

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

December 8, 2021

To: Jody Kreiman, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Leah Lievrouw, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Systemwide Senate Review: Draft Revised APM 025 and APM 671

At its meeting on November 5, 2021, the Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the draft revised APM 025 (Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty Members) and APM 671 (Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Health Sciences Compensation Plan Participants). We offer the following remarks for the Executive Board's consideration.

The Council was broadly supportive of the policies' intent to identify and track significant conflicts of commitment among regular faculty and other academic appointees, particularly their affiliations with or compensation received from domestic or foreign organizations or institutions outside the University. One member noted that the effort is consistent with recent advice from key U.S. institutions such as the NSF and the NIH, though others also observed that the requirements might be seen as frankly political gestures, drawing broad distinctions between domestic and foreign activities and reporting.

However, members' principal concerns related to the inclusion of postdoctoral scholars in the list of appointees subject to the revised reporting and prior approval requirements. Members noted that while the policies' language is primarily and consistently directed toward "faculty" and other full-time academic appointments, postdoctoral scholars are not permanent University employees or faculty, but rather are appointed as limited-term academic fellows or trainees working under the mentorship and supervision of Senate or other full-time faculty. For example, per UC Bylaw 330 B.3.(c), Graduate Councils set policies and standards for "the appointment of postdoctoral scholars or their academic equivalent and for their *enrollment* by the Graduate Division" (emphasis added), and Graduate Division administers and oversees such appointments.

In essence, the distinction between postdoctoral scholars and graduate students is minimal, which prompted some members to speculate whether the same requirements could not be extended to graduate students or even undergraduates employed as GSRs funded by research grants from domestic or international agencies, for example. As presented in the draft, the reporting and permission requirements could have the unintended effect of limiting postdoctoral scholars' research agendas or professional relationships outside UCLA, with adverse consequences for their academic careers. Members also pointed out that the revisions and covering documents did not contain clearly stated rationales/justifications for the 10 new categories of appointees to be covered by the revised policies, or an account of how the new categories were selected. Members recommended removing postdoctoral scholars from the list.

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Some members also expressed frustration with the difficulty of distinguishing which activities under the policy are subject to limits on compensation, versus limits on time, and called for clearer language on this point. Others suggested that the revised policies should state more clearly the reporting implications of differences between domestic vs. foreign organizations or institutions, whether located in the U.S. or internationally -- or as one member put it, clearly distinguishing the “interaction” between outside-university and outside-country affiliations or activities.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact us via Graduate Council’s Analyst, Estrella Arciba, at earciba@senate.ucla.edu.