

Letter to Academic Community

July 31, 2017

Dear UC Merced Academic Community,

It's hard to believe, but we are well into the 'final third' of the summer, and I do hope you have had an opportunity to take some time off. I want to give you an update on faculty hiring for this past year, and discuss the implications for our hiring plans in the year ahead.

In the previous academic year, we embarked on the most aggressive faculty hiring plan in the school's history. The magnitude of our efforts was the result of a 'perfect storm' of delayed cluster hires, carried positions from unsuccessful searches the previous year, a few lost retention cases and a significant focus on foundational hires. In total, we searched to fill 40 positions, and that level of activity put much stress on the system, most notably on all of the faculty, who defined, orchestrated, led and consummated those searches. Sixteen of those recruitments were carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Academic Focusing Initiative (SAFI) cluster hiring process, and the remainder (24) focused on individual foundational hires.

We have yet to completely close out all those searches, either by formal acceptance of an offer or by agreement to carry over the search to next year. This delay is not typical (all searches are usually completed one way or the other by early June). But the additional time required is a consequence of the magnitude of our efforts and what has proven to be yet another season of identifying outstanding candidates who we would very much like to add to our faculty. In other words, some negotiations are taking longer.

As of Monday July 24, we have successfully recruited 39 new members to the Senate faculty at UC Merced. We have hired into every school, through a combination of interdisciplinary and disciplinary strategies, and have once again demonstrated our collective acknowledgement that diversity is a key metric of quality for this campus. Sixteen distinct disciplinary groups will welcome at least one new member of the faculty this academic year.

We are working closely with our Office of Communications to put together a more detailed and personal description of who our new faculty members are, but let me take a moment to give you some broad-brush details:

Of the 39 new hires:

- 17 have an academic home in SSHA, 17 in SOE and 5 in SNS
- In SSHA, 11 are women, in SOE 7 are women and in SNS 2 are women. In total, 20 of 39 faculty members hired are women. We do not as yet have complete data on ethnic diversity of those hired, but I will provide that information as soon as it is compiled.
- 36 are Ladder Rank Faculty, 3 are L(P)SOEs.

- 13 were recruited via cluster hiring (3 in IPSJ, 3 in SUST, 3 in AFM and 4 in HHS) and 23 via foundational hires.
- Startup packages to recruit this class, to date, totals \$16.2M
- Annual salary commitment to date, totals approximately \$4M exclusive of benefits and summer support.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you, from the search committees to the faculty diversity advisors to each faculty member who devoted time and energy to the recruitment process, and very importantly to the staff in all the schools who supported these efforts. **You** are responsible for such a successful recruiting season. Thank you.

Identifying the source of funds for faculty salaries and startup packages is but one element of the resource challenge. The other major challenge is identifying space, both office and research space, for our incoming class. Without the collaboration and cooperation of many of you, and the dogged analysis of exactly what space is available (by the Deans, with major assistance from Maggie Saunders), we could not have hired these faculty members. The primary reason we have been able to place new faculty is your willingness to share and collaborate with the space we do have available.

There are still approximately eight negotiations ongoing, and given we already have acceptances on 39 offers, the potential “final tally” exceeds the 40 allocated positions for this year. The difference is largely but not exclusively attributed to additional positions provided in response to a substantial number of spousal hire requests.

Implications for Faculty recruitment in AY17-18

Once all the current negotiations wrap up, I will do a careful assessment of how each recruitment closed. We will not carry forward any recruitments from SAFI hires that failed to close in this round. We won’t “lose” those SAFI positions, but rather will add them to the recruitment pool after our planned review of the entire SAFI process, which will take place this academic year. We will, however, carry forward all unsuccessful foundational searches, including replacement searches. By my current count, we will have at least six (6) foundational searches that will carry forward. We unfortunately will also have a few searches to fill positions vacated by faculty who have left UC Merced this past year.

Until Fall of 2019, when the first new academic office and research space becomes available as part of the 2020 Project, we have no new space available for additional incoming faculty. Please bear with us on this and know that any sub-optimal space accommodations are temporary. We will do our best to make sure all faculty have appropriate office and lab spaces as soon as the new buildings come online.

We now enter a very challenging ‘transition year’. Those faculty recruited to begin their careers at UCM in Fall of 2018 will be the last incoming faculty class before space becomes available from the 2020 Project.

I will still honor the foundational carry-over positions previously described. There will also be a limited number of new foundational searches, but they will be very few in number (most likely 5 or fewer). We simply do not have the capacity to recruit for more.

In the next week, I will summarize the specific foundational recruitments that will carry forward for each school and provide an allocation for the limited number of new foundational hires. I apologize for the lateness of the season, but the outstanding success we have had in our recruitments for this year have justified, in my mind, the additional time we have taken to successfully 'close the deal' on many of these offers.

Once again, thank you all for your hard work and dedication to the success of this fine university.

Sincerely,

Tom Peterson