



BERKELEY DIVISION

January 5, 2012

TO: Rita Evans, Chair, Committee on Appointment, Promotion and Advancement

From: Nick Robinson, Chair, LAUC-B Executive Committee

RE: Peer Review Standards in a Time of Increased Workload

The Executive Committee of LAUC-B is concerned about the impact on peer review standards of increased workload due to reductions in library staff. As of October, 2011, there were 105 librarians in LAUC-B, down from 116 just one year earlier. Reduced numbers of non-librarian staff also contribute to increased workload for librarians.

Downward staffing trends in the early 1990s evoked similar concerns. “In September 1990, there were 154 librarians in LAUC-B. By August 1991, the number of librarians had declined to 128. By August 1992, the number had dropped still further, to about 115...” (Whitson, William L., *Librarians, LAUC-B and the AFT*, 1992, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/docs/pdf/laucbhistory.pdf>)

Then, as now, many LAUC-B members assumed new responsibilities previously held by other staff. Increased workload within the library made it difficult to sustain or expand activities in one or more of the other three criteria that form the basis for judging merit and promotion reviews: professional activity outside the library; University and public service; research and other creative activity.

The long-term interests of both librarians and the University will be best served by restoring an appropriate balance between the demands of the primary assignment and other professional activities. While imbalances persist, special attention should be paid to ensuring that the flexibility granted by the APM to accommodate diverse career paths and professional contributions is upheld by all participants in the peer review process.

In 1992 the LAUC-B Executive Committee issued a policy directive to CAPA, advising that “during difficult periods, candidates and review initiators should explicitly acknowledge constraints inhibiting outside professional activities, and other reviewers should demonstrate requisite flexibility when evaluating professional activities beyond the primary assignment.” (*The Librarian Series in the 90’s and Beyond*, http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/docs/pdf/librarian_series_90s.pdf)

The 2011/2012 Executive Committee endorses this advice, and specifically recommends that for merit and promotion reviews:

- Candidates should note duties within the primary assignment that have been added during the period under review. Candidates should provide evidence of professional growth and accomplishment in mastering new and enlarged responsibilities in the primary assignment.
- Candidates should note additional responsibilities for UC systemwide activities that constitute contributions in the area of University and public service.
- Review initiators, administrative reviewers, CAPA, ad hoc committees, and final decision makers should give due weight to accomplishments that involve mastering new and enlarged responsibilities in the primary assignment and in systemwide activities.

The APM criteria for advancement and promotion are intentionally broad and flexible. CAPA in particular has the opportunity to assess each case in context, to weigh the librarian's activities in each of the four criteria, and to advise the University Librarian and the Vice Provost for the Faculty on what constitutes evidence of professional growth. The LAUC-B Executive Committee encourages all participants in the peer review process to exercise flexibility when evaluating professional activities in merit and promotion reviews.

cc: University Librarian Leonard

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LAUC-B Membership