

The Fortnightly

January 28, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Happy new year! Your Divisional Council met for the first time in 2020 and the Year of the Rat on Monday, January 27. It was an extended meeting to address an unusually dense agenda. Even the announcements were more numerous than usual:

- We continue to seek ways to increase faculty participation in the governance of the university, particularly from earlier career faculty, and welcome people stepping forward now to serve on committees for 2020-21. Please encourage especially those colleagues who have not yet served on Senate committees to participate. The form is available at: <https://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/volunteer-service>
- As we face increasing challenges to sustaining instruction, there are two upcoming town halls on instructional resilience. These are opportunities to learn about practical solutions, technological and not, for keeping courses running under difficult circumstances. A town hall for instructors will be held on Tuesday, February 4 from 12-1 in [Academic Innovation Studio](#) in 117 Dwinelle Hall. A town hall for students and staff was held on Tuesday, January 28.
- A new policy has gone into effect governing how people who are not affiliated with the campus may audit courses. This is important for all instructors. Please see: https://evcp.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/policy_for_auditing_classes_at_uc_berkeley.pdf
- Working in collaboration, several groups across campus, including the ASUC; the Provost's Office; the Academic Senate; Graduate Division; and the Special Faculty Advisor to the Chancellor, Sharon Inkelas, a new Academic Accommodations Hub has been created. Here are resources, policies, and best practices regarding the Disabled Students Program, the Honor Code, illness, sexual violence/sexual harassment, etc. as they intersect with instruction. Instructors, including GSIs, are strongly encouraged to review this resource, and provide a link to it in their syllabi. See: <https://evcp.berkeley.edu/programs-resources/academic-accommodations-hub>
- The year-long celebration of 150 Years of Berkeley Women has begun, with special thanks to Cal Athletics and the Cal Women's Basketball team. See <https://150w.berkeley.edu> for information and ways to get involved.

Following the Announcements, we began a slew of business. DIVCO authorized the creation of a new working group to provide faculty perspectives and support to the Office of University Development and Alumni Relations (campus fundraising), Cal Alumni Association, and Government and Community Relations. Any faculty interested in working collaboratively with these organizations should contact the chair of the Senate.

DIVCO then reviewed revised drafts of five Signature Initiatives proposals, developed by groups of faculty as part of the Campus Strategic Plan begun in 2018. These large-scale visions for

campus research and teaching across broad domains are hoped to serve important roles in fundraising, and also jumpstart faculty collaborations going forward. Information about the Signature Initiatives is available at: <https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/signature-initiatives>

The next topic for DIVCO was the reports of the Undergraduate Student Diversity Project. Chancellor Christ has made increasing diversity of faculty, students, and staff an important campus priority. Three working groups focused on ways that admissions policy; outreach and recruitment; and campus experience might be improved in order to promote a more inclusive and diverse undergraduate student body. DIVCO endorsed many of the suggestions in the reports, which are available under the “Diversity” heading at: <https://strategicplan.berkeley.edu/implementation/>

The next substantive report to receive DIVCO review was the report from the inaugural class of the [Faculty Leadership Academy](#) on the topic of the future of graduate education. This report advocates better support for high quality mentorship, as well as an increased focus on graduate education to address pressing public needs and issues.

DIVCO was asked to comment on proposed revisions of APM 120 concerning the use of emeriti titles. This is a Systemwide issue, as the APM (or “Academic Personnel Manual”) governs faculty at all ten campuses, plus the national labs and the Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources. The Berkeley Division was not convinced of the necessity of the proposed revisions, except for the need to find a workable gender-neutral title in place of emerita/emeritus.

We next heard an update on the work on one of our important committees, Undergraduate Council, from its chair, Jonah Levy. Undergraduate Council (hereafter UGC) is a fairly new committee, the product of a merger three years ago between two distinct undergraduate-facing committees. UGC is charged with advising the Senate on matters related to undergraduate curriculum development, participating in departmental reviews and proposals for new undergraduate majors and schools, and advising the Senate on issues related to the quality of undergraduate student life. Within that broad mandate, UGC has three current priorities. The first of these is to improve accommodations and services for students with disabilities. As Chair Levy noted, “UC Berkeley basically invented the disability rights movement, and UGC is working hard to ensure that the university reaffirms its historic commitment.” The second priority for UGC right now is to improve other student-facing services, including financial aid, the Career Center, and the Office of Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination. Finally, UGC has had a third priority of promoting the use of undergraduates to help teach undergraduate courses; however, this project has run into a major roadblock recently as an arbiter ruled against this practice in EECS. For more information about UGC and its work, see <https://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/UGC>.

The last hour of our meeting was devoted to learning some history of the Academic Senate itself, as well as the State Law and Regental Bylaws that govern its standing, from Robert May, UC Davis Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and former Systemwide Academic Council chair. The key points in this conversation concerned how the UC Academic Senate is exempted from certain provisions under the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act, because

in certain capacities we serve more as “appointees”, like federal judges, than like “employees” in the way that either union members or conventional administrators might.

The next meeting of DIVCO will be February 10th. Please look forward to attending the spring meeting of the whole Berkeley faculty (called the Division Meeting) on Thursday, April 30th, 3-5pm in Sibley Auditorium, Bechtel Engineering Center. These open meetings are an important opportunity to learn about campus beyond your department or school.

Thanking you for your engagement and interest and wishing you a successful Spring semester.

Kind regards,

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150 Years of Women at Berkeley

