

Proposed Resolution on the Faculty Housing Allocation Policy

WHEREAS the current allocation policy for on-campus purchased housing is based on obsolete assumptions about the housing market in Santa Cruz and no longer adequately addresses the needs of the faculty, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED:

that new faculty members, having been told that they will be given priority in the allocation of housing on campus, must not lose priority to faculty members hired after them without ever having been given the opportunity to purchase an adequate house on campus; *AND*

that the housing allocation policy as it applies to all faculty members must be revised to provide a fair and straightforward policy that best addresses the current needs of the faculty.

DISCUSSION:

A recent study conducted by the UCSC administration and the Faculty Welfare Committee[1] identified affordable housing as the single greatest concern for the faculty. The study noted that "[r]esults of the survey indicate a near consensus of opinion that the housing crisis in Santa Cruz is acute." Almost 90% of respondents (100% of junior respondents) considered housing to be the most important issue for junior faculty, with 86% of respondents rating it "extremely severe" or "severe." Without some form of assistance, most new faculty members simply cannot afford to live within a reasonable distance of campus[2]. This crisis has reached the point where many new faculty members from all divisions are considering leaving UCSC; some already have. It is also becoming a major recruiting issue and a serious morale issue for the entire University community.

The current system for allocating on-campus housing is based on the obsolete assumption that everyone on the waiting list will have the opportunity to buy a house on campus within 2 years. This system actually consists of three lists:

- Faculty who have been with UCSC for less than 2 years and do not own a house on campus.
- Faculty who have been with UCSC for more than 2 years and do not own a house on campus.
- Faculty who already own a house on campus.

After 2 years at UCSC, regardless of whether or not they have had the opportunity to buy a house on campus, people on the "new faculty" list (A) move to the bottom of the "old faculty" list (B). When a house becomes available, it is offered to the first person on each list, rotating through the lists, then the second person, and so on, until somebody wants it.

No new faculty housing has been built on campus recently and with the recent dramatic changes in the housing market in Santa Cruz there has been extremely little turnover in existing faculty housing. Very few houses have been offered to anyone on the lists and most new faculty members, all of whom were promised priority in housing allocation, never get the priority they were promised and drop to the bottom of the "old faculty" list without ever having had the opportunity to purchase a house on campus. The only way a new faculty member has an

opportunity to buy a house on campus is if one just happens to become available when the faculty member has been here for just under 2 years. Furthermore, with the next planned development on campus at least two years away from completion, virtually everyone currently on the "new faculty" list will find themselves at the bottom of the "old faculty" list by the time housing is available, thus making it unlikely thus making it likely that many of those currently waiting for housing will not be housed by this development.

If something is not done about this situation, the future of UCSC itself is at risk - we cannot have research excellence and an uncommon commitment to education without a minimal commitment to newer faculty members who came to UCSC in good faith. These faculty members are at the stage in their careers when they are mobile; some are considering leaving and some already have. The senior faculty, department chairs, and deans have already invested great time, money, and energy in the recruitment process that resulted in their hiring and being integrated into our university. Therefore it is both right and politic, as well as least wasteful of resources, to create an allocation policy that is transparent and just, in the hopes of encouraging these newer faculty members to consider UCSC a viable place for their careers.

This Resolution provides a mandate to the campus administration and the appropriate committees of the Academic Senate to address this important issue. Moreover, this Resolution specifies the guiding principles that any new policy must embody: that new faculty members, having come here with the promise of priority in housing, do not lose that priority to subsequently hired faculty members without ever having been given the opportunity to exercise it; that any solution be fair and straightforward; and that any solution take into account the current realities of the housing market in Santa Cruz.

It is our hope that with this mandate the Administration and the Senate will work together quickly to craft and implement such a policy.

Respectfully submitted,
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- [1] Faculty Recruitment and Retention at UCSC: Results of a Joint Administration/Senate Information-Gathering Effort, January 2001
[<http://senate.ucsc.edu/cfw/Housing.Rpt.Jan01.html>]
- [2] The average price of a house in Santa Cruz County is \$590,000
[<http://www.ror.com/html/stats.htm>]. It is significantly higher anywhere near campus.