

February 17, 2021

To: Shane White, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Andrea Kasko, Chair
Graduate Council

Re: Proposal for Modified “Off-Scale” Salary Components

At the January 15, 2021 and February 12, 2021 Graduate Council meetings, the *Proposal for Modified “Off-Scale” Salary Components* and a third version of the proposal were presented as information items. Although the Graduate Council was not required to opine on this issue, members offered the following observations for your consideration should the proposal be reintroduced:

Members observed that the “off-scale” work around salaries has turned into a real engine of disparity at UCLA. There are large parts of campus that are compensated very differently. Because of this, members would like to see more robust data (e.g., data on how far UCLA deviates from our sister campuses, fraction of off-scale salaries both as a percentage and total amount, etc.) and a clearer rationale for moving forward with the proposal at this time. Members stated that having more data would be helpful in generating a more thoughtful approach.

In particular, members felt the change to the treatment of off-scale salary comes at a particularly bad time, as two other large, structural changes are underway, each of which will also affect compensation in ways that are, as yet, unclear. The first is the change to the budget model. Members would urge the administration to see how the new budget model operates before making changes to the salary scale. The second is the system-wide changes to the salary ladders. The Task Force Report and Recommendations makes clear a continued commitment to maintaining a single ladder for all campuses. It also notes the difficulty presented by the higher cost of living, and, especially housing, at some campuses, stating both that “Campuses are straining to address housing costs” and that “recommendations in this report do not directly address these issues.” Instead, “the Task Force urges UC leadership to develop and augment systemwide resources to assist faculty with living and housing costs...” (VI.C). Because off-scale salaries have been the most effective way for UCLA to address the higher cost of living in Los Angeles, it was suggested that changes to the off-scale component of salaries might await the development and augmentation urged by the Task Force. Members are very concerned about the implementation timeline, especially in light of the stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members also noted that salary disparities and lack of competitive salaries will negatively impact departments’ ability to recruit the best faculty, especially at a time when UCLA is committed to increasing faculty of color (Latino/a, African American, Asian/Pacific Islanders); diverse faculty certain

to be sought after by top private and public research universities. Another major financial impact will be on the retirement system that will undoubtedly disincentivize faculty loyalty. As well, this will impact graduate education and the research enterprise.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the Graduate Council Analyst, Estrella Arciba, at earciba@senate.ucla.edu.