UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA **ACADEMIC SENATE • MERCED DIVISION**
Committee on Academic Personnel

January 30, 2009

KEITH E. ALLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST

RE: EVALUATION OF TEACHING IN PERSONNEL CASES

In response to requests from both the UC Merced WASC Steering Committee and, through that Committee, from UC Merced's Divisional Council, CAP is recommending changes in the way UC Merced presents the teaching component of personnel cases. Absent campus traditions to guide practice, UC Merced faculty and administrators frequently fail to follow the *Academic Personnel Manual* (*APM*) when presenting the teaching component in review files. The *APM* specifies the importance of teaching to personnel decisions, directs which aspects of teaching to consider, and insists that evaluation of teaching be based on more than one source of information.[1]

In discussing evaluation of teaching at other UC campuses, CAP members identified a wide range of practices that UC Merced faculty evaluation committees might wish to emulate. On several campuses, these committee members visit classes to observe and report on colleagues' teaching; review syllabi, lecture notes, exams, quizzes, and other assignments; conduct interviews of graduating students and of alumni (especially regarding mentoring of graduate students); and solicit letters from former students. In each case, the faculty take the responsibility of peer review because only faculty are in a position to evaluate "the candidate's command of the subject; continuous growth in the subject field; ability to organize material and to present it with force and logic." In some cases, regular review of teaching is handled by the departmental chairs or vice-chairs, deans, or even, in one case, a vice-chancellor. In these cases, however, the evidence such administrators provide must still be analyzed and evaluated by the appropriate faculty review committees.

Mindful of the many pressures on faculty and mindful of the wide diversity of accepted practices among disciplines and campuses, CAP does not wish to specify what kinds of information shall be presented nor exactly how it shall be analyzed. CAP will limit its requests to the minimum necessary to fulfill the letter of the *APM*, namely, that each case we receive will evaluate teaching quality on the basis of at least two sources of evidence (at least one of which must register student input), and that each case include a robust analysis of a candidate's "ability and diligence in the teaching role." Mere repetition or citation of the evidence is not an adequate response to the APM requirement that teaching be subject to rigorous examination. When files lack such analysis, CAP will return them for revision.

Joseph Cerny

Joseph Cerny, Chair

c: Martha Conklin, Senate Chair
David Ojcius, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

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[1] See appendix A for the full text of *APM*-210-1-d-1. All quotations *infra* are from this section of the *APM*.

(1) Teaching — Clearly demonstrated evidence of high quality in teaching is an essential criterion for appointment, advancement, or promotion. Under no circumstances will a tenure commitment be made unless there is clear documentation of ability and diligence in the teaching role. In judging the effectiveness of a candidate's teaching, the committee should consider such points as the following: the candidate's command of the subject; continuous growth in the subject field; ability to organize material and to present it with force and logic; capacity to awaken in students an awareness of the relationship of the subject to other fields of knowledge; fostering of student independence and capability to reason; spirit and enthusiasm which vitalize the candidate's learning and teaching; ability to arouse curiosity in beginning students, to encourage high standards, and to stimulate advanced students to creative work; personal attributes as they affect teaching and students; extent and skill of the candidate's participation in the general guidance, mentoring, and advising of students; effectiveness in creating an academic environment that is open and encouraging to all students, including development of particularly effective strategies for the educational advancement of students in various underrepresented groups. The committee should pay due attention to the variety of demands placed on instructors by the types of teaching called for in various disciplines and at various levels, and should judge the total performance of the candidate with proper reference to assigned teaching responsibilities. The committee should clearly indicate the sources of evidence on which its appraisal of teaching competence has been based. In those exceptional cases when no such evidence is available, the candidate's potentialities as a teacher may be indicated in closely analogous activities. In preparing its recommendation, the review committee should keep in mind that a redacted copy of its report may be an important means of informing the candidate of the evaluation of his or her teaching and of the basis for that evaluation.

It is the responsibility of the department chair to submit meaningful statements, accompanied by evidence, of the candidate's teaching effectiveness at lower-division, upper-division, and graduate levels of instruction. More than one kind of evidence shall accompany each review file. Among significant types of evidence of teaching effectiveness are the following: (a) opinions of other faculty members knowledgeable in the candidate's field, particularly if based on class visitations, on attendance at public lectures or lectures before professional societies given by the candidate, or on the performance of students in courses taught by the candidate that are prerequisite to those of the informant; (b) opinions of students; (c) opinions of graduates who have achieved notable professional success since leaving the University; (d) number and caliber of students guided in research by the candidate and of those attracted to the campus by the candidate's repute as a teacher; and (e) development of new and effective techniques of instruction, including techniques that meet the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in the field of instruction.

All cases for advancement and promotion normally will include: (a) evaluations and comments solicited from students for most, if not all, courses taught since the candidate's last review; (b) a quarter-by-quarter or semester-by-semester enumeration of the number and types of courses and tutorials taught since the candidate's last review; (c) their level; (d) their enrollments; (e) the percentage of students represented by student course evaluations for each course; (f) brief explanations for abnormal course loads; (g) identification of any new courses taught or of old courses when there was substantial reorganization of approach or content; (h) notice of any awards or formal mentions for distinguished teaching; (i) when the faculty member under review wishes, a self evaluation of his or her teaching; and (j) evaluation by other faculty members of teaching effectiveness. When any of the information specified in this paragraph is not provided, the department chair will include an explanation for that omission in the candidate's dossier. If such information is not included with the letter of recommendation and its absence is not adequately accounted for, it is the review committee chair's responsibility to request it through the Chancellor.