

October 12th, 2020

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It has been nearly a month since the last *Fortnightly*, but we are holding on to the name, even if we can't keep up with the schedule! The theme of this edition of the *Fortnightly* is compassion, for ourselves and for each other: compassion across categories (faculty or staff, lecturer or administrator, student or postdoc) and across other kinds of difference. Most of us are struggling in month eight of the extended emergency. People are scared, their necks hurt, and they are tired. Compassion in these days can mean doing less—some important things can be postponed, and less important ones foregone--and making allowances we would not normally make.

Many of our students would be grateful if their classes were recorded, not only for the benefit of those in distant time zones for whom the class time falls in the middle of the night but also for those who participate real time but miss something in their notes or have connection challenges at a key point in the lecture. They would also be grateful if they could attend class without being required to keep their cameras on. Although we can see our students in a lecture hall, being spotlighted in a tiny *Zoom* box can feel to them like a more invasive form of surveillance. *Zoom* fatigue is real, for our students as well as for us, and recording your classes and allowing cameras off can be forms of compassion. As ever, advice about teaching in the pandemic is available [HERE](#).

If you can, have compassion for yourself as well. But don't beat yourself up for not being able to have compassion for yourself right now! Many of us are behind on everything—if you are behind, you are not alone. If you are having trouble focusing, or are checking your news feed every three minutes, you are not alone. Under COVID-19, there is more potential for strain and conflict than usual. A revised description of resources for faculty facing difficulty, and especially for conflict resolution, is [HERE](#), and resources for staff and faculty are [HERE](#).

Some other things that are going on now:

*Planning for spring instruction is underway, with the hope and expectation that some small-scale in-person instruction will be possible. The Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI), under the leadership of Estelle Tarica, has prepared an instruction FAQ for faculty, available [HERE](#). They will continue to update the FAQ as more information becomes available.

*To help us learn how to return to class safely, as well as provide some much-needed interaction in these distanced times, the campus is seeking permission from the City of Berkeley for a very small-scale pilot of outdoor in-person instruction. The well-being of our community is paramount, so this will only go forward if everyone is confident that it is safe.

*There is also good news! Our colleagues Jennifer Doudna and Reinhard Genzel won Nobel Prizes in Chemistry and Physics, respectively. More Information about Genzel is [HERE](#) and about Doudna is [HERE](#). In addition, our colleague Polina Lishko was awarded a MacArthur fellowship for her work in reproductive physiology, as described [HERE](#). Warmest congratulations and thanks to all three—your intellectual leadership inspires and excites all of us, and makes us proud to be part of the Berkeley community.

*The 150th anniversary of the Regents action to admit women on equal terms with men was Saturday, October 3rd. Celebration co-chairs Oliver O'Reilly and Sharon Inkelas, whose leadership all year has been extraordinary, are raising funds for a permanent memorial to the history of women at Berkeley. You can read more and donate [HERE](#).

*This year, election day is likely to be more of an election season, as people have already started voting and vote counting is likely to take some time beyond November 3rd. Many people are feeling anxious about the election, and we therefore encourage you to refrain from holding exams on November 3rd and 4th. You might consider using some class time to discuss the election, remembering our commitment to welcoming a diversity of viewpoints in our classrooms.

The DIVCO meeting of September 14th was focused on information and the meeting of October 5th on actions. On September 14th your Divisional Council learned about three topics:

*From Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate Division Lisa García-Bedolla, we learned about the steps that Graduate Division is taking to support graduate students in these difficult times. Like us, many of them are having trouble advancing in their research, as libraries remain closed and labs are only operating at 25% capacity. In addition, graduate students are facing one of the worst job markets in decades, and many are understandably anxious. In response, Graduate Division is extending deadlines, allowing students to be enrolled part-time, and allowing departments to forego admissions without reducing the block grant they receive next year. More information is available [HERE](#).

*Director of Undergraduate Admissions Olufemi "Femi" Ogundele and Deputy Director of Undergraduate Admissions Abby Jones spoke to DIVCO about last year's admissions cycle and what they expect for this year. Note that this conversation took place before the release of the admissions audit, and also that neither Ogundele nor Jones worked in Berkeley admissions during the timeframe covered by the audit. Last year, they were able to recruit a truly excellent and [diverse](#) class, by increasing outreach across California, revising our communications materials, and improving training of admissions officers. This year, they will have to admit a class with very disrupted grades from spring 2020 and without SAT/ACT scores. They are working closely with the Senate Committee responsible for admissions policy (AEPE) under the leadership of Sara McMains, to determine how admissions will work this year.

*Division chair Johnson-Hanks, with help from CAPRA chair Paul Fine, gave some background to the Berkeley budget. A video of that presentation, for those who want to know why the budget is like Dwinelle Hall, will be made available.

On October 5th, we took up four issues for discussion and possible action.

* It has been 31 years since the Berkeley Division approved Regulation 300, which created the American Cultures requirement. Divisional Council (DIVCO) discussed how we might appropriately review that requirement, especially in light of renewed calls for social justice and the aspiration that Berkeley should be an actively anti-racist campus. No decision was taken, and we will return to the issue in a later meeting. If you have thoughts about this, please address them to Chair Johnson-Hanks (johnsonhanks@berkeley.edu).

*It is currently the case that if a faculty is suspected of violating the Faculty Code of Conduct for reasons other than sexual violence/sexual harassment, the Vice Provost for the Faculty appoints an ad hoc investigatory committee to advise whether there are sufficient grounds to take the case to the Privilege and Tenure Committee for adjudication. DIVCO discussed whether a change should be made to this process, and assigned the Chair and Vice Chair to formulate a proposal to create a Special Committee of the Division to serve in this capacity. We will vote on the proposal at the next meeting.

*Campus Ad Hoc Review Committees (CAHRCs) can substantially slow down hire, tenure, and promotion cases, and add to the already heavy service burden of faculty. In accord with a well-crafted suggestion from Vice Provost for the Faculty Ben Hermalin, DIVCO voted in support of increasing the circumstances under which CAHRCs can be waived.

*The Faculties of the Colleges and Schools, usually in the form of their Faculty Executive Committees, have the authority to approve “minor changes” in degree programs without referring them up to the Division level. DIVCO considered the question of what constitutes a “minor change”, and voted in agreement with the recommendation from the Committee on Rules and Elections, chaired by Keith Gillless, that any change that entails an exception to Division policy is by definition not “minor” in this sense.

The next meeting of DIVCO will be on October 19th. The agenda will include an item about the Long-range Development Plan (LRDP) and Campus Master Plan update, among others.

As ever, we are here to help and support you. Please always feel free to come to us with questions and concerns. We are in these hard times together, and we will get through them together.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson-Hanks

Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Demography and Sociology

Ron Cohen
Vice Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Chemistry and Earth and Planetary Sciences