Welcome to the spring edition of the Faculty-to-Faculty newsletter. The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) has been vigorously engaged in many issues over this academic year, most of which are centered on educational policy. Summaries of the activities are listed at the end of this newsletter. I would also encourage you to browse our Faculty Academic Senate website where you will find the General Faculty meetings minutes and redacted FEC meeting minutes, plus the School of Medicine (SOM) Bylaws, lists of the SOM Standing Committees, and archived copies of the Faculty-to-Faculty newsletters at: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medschool/somsenate.

I want to bring to your attention an issue that has greatly affected our academic and educational functions for the faculty of the School of Medicine. There is a persistent challenge stemming from integrating the faculty in the Health Sciences Clinical Professor (HSCP) series into the academic affairs of the School of Medicine. About one quarter of the SOM faculty are in the HSCP series, which is part of the Academic Federation, but not part of the Academic Senate. They represent an increasing number of the new appointments in the SOM. This series has a focus on clinical service and teaching, but achievements in creative works are optional. Many faculty in the HSCP series focus their careers on medical education, and are master educators in their respective clinical departments.

The difficulty is that HSCP faculty are not part of the Academic Senate, and therefore, there are significant constraints to their full participation in the academic affairs of the SOM. Foremost, they are not eligible to vote on Academic Senate issues and they cannot be SOM committee chairs. While these members can, and do participate fully in developing options and strategies, they cannot formally voice a recorded vote. This has the effect of leaving them disenfranchised when it comes to some SOM academic issues. The unfortunate consequence is that many faculty, whose primary focus is education, cannot vote on educational committees, nor can they lead those committees.

We have evaluated many options for ameliorating this problem, but have found that the Academic Senate Bylaws are inflexible on these issues. We continue to look for creative solutions, but ultimately, it appears that we may need to petition the University of California to allow HSCP faculty to join the Academic Senate series, possible by working to rewrite the Academic Personnel Manual (APM). In the meantime, we will continue to advocate for full privileges and recognition for all members of the SOM faculty, including members of the HSCP and Adjunct series. If you have any questions or comments about how we can improve our faculty governance, please feel free to contact me at: gsleiserowitz@ucdavis.edu.

—Gary Leiserowitz, M.D., Chair of the Faculty
The financial crisis of the state of California and the University of California threatens the University, its students, faculty and staff. As importantly, the underfunding of the university retirement system and the ongoing costs of the retiree health benefit threatens the viability of both benefits. I will try to summarize the status of these programs, and refer you to more information at the upcoming Faculty Meeting, May 26, as well as resources online.*

Pension Benefits: The UC Defined Benefit Plan (DBP) legally guarantees a set of retirement benefits based on salary, years of service, and age at retirement. Until 20 years ago, the UC Retirement Plan trust was supported by the state, as well as contributions by employees and the employer (funds from clinical operations in many cases of health sciences faculty). Contributions were suspended at that time due to a fund surplus, and were only reinstated a few weeks ago on 4/15/2010. Due to the lack of contributions, as well as recent stock market performance, the plan is currently underfunded, and is projected to be vastly underfunded ($20 billion by 2014). This is due to the Actuarial Accrued Liability, to this date, of current retirees and employees. This obligation cannot be changed, and is the greatest source of financial burden for the system.

A number of bodies have been meeting to decide how to meet this obligation. There is a UC Post-Employment Benefits Task Force charged with presenting recommendations to the President Yudof this summer/fall; this Task Force is being advised by faculty representation in the form of the Task Force on Investment and Retirement (TFIR), and the University Committee on Planning and Budget of the Academic Senate. Their recommendations will certainly involve a change in the structure of the DBP, likely involving lower benefits and longer requirements for eligibility for these benefits. The Academic Senate has also recommended that employee and employer contributions, currently at 2% and 4%, respectively, be increased rapidly over time to fund the system. Since 2/3 of these benefit contributions come from outside sources such as grants and contracts, the employee contributions will be leveraged.
However, even a decrease in benefits and an increase in contributions will not address the accrued liability. Therefore, TFIR has recommended that the UC issue Pension Obligation Bonds to address the current shortfall. These bonds would allow full funding of UCRS, and the earning of investment income over the life of the bonds, hopefully at a rate greater than the interest paid on the bonds, will ease repayment. Absent these bonds, and a change in UCRS contributions and structure, it is projected that 50% of payroll will go to fund the system by the year 2022, clearly an untenable situation.

Health Benefits: In contrast to pension obligations, health benefits for retirees are provided by UC but not guaranteed. They are funded from the current budget. They can be changed, and most certainly will be. As with pension benefits, a number of options have been proposed – they largely involve increasing eligibility requirements such as vesting, and decreasing UC contributions to health insurance premiums. One can expect that health insurance premiums will rise substantially in the coming years, both for current employees and retirees.

Frequently ask questions and resources

1. Are my current accrued pension benefits secure?

Yes.

2. Are my pension benefits earned in the future guaranteed?

Unknown. Two committees of the Academic Senate have come out strongly opposing any change in the benefit formula for currently vested employees.

3. Will the retirement plan become a Defined Contribution Plan?

While some favor this option, it has the drawback of immediately decreasing contributions to the fund, thus worsening its financial status. It also violates the principle of providing for a secure retirement.

*Resources:

PEB Task Force website
http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/ucrpfuture/emp_task.html

Pension and Retiree Health Valuation reports
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/regmeet/nov09.html

Total Renumeration Study
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/compensation/comparisons.html

Academic Senate documents
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate
Amsterdam receives 2010 UC Davis School of Medicine Research Award  
Anissa Routon, Senior Writer, Public Affairs and Marketing

Ezra Amsterdam, associate director of chest pain emergency services and associate director of the coronary care unit, has received the 2010 School of Medicine Research Award.

Amsterdam will receive the award at the General Faculty Meeting on May 26. The award includes a $350 stipend and, after July 1, a $15,000 fellowship.

In his more than 40 years at UC Davis, Amsterdam focused his clinical and laboratory research on coronary artery disease. He produced some of the earliest studies on beta adrenergic blockade for treatment of angina. Through his early research, he led the effort to introduce vasodilator therapy for heart failure, on which he and his collaborators published an influential series of studies, including one of the earliest reports of ACE inhibitors, an approach that would revolutionize heart failure therapy. He also led a multicenter trial on noninvasive counterpulsion.

Amsterdam published the first study which showed that low intensity exercise was associated with evidence of increased myocardial oxygen supply in coronary patients. He also published research on the effects of training on ventricular ectopy, interaction with beta blockade and the cardiac effects on resistance training in CAD patients.

His studies on the management of patients presenting to the emergency department with chest pain resulted in his leadership role in the development of chest pain units nationally and abroad. Amsterdam is the chair of the AHA Writing Group of a Scientific Statement and recently received the 2010 Distinguished Physician Award by the Society of Chest Pain Centers. Amsterdam is the founder and editor-in-chief of Preventive Cardiology, the official journal of the American Society of Preventive Cardiology.
Hongwu Chen, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular medicine at UC Davis Health System and the co-leader of the molecular oncology research program at UC Davis Cancer Center at UC Davis Health System, will be awarded the Oettinger Memorial Award for his outstanding research in breast and prostate cancer, specifically the epigenetic regulation of gene expression and cell cycle control and their action mechanisms. The award is being presented on May 26 at the General Faculty Meeting.

“Dr. Chen is an outstanding molecular biologist and scientist,” said UC Davis vice chair of research for the internal medicine department John Rutledge, chair of the Research Affairs Committee that selected Chen for the 2010 award. “His research has significantly contributed to a shift in the paradigm of hormone signaling. His findings may lead to the development of new drug therapies that target steroid hormone receptors, bringing new hope to those diagnosed with breast and prostate cancer.”

The role of sex-hormone signaling in cancer is an area of intense interest among scientists seeking a better understanding of the disease and potential targets for new treatments. Chen’s research includes molecular mechanisms of hormone signaling in control of cell growth and differentiation and the role of steroid receptors such as estrogen receptors and androgen receptor and their associated cofactors (especially coactivators) in cancer. Chen’s recent research indicates that tissue and development-specific hormone signaling entails the induction of a novel group of chromatin coregulators that mediate the temporal- and tissue-specific hormone signaling events.

As a result of his innovative research and growing national reputation, Chen was invited to serve at the DoD Breast Cancer Research Program Study panels and the National Institutes of Health’s Cancer Etiology Study Section. In addition to conducting his research, Chen also has trained medical students through two NIH-funded T32 training programs.

The Oettinger Memorial Award memorializes a UC Davis graduate student who died of lung cancer in July 1970. Her husband Martin was a senior lecturer in economics at UC Davis before his death in 1986. The award recognizes outstanding lung research by a member of the UC Davis faculty and is presented annually.
The standing committees of the faculty

**Admissions Committee:** Composed of members of Admissions Subcommittees: Steering, Policy, Screening, Selection, Interview, and Rural-PRIME. Reviews previous cycle, discusses goals, priorities, and deadlines.
Chair: Don Hilty, M.D.

- **Admissions Steering Subcommittee:** Oversight of admissions process; reviews progress of Selection Subcommittees; advises Selection Subcommittees; makes final recommendation for admission. Meets as needed.

- **Admissions Policy Subcommittee:** Assesses, reviews, and enhances admissions process; develops policies for primary and secondary screening of applicants. Meets as needed.

- **Admissions Screening Subcommittee:** Conducts primary screening; prioritizes applicants for interviews. Meets 3rd Thursday of each month.

- **Admissions Selection Subcommittee:** Taking into account all available information, ranks applicants for acceptance and submits ranking to the Steering Subcommittee. Typically meets twice each month between November and April.

- **Admissions Interview Subcommittee:** Conduct interviews and prioritize applicants for the Selection Subcommittees by following the policies and procedures developed by the Policy Subcommittee.

- **Admissions Rural-PRIME (Program in Medical Education):** Will screen, interview and prioritize applicants for the Selection Subcommittees by following the policies and procedures developed by the Policy Subcommittee. Applicants will need to be accepted for MD and Rural-PRIME criteria sets, with the Selection Subcommittees determining the former and the Rural-PRIME Subcommittees determining the latter.

**Committee on Education Policy:** Defines and implements goals, objectives, and structure of the curriculum; oversees curricula and evaluates course content; establishes teaching and student evaluation guidelines; recommends criteria for evaluation and promotion of students; and consults with Admissions Committee on the academic prerequisites for admission. New volunteers are asked to provide a brief summary of teaching involvement.
Chair: John Rose, M.D.

**Committee on Student Progress:** Reviews and evaluates student progress; certifies promotion into years two, three, and four. The Committee has the authority to place a student on probation, establish the duration of probation, prescribe steps for remediation of performance deficiencies, remove student from probation, and recommend dismissal. Members shall have contributed to the teaching of medical students.
Chair: Paul FitzGerald, Ph.D.

**Health Sciences Library Committee:** This is a joint committee with the School of Veterinary Medicine. The committee recommends on acquisitions, operating policy, capital improvements and personnel of the Loren B. Carlson Health Science Library.
Chair: Hung Ho, M.D.

**Committee for Research Affairs:** Reviews applications for research support awarded within the SOM and UCDMC; reviews and selects candidates from medical classes or from the medical faculty for research awards.
Chair: John Rutledge, M.D.

**Committee on Research Space Allocation Appeals:** Hears complaints and appeals of individual faculty members with regard to intra-departmental assignment of research space, and transmits findings and recommendations regarding such appeals to the Associate Dean for Research and the department chair.
Chair: Carroll Cross, M.D.

**Committee on Faculty Affairs:** Acts as an ombudsman; advises on publication matters such as plagiarism, censorship and right of authorship; advises in matters involving academic freedom, including issues related to discrimination; considers appeals and special problems relating to faculty appointments and promotions; and considers other matters pertinent to faculty welfare. Membership limited to full professors.
Chair: Anthony Stone, M.D.

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Faculty Executive Committee: Summary of recent actions

September 2009
- Discussions on the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy continued.
- Discussions on the proposed Academic Senate Library Committee Reorganization presented by Dr. Hung Ho, Chair, Health Sciences Library Committee.

November 2009
- Discussions on the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy continued. Received faculty feedback.
- Research Space Advisory Committee report presented by Dr. Robert Berman, Past and Interim Chair.
- Faculty Personnel Committee report presented by Dr. Vijay Khatri, Past FPC Chair.

December 2009
- Information Technology report presented by Michael Minear, Chief Information Officer.
- Discussions regarding the proposed revision of the Davis Physician’s Oath.

January 2010
- The proposed Conflict of Interest Policy was presented at General Faculty meeting. Faculty members were invited to submit a pro and con statement to include on the ballot.
- Reviewed admissions waiver requests.

February 2010
- The proposed Conflict of Interest Policy was approved.
- Discussions on the proposed Davis Physician’s Oath continued.
- Reviewed admissions waiver requests.

March 2010
- Discussions regarding student evaluations and the process of the Committee on Student Progress.
- Discussions of the Admissions Committee proposal to implement Multiple Mini Interview in the admissions interview process continued.
- Reviewed admissions waiver requests.

April 2010
- Discussions continued regarding the Davis Physician’s Oath.
- Class co-presidents were invited to attend the meeting to improve the two-way communications between the students and the faculty.
- Reviewed admissions waiver requests.

May 2010
- Reviewed standing committee composition.

General faculty meeting
Spring Quarter General Faculty meeting
Wednesday, May 26, 2010
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
PSSB Bldg, Auditorium, G300 (basement)
Sacramento campus
&
MS1-C, Room 130
Davis campus

Contact:
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Website: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medschool/somsenate
Smartsite: https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu:8443/portal

Faculty Senate Website
To access FEC roster, standing committee Chairs list, standing committee membership list, standing committee descriptions, School of Medicine Bylaws, and archived Faculty-to Faculty newsletters, please visit:
www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medschool/somsenate

In addition, you can access General Faculty meeting minutes and redacted FEC meeting minutes on SmartSite, using your Kerberos login and password, please visit:
https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu:8443/portal