Executive Summary 2016-17

On the UCSB campus, the College of Letters and Science comprises 93% of the undergraduate population on campus, 79% of the senate faculty, 80% of the academic departments, and 90% of the degree programs. For the most recent year in which full statistics are available, Letters and Science provided fully 98% of the lower division courses offered on campus (96% of lower division units), and 92% of all undergraduate instruction at UCSB. The Letters and Science Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) provides oversight on academic matters pertinent to departments, faculty, and students within the College of Letters and Science.

The committee, comprised of two elected faculty members from each division within the College, met 16 times during the year, typically five meetings per quarter, for 2 hours each.

Policy/Regulation/Guideline Review

With a variety of other committees, the FEC is offered the opportunity to review and provide perspective on systemwide policy revisions. The committee frequently engages these opportunities to comment, as the policies and regulations nearly always impact the FEC areas of focus, namely of the well-being of departments, faculty, and students within L&S. Among the policy revisions the FEC considered in 2016-2017 were the faculty code of conduct, the policy on information security, nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies, proposed changes to the APM pertaining to LPSOE, and oversight of the university’s international activities.

Academic Program Reviews

Maintaining excellence in College departments, undergraduate programs, and graduate education is essential for the continued excellence of the University. As such, the FEC takes its role in Academic Program Review very seriously. This year the committee provided extensive comment during the reviews of the Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Marine Sciences (IGPMS), the Chicana/Chicano Studies Department, and the History Department.

Curriculum adjustments

Due to volume and significance, curriculum adjustments occupy a considerable amount of the committee’s attention every year. Departments and programs are encouraged to actively monitor their academic programs, and disciplinary trends are balanced against program learning assessment data, enrollment pressures, faculty expertise, and available resources. From the FEC’s perspective, curriculum adjustments and proposals for new programs must have an academic rationale that places programs within the broader context of the College. This perspective allows the FEC’s review to safeguard against changes that negatively impact other departments or that impose undue barriers to enrollment (whether intentional or unintentional). The FEC has review authority over the modification of all undergraduate programs (majors and minors) in the College. Due to the sheer volume of changes that
occur on an annual basis, modifications are triaged into those that are considered to be of a housekeeping nature (e.g., typos, course title adjustments, numbering, etc.) and those that are of a significant nature. Housekeeping changes are reviewed by divisional subcommittees (three) made up of the FEC faculty members representing a specific division (e.g., HFA), divisional Dean (or designee), and College advisor. Major changes and those flagged by the subcommittees undergo full review by the entire FEC. The FEC review is then forwarded to UG Council for final approval to ensure equitable application of policies across the three colleges offering UG degrees (CCS, Engineering, Letters & Science). Over the course of 2016-17, the L&S FEC reviewed significant changes to 25 L&S majors and minors (from 14 departments), while the subcommittees endorsed lesser modifications to another 79 programs. The FEC considered establishment of 5 new minors within the College, and potential discontinuation of one minor.

In addition to reviewing curricular changes for face-to-face courses, the FEC also reviews proposals for online courses. Unlike face-to-face courses, online courses go through significant scrutiny of the syllabus, format, assignments, and security procedures. Some of this additional scrutiny is required due to the unique manner in which student evaluation is performed. During 2016-17, approval of online courses took a significant amount of committee effort, given that only seven online courses were reviewed (vs the 730 non-online L&S courses that were processed in the same timeframe). In the end, the FEC approved all 7 online courses, 5 for an initial offering and 2 for more permanent approval (Of these seven, 6 are sponsored by UCSB Summer Sessions and 1 by UCOP’s ILTI initiative). Partly triggered by the imbalance between the amount of FEC time spent on a small number of online courses (relative to the large number of other new or modified courses), but also because it has been four years since the review procedures were initially adopted, the FEC believes that it is time to review the online course approval process in the next academic year.

Additional Curricular Matters

The FEC also considered the calculation of major GPA, an issue that has been referred to the Undergraduate Council as it has cross-college implications; approved revision of the College Honors Program; clarified the FEC position on the permissibility of completing a double-major or a major and minor housed within the same department and reviewed and approved five petitions for exception; and ruled on two proposals for an individual major.

The FEC deliberated two undergraduate grade appeals, which prompted scrutiny of the existing process. This process will continue to be scrutinized in the coming year to ensure that the grade appeal process can be executed in a timely and fair manner. The committee endorsed a Mathematics proposal designed to enhance transfer student success by adjusting requirements for transfer students to enter Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences pre-majors. At the graduate level, the FEC endorsed a proposed PhD Emphasis in Neuroengineering.

Given the potential impact on L&S, the FEC was asked to review College of Engineering adjustments to its breadth requirements, a proposal to establish a Marine Sciences major in the College of Creative Studies, and a proposal to establish a BS in Bioengineering and an associated administrative unit within COE. Additionally, the committee weighed in in favor of Priority Registration for ROTC scholarship recipients.

Recent efforts have revealed local processes or policies that could benefit from review and revision. The FEC intends to work on these through the summer and over the course of the subsequent academic
year. These include: grade appeal process, regulations for calculation of major GPA, and the online course review and approval process.

**Other Activities**

The committee participated in interviews of short-list candidates for the position of Associate Vice Chancellor for the Office of Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Education in the College of Letters and Science.

The Chair of the FEC is a member of the campus General Catalog Committee, which met in spring 2017. The FEC oversees the selection of the Harold J. Plous Memorial Award, and was pleased to name Terence Keel (Black Studies, History) as the 2017-18 Plous Recipient. The committee also oversees selection of other awards within the college.

**2016-17 FEC committee members:**

Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, Chicana/o Studies  
Jordan Clark, Earth Science and Environmental Studies  
Paige Digeser, Political Science  
Barry Giesbrecht, Psychological and Brain Sciences  
Nuha Khoury, History of Art and Architecture  
Sherene Seikaly, History

*Ex officio* members:

Jeff Stopple, Co-Interim Dean of Undergraduate Education  
Pierre Wiltzius, Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science.

We express our appreciation to them both for their insights and attention to FEC matters.

The committee was pleased to have graduate student Mary Okin join for winter and spring quarters as a representative of the GSA. Regrettably, Associated Students was unresponsive to our repeated requests for an undergraduate student representative.

FEC members serve three-year terms, in summer 2017 two senior members rotated off the committee: Nuha Khoury (HAA), who served 7 quarters as committee chair; and Jordan Clark (Earth Sci and Enviro Studies), who was committee secretary. In spring 2017 a call for nominations was sent to all L&S faculty and the following new members were elected to serve on the FEC for three-year terms:

- Laurie Monahan (History of Art and Architecture) representing HFA  
- Bruce Lipshutz (Chemistry and Biochemistry) representing MLPS

This report is respectfully submitted by FEC Chair Barry Giesbrecht.  
September 2017