

*The following message was sent to all Academic Senate Members*

# UC SANTA BARBARA

## Academic Senate

### Divisional Chair's Newsletter - October 2020

Welcome to this edition of the Divisional Chair's Newsletter, which is designed to keep Senate members informed about recent events in the Academic Senate.

Dear Colleagues,

At the start of our new academic year, I write to you as Divisional Chair of our Academic Senate with news about the upcoming fall quarter, and information on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I am pleased to announce the appointments of Professor Rita Raley (English) as Vice Chair/Secretary of the Academic Senate, and Professor Melissa Morgan (Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology) as Vice Chair with special portfolio for advancing diversity and equity. Both Vice Chairs will serve for the 2020-21 academic year.



Susannah L. Scott

The Senate's Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE) is also chaired by Prof. Morgan, and will be very active this year. The Senate is especially pleased to welcome our new [Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Dr. Belinda Robnett](#), and looks forward to working closely with her and with our university's [Faculty Equity Advisors](#) as we all strive for greater diversity and inclusiveness on our campus. I also want to alert you to the exciting [Race to Justice](#) series of events organized by UCSB Arts & Lectures for their 2020-21 season, and encourage you and your students to attend. All events in fall will be virtual, and free for UCSB students.

The Senate website has been reorganized and refreshed, with up-to-date information and a new structure that is easier to navigate. I intend to post Senate news and reports regularly so that you can access them easily. A key page relevant to special circumstances during the pandemic collects policies and updates of immediate relevance to faculty, including FAQs on remote instruction organized by quarter, and links to campus resources. You can access the page [here](#), or from the Senate [homepage](#). Your suggestions are most welcome on new content for any part of our website.

Over the summer, the Senate was involved in extensive discussions and planning for a hybrid (partly in-person, partly remote) fall quarter with Chancellor Yang, senior administrators, Student Health, and many others. I am very grateful to Professor Henning Bohn (Economics, Divisional Senate Chair, 2016-20) for his leadership, and for inviting me to participate in many of these discussions. One of the challenges was, and remains, the need for comprehensive virus testing and case investigation (similar to, but not the same as contact tracing) to ensure that we have early information about community transmission. As you know, the decision was made in [late August](#) not to open the university's undergraduate residence halls, and to advise our students not to return to Isla Vista if they have another safe place to live. This decision was based on the decision to hold almost all classes via remote instruction, concerns about the unpredictable spread of COVID-19, and news reports of outbreaks on campuses around the country related to university students living in close quarters. Until a few days ago, California and Santa Barbara County restrictions did not allow for in-person instruction in higher education.

I hope, as I know you do, to see our campus reopen soon. Graduate students conducting laboratory-based research already have limited access to campus facilities, and graduate student housing is fully open at this time. While most faculty will continue to work remotely at least until early 2021, limited access to faculty offices, which are essential for some of the University's instructional activities, should be granted soon. A building-by-building assessment of ventilation and traffic patterns is currently underway by Design, Facilities, and Safety Services and procedures for controlled access will be communicated to building committees soon. A similar effort has identified appropriate spaces for our graduate students in the Library and HSSB to use for teaching. Several members of the Senate leadership, including myself, Undergraduate Council Chair Betsy Brenner (GGSE), and Graduate Council Chair Tammy Afifi (Communication), are working closely with EVC Marshall and Associate VC for Undergraduate Education Stopple in planning a gradual return to teaching starting in winter quarter and beyond.

The University's immediate [budget outlook](#) is a serious concern, although still freighted with too many uncertainties to offer firm predictions at this time. We are waiting to learn exactly what the revised State budget for the University of California will be, but a significant cut in state funds this fiscal year is a likely scenario. Other issues include loss of housing and dining revenue from campus residences, decreased tuition revenue due to lower enrollments, and increased costs related to insurance and virus testing. As a result, we can anticipate difficult decisions and budget restrictions in the coming year. The Senate, including myself and Council on Planning and Budget Chair Doug Steigerwald (Economics), is committed to ensuring that these decisions are made with the core educational and research missions of the university foremost in mind via our roles on the Chancellor's Coordinating Committee on Budget Strategy.

The first meeting of the Faculty Legislature will take place (virtually) on October 22, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. An agenda and Zoom link will be distributed via email a few days before the meeting. All members of the Academic Senate are warmly invited to attend to learn more about the issues we are working on; your participation in shared governance of our university makes the Senate's voice broader, stronger, and wiser.

Finally, I intend to make these newsletters a regular occurrence to keep you informed about the decisions our University makes for the benefit of all of our community. If you would like to suggest topics, please do send an email to me or to our Executive Director, Shasta Delp ([shasta.delp@senate.ucsb.edu](mailto:shasta.delp@senate.ucsb.edu)). The Senate is eager to hear your ideas.

Sincerely,

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