

Academic Assembly Council President's Report: December 2020

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

PRACTICAL • CONNECTED • TRUSTED

Academic Assembly Council Members

Van Butsic
President

Jim Downer
Past President

Tunyalee Martin
Secretary

Fadzayi Mashiri
Advisor Committee Chair

Tunyalee Martin
Academic Coordinator Committee Chair

Mark Hoddle
UC Riverside Specialist Committee Chair

Kassim Al-Khatib & Leslie Roche
UC Davis Specialist Committee Co-Chairs

Ellen Bruno
UC Berkeley Specialist Committee Chair

Susie Kocher
Program Committee Chair

Karina Diaz Rios
Multiple Academic Titles Committee Chair

Rebecca Ozeran & Ben Faber
Welfare & Benefits Committee Co-Chairs

Aliasghar Montazar
Rules & Election Committee Chair

Steven Worker
Personnel Committee Chair

Georgios Vidalakis
Program Council Liaison

Dec 15, 2020

Dear UC ANR Academic Assembly:

As the semester winds down on campus and the end of the year approaches it feels like an appropriate moment to take stock of AAC activities for the past year. I'm proud of the work our committees have done including updates to the PPM and "eBook", successfully filling all open AAC committee positions, contributing to the ANR@Work survey and creating new study groups to address pay and parental issues. In the new year, we look forward to our fruitful conversations with administration, continuing to refine and enhance the role of our committees and above all serving the assembly.

Newsletter highlights for this quarter include:

- Travel award updates – they are available!
- Preliminary cost of living adjustment study results
- "eBook" revisions
- Commenting on UCOP proposals
- Exit interviews

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,



Van Butsic
President
Academic Assembly Council

For more information about the UC ANR Academic Assembly Council, including travel awards, committees, and publications, visit our website at:

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/>

Travel Awards return this spring – Apply Today

The Academic Assembly Council (AAC) offers travel awards to support travel to professional society meetings, primarily for the reporting and exchange of knowledge among members. We understand that most events scheduled for early 2021 are being held virtually. Some of these virtual events may have registration fees associated with them. Some organizations may also be scheduling in-person events for late spring.

With this call, we will allocate funding for UC ANR academics to attend virtual or in-person events through June 30th, 2021. However, we will be allocating funding based on actual expenses, rather than awarding a flat amount of \$600 per meeting. This is because the cost to attend a virtual event (registration fee) is usually quite small compared to the costs to attend an in-person event.

Cooperative Extension academics are eligible for one meeting approval per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Academic Assembly Council did not release a call for the Summer and Fall of 2020 since the pandemic situation made knowing whether events would go forward unpredictable. This means all academics are eligible for this call. As these funding request calls are held twice a year, the next will be sent out in late spring to cover the period July 1st to December 31st, 2021 and will use any funds allocated for next fiscal year. We note that it is unlikely AAC will be able to carry-over unused funds until next fiscal year, so our goal is to maximize funding this term.

Applications are scored based on set criteria. Priority scoring is given to applicants new to their positions, presenting papers, or with special functions within the society/meeting.

To submit a request, visit this website: <http://ucanr.edu/sites/ucaac/>

~ Susie Kocher

Help AAC respond to UCOP policy changes

UCOP will occasionally ask for input from employees regarding potential policy changes. In the past, UCANR would solicit responses from the assembly, put the responses in a spreadsheet, and forward it to UCOP. Most other academic units would instead write a letter expressing their view. To better align AAC with other units across UCOP, we are now responding to UCOP policy changes via letter. When input is requested, the appropriate AAC committee will send an announcement to the Assembly soliciting feedback, which we will then summarize as a letter to UCOP. A recent example of this new procedure is with regard to APM 700. If you see an email from an AAC committee regarding UCOP changes – please let us know your opinion.

Geographic based pay in ANR?

California is a diverse state, and the cost of labor varies widely across the. Because of these cost of labor differentials, ANR academics have often wondered if it made sense for all ANR Academics of the same rank to be paid the same, regardless of where they were employed. To address this question, the Welfare and Benefits committee, joined by a few other academics, started to study if different pay for different labor markets would make sense for ANR. While no recommendations have been made to administration, and most of the research this far has been of a fact-finding nature, the study group has already made a number of interesting findings:

- Some states – including Florida and New York – do have different pay for extension employees depending on where they live. Others – such as Texas and Arizona – do not.
- The federal government has differential pay for employees in California based on Geography. Many Coastal Counties and areas around Sacramento range from 21%-41% above the general pay scale, while most rural counties are on scale.
- At some campuses there is initial pay differentials for new faculty. Essentially, it gives campuses the option of providing a payment to new faculty, within the first two years of employment, of up to \$100,000. This can be taken all at once or spread over a number of years. Campus by campus, the Vice Provost to makes the decision about who receives these bonuses. Only senate faculty members, agronomists, and astronomers are eligible. Currently Advisors and Specialists are not eligible for this.
- UCOP/UC ANR already pays different wages based on location for represented staff. For each county that holds UC ANR employees there is a comparison to the labor market. For represented staff in counties, salaries are often tied to local campuses. So for example, Ventura County staff salaries are linked to those at UCLA's so that it reflects the living costs in that area. For non-represented staff as described in the above example with geo groups, the following graphs depict how those salaries compare to those in the geo groups (the shaded areas) to the average salaries in the different counties.
- ANR will often use a salary offset at hiring for advisors. This hiring "bonus" will decrease with time as the Advisor obtains merit increases.

Based on these findings, the Welfare and Benefits committee will now examine the costs to ANR of applying any of these programs to our academics.

~ Ben Faber

Exit Interviews

Since 2018, ANR has lost over 60 academic positions to either retirement, ~~or~~ resignation, or position reaching an end date. Critical mass of academic positions is imperative for ANR to conduct the programs and research that will support California communities, farms, and environments.

Advisors Downer (chair), Faber and Karlik are members of an Assembly Council ad-hoc committee on exit interviews. We formulated exit interview questions which were approved for use by Human Resources. Our questions sought to understand the relevance of ANR's work environment, compensation, growth, networking opportunities, performance expectations and leadership impacts on employee retention. Since committee formation at the end of summer, we interviewed 20 academics. We interviewed Advisors, Specialists, Academic Coordinators and Junior Specialists. Our interviews are anonymous, and we report no names. The data we are collecting are qualitative and we are still interviewing and assembling these data.

However, a few trends are apparent. As a group, retirees are more positive about their time spent in ANR--mostly a career well worked and very satisfying. Some retirees had difficulty getting their first paycheck after separation due to issues at RASC.

Those who left because of resignation have a less positive view of their time spent at ANR. Several who resigned stated they were burned out before their departure. One advisor who worked in a remote area was astonished at how much better the health care benefits were at their new university. Several former employees indicated their ANR position was their "dream job," and they regretted that they had to leave. **All interviewees at this point have indicated that they had entered ANR as a long term career choice.** Reasons for leaving included inadequate compensation to live in the county to which they were assigned too many responsibilities. Some academics have "traded up", that is, moved to a faculty position with Academic Senate standing or to industry jobs with significant salary increases. One academic says ANR has become a steppingstone institution for movement to other jobs, not a place to have a terminal career. When asked if a separated academic would recommend ANR to another for employment opportunities about 50% said they would--these were usually Specialists. If we are going to continue to conduct excellent programs and research, we need to find ways to have a more positive and productive work environment and compensation for county-based academics. While specialists indicated that their salary met their expectations this was not the case for many county-based academics. Whether or not an academic left due to retirement, all were grateful for their exit interviews and each of us have enjoyed listening to their career reflections – Jim Downer

Personnel Committee Report

- [Program review dossier examples available](#)
- [Revisions to the Guidelines for Preparing the Thematic Program Review Dossier for UC ANR Academics \(aka "eBook"\)](#)
 - Section 1: Program Review Dossier Preparation and Review Process*
 - An administrative advancement review process was created for academics with 100% administrative assignment; see applicable text in sections 1 and 2.
 - The process to solicit letters of evaluation has changed. [The academic will provide names to the Vice Provosts](#). The Vice Provosts will consider additional evaluators and submit the final list of evaluators to Academic Human Resources to enter into Interfolio.
 - Ad hoc review committee and peer review committee member recommendations will be documented and made visible/ to the candidate.
 - Section 2: Actions Outside the Normal Progression*
 - Clarification added to the process for seeking an acceleration; no significant changes.
 - Clarification provided for academics with administrative appointments and academics with restrictions on advancement criteria (e.g. grant-funded or reduced time).
 - Section 3: Elements of the Program Review Dossier*
 - Page limits changed; merit actions are a maximum of 6 pages and promotion actions a maximum of 10 pages.
 - Section 4: Advancement Criteria*
 - Text added to clarify and define "balance" and "trajectory."
 - The tables for Academic Coordinator and Academic Administrator were modified.
- Revisions to the [annual evaluation](#)
 - Renaming section on goals to "Goals and Objectives"
 - Clarification for new academics: (a) academics who have served more than 6 months (hired before April 1, 2020) submit a full annual evaluation; (b) academics who have served less than 6 months (hired on or between April 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020) submit a partial annual evaluation (I. Position Description; IV. Project Board Reporting; and V. Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year); and (c) academics who began October 1, 2020 or after only complete Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year.
- PPM Section 300 Revision Working Group** (Steven, Mary, Anne, Catherine, Tina). Revisions to all 17 sections are complete and under review by Mark L. & Wendy. A 30-day "public review period" will be scheduled once review is complete, in which the drafts are issued to UC ANR academic appointees, and their comments are invited. This will give academics the opportunity to be heard, thereby promoting a sense of inclusion in the policy update process and may generate new/better ideas for consideration.