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2023-24 Academic Personnel Initiatives to improve transparency, efficiency and user experience October 2, 2023

The academic personnel (AP) system of the University of California, with multi-level review of the faculty carried out on a regular basis, is an essential component that supports the excellence of the faculty and makes this one of the leading public institutions of higher education in the world. However, stakeholders at all levels report finding the system complex to use and challenging to administer; addressing these concerns is one of our top priorities.

Coming out of the pandemic, we have focused significant attention on improving the efficiency of operations within Academic Personnel Services, however the AP mission of the university requires transparency and coordination from the level of individual faculty and staff all the way to the Office of the Chancellor. Therefore, in the current academic year we are launching a number of initiatives intended to improve the efficiency of the system, and provide transparency to faculty and staff alike regarding the status of the academic review process.

Here we review specific initiatives focused on improving transparency and efficiency, continued implementation of enterprise systems to support academic personnel processes, and using AI tools to help faculty and staff navigate AP policies and processes. Each initiative is data-driven and incorporates pilot testing so end-user feedback will drive further improvement.

Transparency Dashboard

Over the summer months APS developed a 'Transparency Dashboard' for administrator, faculty and AP staff use. In August, 2023, phase one of the dashboard was demonstrated to school AP staff in the School of Social Sciences and the School of Arts and Humanities. Based on their input and feedback, the dashboard was revised and will begin pilot use from October 1, 2023 through December 1, 2023 with faculty and staff users from the Departments of Educational Studies, Communications, Visual Arts and Music. Early adoption from volunteer departments will continue through the winter quarter with a continued soft roll-out to the rest of campus during spring

In phase one, faculty will be able to view their leave and service modification history, review outcome history, current appointment detail (including salary components) and probationary clock information. **If the department uses Interfolio RPT (Review, Promotion and Tenure) throughout the review process, faculty will be able to track the status of their in-progress academic review in real time.**

In phase two, faculty will be able to track other AP actions such as leave requests, policy exception requests, OATS submissions, pending compensation actions and more. Phase two development is continuing during the fall and winter quarters, with an anticipated request for beta users during Spring 2024.

When completed, the dashboard is intended to serve as a single source of information for faculty to have access to the status of the variety of personnel actions processed by central APS and by School Dean/VC offices. The dashboard will also allow administrators such as Department Chairs and Deans, and departmental and dean level staff, to track the approval process of the various AP actions for faculty in their unit.

Assistant Vice Chancellor Cindy Palmer will visit each General Campus department this fall to demonstrate the dashboard, discuss how Interfolio RPT will interact with the dashboard and to answer any questions about this and other AP initiatives.

Interfolio RPT and Faculty180

The campus transitioned to Interfolio RPT in order to provide an assessable faculty-first review system, which includes greater transparency into the academic review approval workflow. To understand how this enterprise tool is currently being used in Departments and Schools, APS distributed an Interfolio RPT usage survey to 68 general campus AP Department and Dean's Office staff. Survey responses are being used to generate an FAQ, 'how to' tools, and recommended Best Practices that will help departments use RPT starting at the very onset of creating a case. **Importantly, review cases that are fully processed in Interfolio RPT will allow faculty to track the status of their file as it works its way through the approval workflow using the Transparency Dashboard outlined above.**

Additionally, during the spring and summer months of 2023, APS relaunched the Faculty 180 pilot program, including 52 academic appointee participants from across the University. The distribution of those participating is SIO (2); JSOE (7); Quartet (6); Global Policy and Strategy (1); Research Affairs (1); School of Social Sciences (1); Rady School of Management (3); Arts & Humanities (4); Health Sciences: (23); Biological Sciences (2); and Physical Sciences (2). Of these, approximately half will submit a Faculty 180 generated BioBib for review this academic year. Pilot participants have been asked to consider the system configuration to help determine if the needs of academics have been met, to act as a system tester and to provide feedback throughout the pilot period. As expected, creation of the initial Faculty 180 data set is very time consuming, ranging from a few hours for Assistant rank bibliographies, to 40+ hours for senior academics with substantial publication, teaching, mentoring and service history. Once a Faculty 180 data set is in place however, adding a new publication, grant, or other activity takes just minutes. Moreover, the data used to generate a BioBib within Faculty 180 can also be used to instantly generate customized CV's, bibliographies, and biosketches including in formats commonly used by granting agencies.

Academic Personnel services added an additional 15 (new) faculty to the system at the New Faculty Orientation, and will track their progress using the tool as they ready for their first review. New faculty report that without Faculty 180 it can take days or weeks to convert their CV to a BioBib format for their appointment file review; they have welcomed the opportunity to take part in the Faculty 180 pilot.

Streamlining the Office of Academic Recruitment Services (OARS) Approval Workflow

While the overall turnaround time from the Office of Academic Recruitment Services (OARS) has dramatically improved over the last 5+ years, we have continued to receive complaints about the iterative process to refine search plans, short lists and search reports, i.e. 'change requests'. We take those concerns seriously, and in a continuing effort to improve our ability to succeed in academic recruitments through timely processing, we are implementing changes that will allow Deans to be the final arbitrator of change requests and recruitments within a Dean-delegated authority.

Effective immediately a streamlined escalation process to support timely review of campus academic recruitments has been implemented. This new escalation process for Search Plans, Short List Reports and Search Reports will provide a high level of oversight of each recruitment stage, will reinforce consistency given the single source of change requests from the Director of OARS, and will ensure that change requests from OARS are based on compliance considerations and not academic judgement. Deans continue to have the ultimate authority to approve recruitments and ensure that the compliance requirements are met while preserving the central role of academic judgment. Importantly, this process should result in a dramatic reduction of the time required to carry out these important recruitment tasks.

Kuali Tools to Speed Administrative Appointments, RTAD Requests, Course Overload Approvals, FSEP/FLS and Entry Level Salary Agreements

To create efficiencies, cleaner routing, and shorter turnaround times, APS has converted a wide range of paper forms and manual approval routing to a Kuali format. The Kuali tool also allows departmental and school staff, administrators and faculty to track the progress of each submission and its current status in the approval workflow.

APS consulted with staff across the general campus, SIO and Health Sciences to determine which forms and processes were most time consuming and onerous. As a result, APS converted Part-Time Administrative Appointment requests, Course Overload Payments, FSEP/FLS, and ELSA forms to Kuali. The new forms were rolled out in August 2023, after a pilot duration of April 2023 to June 2023 involving The Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPa), Undergraduate Education, and the Department of Theatre and Dance. Modifications were made based on pilot feedback, and the enhanced forms were offered to early adopters from Biological Sciences, SIO, RADY, Arts & Humanities, GPS, the Department of Ethnic

Studies and CREATE. Follow-up surveys indicate users enjoy “less memos” “automated routing” “more transparency” “ease of form use” and “AP responsiveness to related questions”.

RTAD appointment and Pathway to Retirement requests will begin using the Kuali format in October in a beta test environment. APS will present the form and the new process to campus AP staff at a Zoom launch event on October 5, 2023. Initial adopters will be part of the fall pilot with full implementation scheduled to begin in winter 2024.

APS will continue to monitor usage and will regularly survey users to allow for continuous process improvements. As a result of this type of ongoing communication and surveying, AP has already created a customized routing for the Health Sciences to align the approval work flow to their unique administrative structure.

Artificial Intelligence in AP and Service Now

APS is exploring the use of AI to augment and support teaching and learning of AP policy and process. Academic Personnel will leverage the recently published [Academic Personnel Process Manual](#) as a robust knowledge base to fuel AP AI-driven learning initiatives. The process manual contains a wealth of institutional knowledge, procedural guidelines, and local processes, and will serve as a foundational resource for training AI algorithms. In addition, APS will begin using Service Now to collect information that will further enhance the AP knowledge base. APS will introduce Service Now during the fall and winter quarters and is working to have a beta version of an AI chatbot tutor of the AP process manual available during the spring of 2024. Other Service Now uses include ticket initiation for requests for access to AP systems and a portal for reviewers to submit policy input when policies are under review.

Enhanced Training

In addition to employing virtual tutors powered by AI and in an effort to be responsive to training needs for AP staff throughout the campus, APS created a robust training review committee including the Senate CAP Analyst and 19 staff across general campus and the Health Sciences. Committee members were asked to review all available AP training programs and content, provide input into areas that need updating, to identify training gaps, and to provide input into what trainings are most urgently needed. Over the course of 6 meetings from March to June 2023, the top 4 topic areas identified for updating were the Academic Personnel Overview class, Academic Reviews, AP Data training, and Unit 18 training. Current efforts are underway to address these four areas. There are an additional 15 training topic areas that have been identified for updates and/or development.

Along with local training efforts, the Sr. Director of Policy, Process and Training is working with the Office of the President Academic Personnel and Programs Office to develop basic Academic Personnel training to be offered at all UC locations via the UC Learning Center. The general academic compensation policy training is currently under review by a system-wide committee and is expected to be distributed for campus comment and feedback later in 2023 or early 2024. Additionally, the system-wide committee has reviewed three trainings that are currently under development that will address the areas of Academic Personnel Overview Training, Academic Recruitment, and Employee and Labor Relations. Content has been developed and reviewed and is currently undergoing development as online modules.

We look forward to working with all campus stakeholders this year through these initiatives to further improve academic personnel processes at UC San Diego!

Respectfully Submitted,



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