Agenda for HDC Meeting (Chairs & Department Managers)
Thursday, May 8, 2014: 12:00 Noon-2:00 p.m.
Humanities 1, Room 202

I  Announcements

II Faculty Initiated Group Hires and future planning

See attached report out from senate review. Departments perspectives on the program and relation to future divisional planning.

III Departmental PBK Representatives

The campus Phi Beta Kappa chapter asks if departments would be willing to designate a faculty member to act as a chapter representative, informing majors who are elected to PBK of the standing of the honor and encouraging their acceptance of the invitation. Some departments have decided to pilot an arrangement where they use gift funds to support students’ initiation fees.

Which departments have or are willing to designate chapter liaisons?
CP/EVC Galloway
Chancellor’s Office

Re: 2014-15 Faculty Initiated Group Hires (FIGH) Preproposal Review Recommendations

CP/EVC Galloway,

As the appointed representatives of the Academic Senate, we write to present the results so far of the 2014-15 Faculty Initiated Group Hire (FIGH) review process. In all, 19 preproposals for interdisciplinary initiatives were submitted by faculty that spanned all five divisions. All 19 preproposals were meritorious and worthy of serious consideration. We will soon be providing feedback to each preproposal author. In many cases we will encourage authors to work with colleagues to develop their ideas further, and to resubmit a preproposal next year. In some other cases we will suggest that the authors work now with Department Chairs, Deans and other faculty to incorporate their ideas into the Divisional FTE requests next year or beyond.

Our main task as the reviewing committee is to recommend a few of these preproposals for rapid development and incorporation into campus hiring plans. In keeping with the principles, goals and criteria set out in the FIGH Call, we have converged on two top priorities, together with a set of strong candidates for third priority, as follows.

Priority 1: Regionally-defined Sustainability. We were especially impressed by the strength of the CISCA (Climate, Innovation and Social Change in the Americas) preproposal. Of course, sustainability is already a major research theme on this campus. The preproposal leverages that existing strength, and describes a unique continental focus that should enable us to achieve a very high profile nationally and internationally. The idea is extensible: building a top regionally defined program now could improve the prospects of building a School of the Environment later, should the opportunity arise.

The CISCA preproposal thoughtfully describes how to combine existing strengths across several departments and divisions, and contains persuasive ideas on external funding and MS programs. It already has the endorsement of key department chairs. Thus the preproposal is very strong in all three criteria: the importance of the topic is (or should be) beyond question now and unfortunately will only increase in the future; the potential for world-class excellence with a distinctive continental focus seems realistic; and the case for financial viability is persuasive.

Although not quite as crisp and distinctive, the Coastal Sustainability preproposal builds on existing capabilities in sustainability. The coastal theme joins campus expertise in terrestrial environments with that in oceanic environments and makes good use of UCSC’s physical location.

Crucially, both preproposals highlight the same missing ingredient -- quantitative, policy-oriented researchers in the Social Science division who could collaborate with researchers in PBSci and Engineering to “understand feedbacks between economic and financial incentives and
climate change politics and policy.” The first such recruitment should be defined and searched as soon as possible, perhaps for a position starting Fall 2015 if it can be harmonized with the current round of FTE requests from the Deans. We hope that the CISCA group will reach out to the Coastal group and work jointly to flesh out a full proposal, which will include recommendations on the order and type of subsequent recruitments.

**Priority 2: Slavery in the Atlantic World.** We were impressed by the coherent vision in the Slavery in the Atlantic World preproposal. It demonstrated the historic and continuing importance of the topic, and its potential to leverage campus expertise present and planned (e.g., in the ongoing CRES initiative). The preproposal did not speak to FIGH’s third criterion, financial viability, but there would seem to be some possibility of support by major foundations. Alternatively, it could be argued that one or two well-chosen assistant or associate professor slots, on top of those already in the pipeline, would be a modest price for such a distinctive program.

The preproposal seems related to some others seen in the current round, notably African and African Diaspora Studies and perhaps Indian Oceans Crossings, as well as to some divisional priorities. We encourage the Slavery in the Atlantic World team to communicate with members of these other teams and, if feasible, to include some of them as partners in the development of a full proposal.

**Highly Ranked.**

The following preproposals found strong support among our members, but none achieved consensus as third priority.

- Learning DNA builds on a recent but very impressive cadre of researchers who have already achieved international distinction in the subfield of archaic DNA. Some committee members argue that the group has already achieved critical mass and that additional hires will probably not bring anything new or transformative to campus. On the other hand, retaining the current cadre at UCSC may require the prospect of another hire or two.

- Three other preproposals led by STEM authors --- Cancer Research, Drug Development, and Reverse-Engineering the Brain --- all meet the importance criteria, and were nominated as third priority by at least one committee member. Not all members were persuaded that UCSC could, at a reasonable price, achieve world class excellence in these areas. Surely we would all support the PBSci Dean if he were to commit to any of these proposed clusters.

- Natural Language Processing and Causal Inference in the Social Sciences both complement the campus’ nascent Data Science initiative. The present and future importance of both are clear on their own, and even more as part of Data Science. The preproposals do a good job of pointing to existing pockets of strength on campus and noting how they might be leveraged. Financial viability is a strong point of both, since the proposed hires should garner lots of external funds, support grad students and have relatively low startup costs. The connections between engineering and social sciences would benefit both divisions, and the campus generally. However, the committee believes that the ideas in these proposals are best developed in conjunction with a wider Data Science initiative.
As we prepare to go forward, we would like to thank several Divisional Deans, and especially the Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice Provost Academic Affairs, who provided valuable feedback to our review but were not part of the ranking process.

The preproposals endorsed above now go back to their authors, who will have the rest of the Spring and Summer to develop full proposals in consultation with related campus stakeholders including Deans and Department Chairs. As outlined in our Call, the full proposals are due September 1, 2014 and from that point onward, the approval process is the same as for other FTE requests. Thus the full proposals, which each should already have an endorsement from at least one Dean, would be vetted along with the Deans’ usual FTE requests and considered for your approval for the 2015-16 hiring cycle.

Sincerely,

FIGH SELECTION COMMITTEE
E.G. Crichton, Art
Dan Friedman, Economics
Tracy Larrabee, Computer Engineering
Kimberly Lau, Literature
Bruce Schumm, Physics
Steve Whittaker, Psychology

cc: Senate Executive Committee
VPAA Lee
VPDGS Miller
Dean Kamieniecki
Dean Koch
Dean Ladusaw
Dean Ramirez
Dean Yager