the end of 2017-18. We are deeply grateful to our staff for their commitment to our common mission and for the justified pride they take in the important work that they do for us. Aimee Larsen did a remarkable job over the years at helping the BC function efficiently, including during the transition to on-line case review. Will Lynch and Amy Gonsalves deserve special commendation for their contributions during the period of staffing transition.

Respectfully submitted,

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