



320 STEPHENS HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

June 1, 2021

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Grades have been turned in, and we have made it through an incredibly difficult year. COVID-19 vaccination rates continue to rise, and new infection rates continue to fall. The campus budget is growing slightly less dire. We are feeling optimistic going into the summer. As you wrap things up for the term, we hope that your summer is rejuvenating and that you return to campus for research and teaching with joy and ambition.

Leadership changes continue! We encourage you to sign up using [this brief form](#) to participate in listening session for the new EVCP.

For Senate committees, the end of the academic year is traditionally a very busy time, and this year has been no different. End of term deadlines motivate the timing of many requests for comment. Our committees all strive to complete everything on their docket before closing shop for the summer.

Since we last wrote to you, we held our spring full Division meeting, and the Divisional Council met four times. We are grateful to all the committees that did extra work to support the Senate's advisory role on many different campus initiatives. Below a summary of items that were under consideration at Divisional Council.

Divisional Meeting

At the Division meeting we heard from the Chancellor on topics related to the campus budget, the Mills College property, and reopening the campus. We presented the awards for [*Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times*](#), and took time to acknowledge the work of the many staff and campus leaders who helped faculty, staff and students make it through to this point where vaccinations are leading to reopening. The phrase "above and beyond" came up repeatedly in descriptions of how people approached their work over the last year. The meeting ended with an overview of a [Pre-proposal for the College of Data Science and Society](#).

Since the meeting, we've had many informal questions about the process of creating a new college, and where campus is in that process. As many of you know, campus has been engaged in discussions of how to develop and support a campus infrastructure for data science for a number of years. This pre-proposal sets out a new phase of that conversation. Divisional Council is asked to review it and, if appropriate, endorse and forward to the Systemwide Senate for consideration. (We began the process of discussing the pre-proposal at DIVCO on May 24th, and

will continue the discussion at a special meeting on June 7). The systemwide Senate would then conduct a review—likely in the fall—and send back comments and suggestions. At that point, the CDSS leadership team will revise and expand the pre-proposal, gathering additional input as they need. The complete proposal then goes through the same process here on our campus and at the Systemwide Senate before being submitted to the Regents for approval.

Divisional Council Meetings

Your Divisional Council met on April 19th, May 3rd, May 10th, and May 24th. Discussions included items requiring the Division's comments, approval and items where we gathered information from campus leaders.

Evaluation of teaching

For almost a decade the Senate has been looking at ways to improve evaluation of teaching. There has always been strong support for changes that provide instructors with meaningful feedback they could use to improve upon their work. Many have long recognized that numerical scores in student evaluations have limited use for this purpose. Teaching evaluation is also a part of appointment and promotion. Colleagues involved in the process consistently emphasize the role of narrative interpretation of a full body of evidence by Chairs and Deans in promotion cases. They emphasize that faculty are encouraged to provide a comprehensive self-assessment in much the way we are encouraged to provide a self-assessment of our research and creative efforts. Nevertheless, the absence of other independent measures of teaching leads to a widespread perception that the numerical scores on end of semester student evaluations play an outsized role.

Divisional Council received 6 proposals from the Committee on Teaching to improve on the evaluation of teaching. Proposals included changes to the questions, changes to emphasize the reporting of distributions of scores (as opposed to means or medians), and additional classroom review by colleagues. The topic was discussed at the April 19th, May 3rd and May 10th Divisional Council meetings. After discussion, Divisional Council accepted—with modest revisions—the suggestions related to what questions we ask and how else—besides numerical scores—teaching is assessed. DIVCO did not adopt the proposals to require departments to report distributions or comparative distributions. Our recommendations have been forwarded to the Vice Provost for the Faculty, Ben Hermalin.

Report of the Divisional Council Task Force on Online and Remote Instruction Post-COVID19

DIVCO discussed [this report](#), which focuses on how we can build on our (all-too!) extensive experiences over the last 18 months to improve pedagogy going forward. DIVCO agreed to keep it at front of mind in Fall as the faculty begin the work of defining a new normal in our teaching.

Infusing Inclusion

DIVCO heard from Sharon Inkelas, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Equity and Welfare, about an approach to making inclusive practices more integral to our normal ways of doing our work as a campus. Some information is available on the [OFEW website](#).

Scarlet Letter F

Some regulations regarding academic progress and curriculum “sit” at the systemwide level, others at the Division, others at the level of school or college. And sometimes, there is no process for appeal at the same level as the regulation. Such appears to be the case with the Scarlet Letter (or indelible) F: some of our colleges’ internal regulations appear to prohibit them from making exceptions to their own policies. DIVCO agreed to a proposal from the Committee on Courses and Instruction to encourage Schools and Colleges to review their own rules on such matters and to revise them so that they are able to make appropriate exceptions internally if they so desire.

Faculty Leadership Academy

The [2021 Faculty Leadership Academy](#) had as their object of study the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. They presented their report and recommendations to DIVCO, and will be forwarding a completed, written version soon. We look forward to working with FLA members to flesh out and act on some of those recommendations starting in the fall.

Approvals and Endorsements

DIVCO, informed by the Senate committees that reviewed them, approved or endorsed:

- *Certificate in Health Management
- *Revision to the presidential Policy on Gifts and Sponsored Awards
- *Revision to the Systemwide regulations on residency
- *Revision to Systemwide Policy regarding Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to bring them into compliance with federal policy

DIVCO forwarded to the Chancellor for consideration

- *A letter from Committee on Information Technology regarding the security breach at systemwide.
- *A letter from CAPRA regarding development of programs Moffett Field
- *The annual CAPRA Budget and Policy recommendations

This is the last Fortnightly of this academic year, and the last from Jenna and Ron. The Fortnightly will start up again in the fall, under the new leadership of [Ron and Mary Ann](#). We thank you very deeply for your attention, for your care for Berkeley and the Senate, and we wish you a very productive and recuperative summer.

Fiat Lux,

Jennifer Johnson-Hanks

Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate (2020-21)

Professor of Demography and Sociology

Ron Cohen

Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate (2021-22)

Professor of Chemistry and Earth and Planetary Sciences