

# UC SANTA BARBARA

## Academic Senate

### Divisional Chair's Newsletter - November 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,

As we head into the last days of our fall quarter, and the end of what will likely be known as the notorious pandemic year of 2020, I am writing to you with updates of general interest to faculty.

*Our campus decision on the President's curtailment proposal.* Earlier this quarter, UC President Drake requested systemwide input on a proposal to prevent layoffs via salary savings achieved during campus closures. His initial proposal for a minimum 5-day curtailment on each campus was designed to be progressive based on income level (lower paid employees would be allowed to use accrued vacation time, while higher paid employees or those who do not accrue vacation would take unpaid leave). This type of curtailment differs from its use for annual campus closures during holiday periods, which impacts only employees who accrue vacation and does not involve any salary actions.

On November 23, President Drake announced a new requirement for each campus to establish a pandemic relief fund, and suggested curtailment as one of the options a campus may choose to generate funds for its pandemic relief efforts. The decision for our campus, [announced by our Chancellor](#), is that *UC Santa Barbara will not implement a salary-action curtailment during this year's holiday season*. Chancellor Yang's decision was informed by the work of the Chancellor's Coordinating Committee on Budget Strategy, which examined the financial impacts of salary curtailment and its implementation costs. Many thanks to Chuck Haines, Associate Chancellor for Finance and Resource Management, and Doug Steigerwald, Chair of the Academic Senate's Council on Planning and Budget, for their helpful analyses, and to the many faculty and staff who participated in the extensive consultation process.

You may see an announcement of a campus closure Dec 27-29. This is the regular annual holiday closure, for which staff in affected units can use their vacation time in lieu of taking time off without pay. There is no effect on faculty salaries.

*Update on the university budget situation.* The UC Santa Barbara budget continues to be a serious concern, due to a combination of reduced state funding and unfunded new costs. The ca. \$50M gap in the university's core budget (separate from the housing/dining/parking auxiliaries) includes a one-time deficit in this fiscal year, as well as an ongoing structural deficit. Our hiring slowdown is already resulting in some salary savings, and we have access to a low-interest loan to allow us to spread the impact of the budget shortfall over multiple years. However, there is still a lot of work to do, and much uncertainty about the state budget situation next year. Some form of salary action may be necessary in the future, but the Academic Senate will be consulted before any decision is made. I will be sure to let you know when more information becomes available.

*Impact of the new state curfew order on campus work.* The limited stay-at-home order that went into effect on November 21 prohibits non-essential gatherings between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. It does not affect teaching and research on campus, since these are considered essential activities and are all socially distanced. University buildings may be accessed by faculty and researchers during these hours, subject to the approved building committee plans.

*Pandemic workload issues.* At this point in the crisis, we are painfully aware of how much additional work and stress our colleagues are experiencing. Faculty members with significant dependent care responsibilities are particularly impacted by workload issues during the pandemic. Faculty who need to explore scheduling adjustments or temporary modifications of some of their duties are urged to speak with their chairs and deans, who have been asked to exercise reasonable [flexibility](#). Accommodations, endorsed by the chair and dean, will be documented in a Memorandum of Understanding, comparable to the arrangements made under the Active Service-Modified Duties (APM 170) policy.

*COVID-19 exposure notification.* UC Santa Barbara is participating in a voluntary notification program developed by the State of California. If you choose to install the California COVID Notify app on your smartphone, it will notify you if you have been in close contact with anyone who has reported a positive COVID-19 test, provided that person has the app and requests a notification code. If you have a positive test, the app will take care of notifying anyone with whom you have had contact, as long as they also have the app. The Senate's Committee on Information Technology was informally consulted, and was satisfied that the app protects the anonymity of all participants. Of course, its effectiveness depends on how many of us sign up. For more information on how the app works and how to install it, visit [California COVID Notify](#).

*Teaching in 2021.* The campus is currently planning a gradual reopening starting in January, subject to County Public Health guidance. Although most employees are required to continue to work remotely whenever possible throughout winter quarter, a small number of graduate courses and undergraduate upper-division courses will be offered in person, and a modest number of undergraduates will return to campus student apartments in mid-January. Both developments depend on suitable local conditions in Santa Barbara County. We hope to continue the reopening trajectory with more in-person course offerings and greater occupancy of student residences in spring quarter. Our graduate student housing is already fully open, and will remain so.

The University is optimistically planning for a special summer session in 2021, assuming that COVID-19 vaccinations will be available and the worst of the pandemic will be behind us. Recognizing that many of this year's first-year students and transfer students will not have had any opportunity to live and learn on our campus, we plan to invite them and others to experience UC Santa Barbara in the summer. Although we anticipate an ongoing need for some remote courses, we hope to be able to offer a significant in-person summer curriculum. Departments have been asked to consider expanded course offerings. Your help in reviving our campus learning environment is critical. *I especially encourage faculty to consider teaching one of these summer courses*, assuming we are allowed to offer them. There are several possible styles and durations, including co-teaching (which allows for some flexibility for travel). Please discuss your interest and availability with your department chair in the next few weeks.

*Senate award nominations.* We are proceeding with the normal timeline for Senate award nominations. Faculty are eligible in the categories of research, teaching, diversity, and graduate mentorship. Graduate students are eligible for exceptional performance as teaching assistants. Most award nominations have a deadline of Friday, December 18 at 5:00 p.m. For more information on how to nominate a colleague or a student, please visit our [awards page](#).

*Volunteering for senate service.* Senate members are invited to volunteer for service on the various Senate councils and committees in the 2021-22 academic year. We need your participation to make the Senate's voice heard around the campus and systemwide. To learn more about the opportunities, visit the [Councils & Committees](#) section of our website. To volunteer, enter your preferences on our [Opportunities to Serve](#) page before January 19.

*Rest and relaxation.* I wish everyone a safe and peaceful holiday weekend.

Sincerely,

Susannah L. Scott  
Divisional Chair, Academic Senate  
[susannah.scott@senate.ucsb.edu](mailto:susannah.scott@senate.ucsb.edu)