DATE: April 4, 2024

TO: Andrea M. Kasko, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

RE: Report of the Joint Faculty Rebuilding and Renewal Task Force

The Faculty Executive Committee for the Luskin School of Public Affairs agrees in strongest terms with “increasing ladder faculty.” UCLA has lowest rate of ladder faculty increase, largest increase in student-ladder faculty ratio in the UC system (To get back to where we were in 2003, we would need to hire 373 ladder faculty). We agree strongly with need to increase faculty salaries and trim administrative staff where necessary (not for EDI support or other related critical goals towards making UCLA more inclusive and diverse).

The trimming administrative staff is necessary, there is concern that the least paid and least secured staff will be targeted for such trimming, when it is their labor most needed to run departments and process student enrollment and financial aid needs. Some suggest that UCLA needs to trim senior administration where necessary, but ultimately, we need increased state financial support.

We support creating a committee to investigate facilitating housing access for faculty. As p.12 of report indicates, “faculty morale is low.” Faculty are overworked, salaries do not keep up with cost of living, and the overworking makes it difficult in many fields to find time to do research that advances our careers, represents our passions, and our contributions to society, (our research time also creates a basis of merit and advancement that we need to be able to cover costs of living in Los Angeles). These factors are especially stressors for first generation faculty who most likely cannot rely on intergenerational family wealth to afford living in LA and who are often our more diverse faculty (Black, Brown, Native American, among others) who have historically been underrepresented in the academy.

It also would be helpful to know more about the source of ladder faculty stagnation—whether it is in authorizing faculty lines, or recruiting/retention, or both. The report focuses mostly on challenges in recruiting and retention, however there is not information that compares search success and retention across time or across campuses. Certainly, there are some big warning signs about UCLA’s ability to attract faculty and we all see the problems with morale/cost of living/workload. Missing from the report is any attention to the process for authorizing ladder searches. Retention cannot be the only reason UCLA is lagging so far behind the other campuses. We searching at a rate to keep up with losses.

Thank you for your considerations.

Veronica Herrera
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