MEMORANDUM

TO: Keith Alley, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

FROM: Senate Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA)

RE: Response to Final Version of Academic Plans provided by the School of Engineering (SOE), School of Natural Sciences (SNS), School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA), and graduate groups

Introduction

CAPRA has reviewed the Academic Plans submitted by all three schools. The CAPRA recommendations for the next three years are summarized in Table 1, with recommended AY10-11 searches shown in red. Note that for one school, SNS, the recommendations are endorsed for all three years, and for the other two schools the Deans have requested that the second and third year hiring recommendations be revisited in the future. In any case, CAPRA recommends that all three schools revisit their second and third year plans in the coming years to be sure they are adapted to changing needs. All three schools requested some degree of "front loading" in their 3-year hiring plan and indicated which second year hires should be considered for searches in the first year. CAPRA strongly endorses this front loading given the low success rates for recent searches.

In all cases the schools addressed CAPRA and EVC's request that they plan for faculty hires over a 3-year window. The plans, to varying degrees, attempt to balance the need for new faculty to support continued enrollment growth and the development of research excellence. Specific comments are also provided in separate sections for the individual schools below, but CAPRA has a number of comments that pertain to all school plans and/or planning in future years.

1) Planning for LPSOEs and other lecturers needs to be included in the academic plans and the prioritization
2) CAPRA urges The Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of SSHA to identify a specific academic unit, set of units, or committee, to plan the hires for the management program; this really cannot be delayed further since the viability of this program is at stake.
3) A faculty committee needs to be tasked with developing the process for the 5 "strategic" hires. Ideally this selection process should be completed in fall 2010 for the first group of strategic hires.
4) IPA should be tasked with developing and distributing a consistent set of current and projected enrollment and faculty workload numbers to the schools and CAPRA at the beginning of the planning process. This would provide a consistent basis for evaluating student number- and workload-based requests in the academic plans.
5) As noted below, it is urgent that UC Merced develop more approved graduate groups. Therefore, it would be helpful to describe how each proposed hire is related to the growth or establishment of a graduate group. Of particular importance would be hires that would enable a group to go up for CCGA approval in the near term.

School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

As shown in Table 1, the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA) requests a total of 11 priority 1 hires for AY10-11 and an additional 18 hires for AYs 11-12 and 12-13. This is over the EVC allocation of 21 faculty lines for three years, but in his response to the CAPRA question, the SSHA Dean clarified that the SSHA Executive Committee (EC) had concurred that the first 7 of the 11 first year hires were the highest priority and the next 4 are sufficiently high priority that they would like to "front load" these hires in the first year. The SSHA Dean also noted that there was not yet agreement in the SSHA EC on the prioritization of the remaining second and third year hires and that SSHA would like to consider reprioritizing all future hires in subsequent Academic Plans. Finally, the overall request for 29 faculty hires will apparently be reduced to the allocated 21 in future academic plans.

Overall, CAPRA endorses six of the seven requested SSHA faculty lines for AY10-11 and all four proposed front-loaded hires. Specifically, CAPRA believes that the position in Heritage Management and Conservation be reconsidered in the development of the SSHA strategic plan in the following years. CAPRA agrees that there are many potential synergies between this position and other programs (although the same is true for many other possible hires) and that this heritage management has the potential to be a signature program at UC Merced (again true for many areas). However, CAPRA does not agree that this is the logical first hire to "kick-start the management program" or to build other programs within SSHA. Indeed, CAPRA is concerned that hiring purely "interdisciplinary" faculty before there is substantial depth in the relevant disciplines may be building these programs on sand. Additionally, the current very low student numbers in courses related to heritage management make it difficult to justify when other SSHA programs are struggling with large student numbers and rapid growth. Finally there are several areas in SSHA that are nearly large enough to begin graduate programs, which may be more important near term investments.

CAPRA also makes the following additional comments on the SSHA Academic Plan:

1) CAPRA concurs with the SSHA decision not to prioritize management hires in their Academic Plan until a clear path forward for the management program is developed; however CAPRA encourages SSHA to take a leadership position in developing the management program as quickly as possible, in particular by starting to identify key hires at the disciplinary center of a strong management program.
2) CAPRA is concerned that the SSHA plan makes virtually no mention of the possibility of using LPSOE hires to address the rapidly increasing student/faculty ratios in some programs. Although these do come at the cost of a faculty position, the larger teaching loads and reduced space and start-up costs for an LPSOE free faculty time to teach at the graduate level and develop research programs. One strategy that has been used successfully in other growing programs is to run simultaneous searches for faculty and LPSOE for particular positions. If the faculty search is unsuccessful, then an LPSOE can be hired into the position.
3) Although SSHA is proceeding with CCGA applications for graduate groups in Psychology and Cognitive and Information Sciences, CAPRA notes that it is important that other growing programs in SSHA develop the critical mass to submit proposals for graduate programs if UC Merced is going to be able to continue growth of it graduate student population.

School of Natural Sciences:

As shown in Table 1, the School of Natural Sciences (SNS) requests a total of 6 priority 1 hires for AY10-11 and an additional 9 hires for AYs 11-12 and 12-13. This precisely matches the EVC allocation of 15 faculty lines over the next three years.

Overall, CAPRA endorses the 15 requested SNS faculty lines requested for the next three years and the proposed front-loaded hire in the first year; however, CAPRA notes that one of the proposed hires, the AY10-11 senior hire in ecology, seems to be based on somewhat different justification than the other 14 hires, which balance research contributions with teaching demands at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the relevant discipline. The latter criterion does not seem satisfied for the proposed hire given the relatively low student demand for relevant courses. Indeed, the SNS response to a CAPRA question about this position states "[…]this recruitment is not directly supported by the numbers of current ESS or SIRs in the ESS major, or by numbers of biology majors with an ecology/evolutionary biology emphasis, or by some of the senior faculty[…]". However, the SNS response argues that there will be increasing teaching needs for lower division biology courses that could be taught by this hire and further notes that additional faculty leadership is needed for proposed revisions to the Earth Systems Science major to increase student interest in this area.

CAPRA also makes the following additional comments on the SNS Academic Plan:

1) CAPRA endorses the front-loading of the Organic Chemistry hire for AY10-11 and suggests that SNS be given the option to front-load additional hires, given the relatively low success rate of faculty hires.
2) CAPRA endorses the SNS plans to hire LPSOEs in both Biology and Physics in AY11-12. CAPRA believes that seems a reasonable strategy for managing increasing teaching loads with reduced budgets and a strategy that will free faculty to teach at the graduate level. CAPRA notes that chemistry is a program with large lower division service teaching loads that is not requesting an LPSOE in the next three years. CAPRA encourages SNS to consider the possibility of an LPSOE to take on the growing lower division teaching load, especially if continued space and start-up limitations make faculty searches unsuccessful.
3) The QSB graduate emphasis submitted application to CCGA for an independent graduate group, but CAPRA notes that no other groups in SNS describe plans for near-term CCGA applications. The chemistry plan mentions a minimum of ten faculty required for a stand-alone Ph.D. program. With the addition of three additional chemists in the next three years, the chemistry program will reach this target, and therefore is strongly encouraged to start developing a CCGA application.
4) CAPRA commented in its questions to SNS that the start-up funding requests seemed very high, especially for non-laboratory hires. SNS replied that these are the start-up levels that have been historically necessary to attract such hires to UC Merced. CAPRA notes that start-up funds will be increasingly scarce, and strongly encourages SNS to be as parsimonious as possible in start-ups to ensure that there is funding for start-up in future years.

School of Engineering:

The initial academic plan from the School of Engineering (SOE) requested 5 faculty hires and 3 LPSOEs in AY10-11, and an additional 11 faculty and 2 LPSOEs in the subsequent two years, as well as 6 cross-listed faculty lines. This request is far in excess of the EVC allocation of 9 faculty lines over three years. In the response to CAPRA questions, the interim SOE Dean, trimmed this request to 9 top-priority requests (shown in Table 1), but noted that there was not time for faculty consultation on this change. Given the big difference between the initial and the final hiring plan and the fact that a new SOE Dean will be appointed this year, CAPRA endorses an initial AY10-11 hiring plan for the first three positions given in Table 1. These positions were also high priority in the original hiring plan and are well justified by teaching and/or research needs. (The first priority Computer Systems senior position may be filled by a candidate identified during an AY09-10 CS search). CAPRA recommends that when the new Dean arrives, he or she should be asked to develop a list of additional front-loaded hires for AY10-11, in consultation with the faculty.

CAPRA also makes the following additional comments on the SOE Academic Plan:

1) If the Computer Systems position is not filled by the current candidate, that position should be changed from full professor to open rank.
2) CAPRA emphasizes the importance of a concrete plan to achieve ABET accreditation to ensure that UC Merced engineering graduates are qualified for professional licensure (at least in fields where such licensure is available in California: Mechanical Engineering and Civil/Environmental Engineering). Both the strategic plan and the Dean's memos mention ABET accreditation, but CAPRA encourages that SOE develop a specific timeline and resource needs plan for fields where ABET accreditation may be possible in the near future. CAPRA notes that the Dean's memo states that lack of accreditation is unlikely to affect enrollment in the near term, but CAPRA is concerned that if UC Merced engineering alumni are unsuccessful in getting licensed, this could quickly affect student enrollments. (Indeed, rapid drops in applications in other majors have been seen when word got out about problems in the major).
3) CAPRA encourages SOE to develop at least one new CCGA application for a graduate group in the next year. CAPRA notes that the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science graduate emphasis is one of the largest at UC Merced, especially in terms of the number of doctoral students (21). Additionally, that program has seven faculty members including two who were just awarded tenure, so that might be a good program to begin developing a CCGA application.

Table 1. Priority 1 Faculty Hiring Priorities. CAPRA endorsed searches are shown in red. The "*" indicates "front-loaded" hires (see recommendation text).

AY	SSHA	Level	SNS	Level	SOE	Level
2010-2011	Developmental Psychology	Assoc/Full	Applied Math	Assistant	Computer Systems	Full (Open)
	Quantitative Psychology	Assistant	Biostatistics	Open	LPSOE Eng fundamentals	LPSOE
	Cognitive Science & Technology	Asst/Assoc	Ecology	Full	Energy Storage Technology	Assistant
	Public Economics	Assistant	Physicist (Exprt. or Theor.)	Assistant	Physiological Modeling	Open
	Heritage Mgmt & Conserv.	Full	Molecular Biology	Open	LPSOE EECS	LPSOE
	Quantitative Methods in Socialogy	Assistant	Organic Chemistry*	Assistant	Energy Materials	Open
	English Renaissance	Assistant			Comp. Engr (Stochast. Optim.)	Open
	Political Behavior	Assistant				
	Literature/Spanish Linguistics*	Assistant				
	Colonial American History *	Full				
	Biological Anthropology*	Assistant				
Total Year 1		11.0		6.0		7.0
2011-2012	Music Studies/Asian Music	Open	Applied Math	LPSOE/Open	LPSOE lab design	LPSOE
	Cogs Neurosciences	Assistant	Cell Biology	Assistant	Mechatronics	Open
	Health Economics	Open	LPSOE Biology	LPSOE		
	Modern Latin Amer./Mexico 20th C	Assistant	LPSOE Physics	LPSOE		
	Romantic Victorian Literature	Full	Materials Chemistry	Assistant		
	Comparative Politics	Assistant				
	Developmental Psychology	Assoc/Full				
	Health Psychology	Assoc/Full				
	Race Ethnicity Immigration	Open				
Total Year 2		9.0		5.0		2.0
2012-2013	Visual Culture/Transnational pre-20th C	Open	Comp./Math Systems Bio	Open		
	Sustainable Architecture	Assistant	Evolutionary Bio	Full		
	Industrial Organization	Open	Physics Experimentalist	Assistant		
	Post-Colonial Lit in English	Open	Theoretical Chem.	Full		
	Philosophy of Mind	Assistant				
	Political Institutions	Assistant				
	Health Psychology	Assoc/Full				
	Quantitative Psych.	Open				
	Health Sociology (open	Open				
Total Year 3		9.0		4.0		0.0
Total 2010-201 Total		*29.0*		*15.0*		*9.0*