COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL
Annual Report, 2002-03

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

Duties

The Committee on Academic Personnel advises the Chancellor, the EVC, and/or the Divisional Deans on appointments, promotions, merit increases, and mid-career appraisals for Senate faculty, adjunct faculty, and professional researchers. CAP makes recommendations on Merit Equity files, and also advises the Academic Senate and the administration on other policy matters related to academic personnel issues. CAP advises; it does not decide.

In 2002-2003 CAP had eight members each quarter—one from Arts, one from Engineering, and two each from Humanities, Physical and Biological Sciences, and Social Sciences. Ten faculty members served at least one quarter on CAP during 2002-2003.

The members of CAP were repeatedly struck by the breadth and quality of our colleagues’ accomplishments. The overwhelming majority of personnel files, which we were privileged to review, were filled with evidence of fascinating research, dedicated teaching, and energetic service to diverse communities of scholars and citizens. In the overwhelming majority of cases, UCSC faculty members carry out their jobs with exceptional skill and remarkable energy. We felt honored to have had the opportunity to learn of the extraordinary variety and outstanding quality of our colleagues’ work.

Workload

In 2002-2003 CAP continued its established practice of meeting on Thursday afternoons. The Committee met 28 times during the academic year (7, 10, and 11 meetings, in Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters, respectively).

CAP made recommendations on 261 personnel cases—47 more than in 2001-2002, 36 more than in 2001-2002, 29 more than in 1999-2000, and 86 more than in 1998-1999. It also sent the Executive Vice Chancellor proposed members for 51 ad hoc committees. CAP constituted itself as the ad hoc committee 16 times, 4 times for appointment files, 10 times for promotion to Professor, and twice for Merit Increase to Professor, Step VI.

CAP reviewed 50 appointment files. CAP recommended appointment in all but one case. CAP’s recommendation was usually, although not always, at the same rank and step proposed by the Department. As of July 31, 2003, 35 candidates accepted, 12 declined, 2 withdrew, and 1 decision is still pending. This is a lower rate of acceptance of offers from previous years. Although we do not know why this occurred, two factors seem to us to have been at least part of the explanation: 1) Departments are aggressively recruiting the very best candidates nation-wide. We lost candidates to top-ranked research universities such as Yale and Berkeley. 2) The very high expense of housing in the Santa Cruz area relative to our competitor universities continues...
to pose a barrier to recruitment. Given these conditions, we believe that a roughly 2/3 acceptance rate is quite strong, but, of course, we would all wish to do better.

**CAP’s Recommendations Compared to Administrative Decisions**

During 2002-2003 there continued to be a very high rate of agreement between CAP’s recommendation and the final administrative decision on personnel cases. The two concurred in 94.63% of the cases (247 agreements out of 261 cases).

The final administrative decision did not agree with CAP’s recommendation in 14 cases:

*Appointments:*

- In 1 case, CAP recommended a higher step (with the same salary) as the administrative decision.
- In 3 cases, CAP and the Departments recommended a salary $1,000 less than the administrative decision.
- In 1 case, CAP recommended a lower step than the administrative decision.
- In 1 case, CAP and the Dean recommended a higher step than the Department. The administrative decision agreed with CAP and the Dean on the step, but offered a higher salary than that proposed by any previous review level.

*Merit Increases:*

- In 1 case, the Department and CAP recommended a higher step and salary than the administrative decision.
- In 1 case, CAP recommended the same step as the administrative decision, but the CAP majority did not agree with the salary recommendation of the Department. The administrative decision on salary concurred with the Department and the CAP minority.
- In 1 case, CAP recommended a lower step than the Department. The administrative decision granted less than CAP’s recommendation.
- In 1 case, while all review levels agreed on the step increase, CAP recommended a higher salary than the Department, and the administrative decision on salary was less than CAP’s recommendation, but higher than the Department’s recommendation.

*Accelerated/Greater-Than-Normal (GTR) Merits:*

- In 2 cases, CAP’s (and the Department’s) recommendation exceeded the administrative decision.
- In 1 case, all review levels agreed on step; CAP’s (and the Department’s) salary recommendation exceeded the administrative decision.

*Salary Increase:*

- In 1 case, CAP’s salary recommendation exceeded the salary granted by the administrative decision.
Consultation

As is customary, the EVC and Divisional Deans met occasionally with CAP at the administrator’s request to discuss cases where the administrator’s assessment of the case differed from CAP’s. We also discussed various policy issues with the EVC. The CAP Chair also visited the Council of Chairs of the Divisions of Arts, Engineering, and Social Sciences; visits to the Council of Chairs of the Divisions of Humanities and Physical and Biological Sciences are scheduled for the fall. The purpose of the meetings was to clarify CAP’s procedures, answer questions, and listen to any concerns raised by Department Chairs.

Case Flow

Distribution of the workload for CAP was much more evenly distributed than in previous years. CAP made recommendations of 32 cases in the Fall Quarter, 128 in Winter, and 102 in Spring. Additionally, in contrast to previous years, only one case (a merit equity file) was held over. No tenure or other promotion file was held over. Two reasons account for this happy event:

1) The new rule, promulgated by EVC Simpson last year, that all candidates must turn in their completed personnel files to their Departments by the beginning of the academic year proved hugely helpful. By ensuring a much speedier start to the entire process, this rule helped to avert the traditional “bunching” of cases in the Spring Quarter, and the subsequent, inevitable carrying over of cases. This policy change was strongly recommended by previous CAPs. They were entirely correct in their assessment of the felicitous consequences of such a rule.

2) A number of our colleagues were willing to serve on ad hoc committees at the very end of the academic year, a time when everyone is, of course, already swamped with work. Such selfless service is particularly praiseworthy. You all know who you are—and CAP thanks you, again, for your heroic efforts!

Ad Hoc Committees

During 2002-2003, 141 Senate members served as members of ad hoc committees. Two people served 3 times, 8 people served twice, and 130 people served once. The academic personnel process cannot function without our colleagues’ continued willingness to serve on ad hoc committees, and CAP thanks each and every Senate member who so served. We also thank previous CAPs for creating a database of faculty research specialties, which makes it much easier to constitute ad hocs now compared with the past. Here, again, last year’s CAP has benefited from the hard work of previous CAPs.

As noted earlier, CAP constituted itself as the ad hoc committee 16 times during 2002-2003. We did this in order to relieve our colleagues of the burden of serving on ad hocs in cases where we felt that an ad hoc would add little new information. Given the ever-larger volume of cases as the campus continues to expand, we expect to continue to follow this practice in the coming year.
Assessment of teaching in the personnel process

CAP continues to discuss the best way(s) to evaluate teaching performance. Several issues emerge.

1. It is essential that the student evaluation return rate not be too low. In cases where the return rate is low, we have no basis on which to assess either positive or negative student comments. (Are they representative? Are they “outliers”? We can’t tell.) We urge all faculty, and all Department Chairs, to take steps to ensure consistently high return rates on student evaluations.

2. Very occasionally, there is a discrepancy between the student evaluations and the Department letter’s characterization of the faculty member’s teaching. At least one CAP member—and usually most members—reads every single teaching evaluation. We would much prefer a frank assessment of teaching to any (futile) attempt to paper over difficulties in teaching. If there are teaching problems, evidence that the faculty member has taken them seriously (e.g., has been working with the Center for Teaching Excellence, has sought advice from stronger teachers in the department) can be very helpful for the candidate. Department letters should include such information.

3. One “best practice” followed by some Departments is to present a table in which the percentage of “very good to excellent” responses is given. Such summary information is very useful.

4. If there is any evidence other than student evaluations, by all means this should be included in the department’s letter.

5. CAP continues to prefer to see teaching over a broad spectrum of the curriculum: lower-division, upper-division, and graduate courses. If the teaching is narrowly focused (particularly on the graduate level), it would be helpful if the chair’s letter explained the rationale for the course assignment.

Forms of Departmental Letters

1. Very long letters (e.g., 15 pages) are not particularly helpful. We recognize that Departments rightly wish to be thorough. However, we believe that this can be done without excessive length. One possibility is for the letter to include a “summary statement” for each of the three areas of research, teaching, and service in a letter of no more than 5 pages.

2. It is also not necessary to evaluate each and every publication (when there are many of these), but rather, to group the work into areas of inquiry and then to evaluate the contribution, which the research has made within such a sub-field.
3. In nearly all cases, six outside letters suffice to provide a representative perspective of how a candidate’s work is viewed in the wider community of scholars and/or artists. The additional value of still more letters is relatively slight.

4. *It would be very helpful if department letters were to explain negative or abstaining votes.* In some cases, CAP receives a department letter which reports a split vote (typically, a minority of negatives), but there is too often no explanation of these votes. In some cases, we have then sent the file back to the department, requesting clarification. This delays the process and could be avoided by a simple explanation of split votes in the original Department letter.

**Other Issues**

1. *Criteria for advancement:* CAP reads the APM as creating two classes of faculty advancements: (a) those where demonstrated excellence in *all three* areas research, teaching, and service is required, and (b) those in which there is some “substitutability” or “fungibility” among the three categories—that is, for example, if a candidate’s service record is weak, excellent research and/or teaching may compensate for that weakness. Category (a) consists of: 1) Promotion to tenure, 2) Promotion to Professor, 3) Merit Increases from Professor V to Professor VI, 4) All Merit increases above Professor, Step VI, 5) Promotion to Above Scale, 6) All salary increases of “Further Above Scale”. Category (b) includes 1) all non-promotion Merit Increases for Assistant Professors, 2) all non-promotion Merit Increases for Associate Professors, and 3) all Merit Increases for Professor below Step VI. This interpretation is based on our reading of the APM, a reading with which the EVC agrees. Department letters should reflect this. [See e.g. http://www2.ucsc.edu/ahr/policies/CAPPM/400220.htm, H-4 (c)]

2. *Accelerations/GTRs:* In cases in which the Department is requesting an acceleration or a greater-than-normal increase, the Department letter should explicitly justify such an action.

3. *Personal statements:* Department Chairs would do well to advise candidates to write succinct personal statements. There is little point in such statements recapitulating what will be contained in the department’s letter. Personal statements should clarify issues and provide a context for the faculty member’s work. CAP believes that this can be done in 5 pages or less.
4. Memoranda for Action: CAP also reviewed 31 “Memoranda for Action” during 2002-2003. The subjects of these were as follows:

a) Bylaw 55 changes – 8  
b) Unit 18/Rate Card – 5  
c) Proposed APM changes – 4  
d) Endowed/Presidential Chair Nominations – 4  
e) Divisional CAP Nominees – 3  
f) FTE/Other Transfers – 2  
g) Time off Clock – 2  
h) Miscellaneous – 2

Conclusion

None of the work of CAP would be even remotely possible without the very hard work of the exceptionally competent staff of the Committee and of Academic Human Resources. We especially thank Pamela Edwards for managing to maintain her sense of humor and for her unfailingly swift responsiveness to any and all requests for information. We are also deeply indebted to Barbara Brogan, Breck Caloss, Nancy Aebersold, Michelle Brady, Chris Bumgarner, Nancy Degnan, Liz Fohs, Nancy Furber, Linda Petrakis, and Susan Swim. Their support, wisdom, and detailed, rigorous knowledge of the personnel process of UCSC made our lives much easier.

Finally, we once again thank all of our colleagues who have contributed to the personnel process. The process works as well as it does only because of your hard work.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL
Tom Banks (W, S)  
Barry Bowman  
Joyce Brodsky  
Angela Davis (W, S)  
Emily Honig  
Peter Kenez (F)  
Joel Primack (F)  
Anujan Varma  
Candace West  
Alan Richards, Chair

August 28, 2003