November 23, 2015

Leobardo Estrada
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Re: Teaching Professor Series Proposal, Second Review

Dear Professor Estrada,

The Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the proposal to establish a “Teaching Professor” for members of the Pre-Security Employment and Security Employment lecturer series at its meeting on November 2nd, 2015 and once again on November 16th, 2015. We were pleased to read the College FEC response to Senate Concerns dated October 23rd, 2015, which addressed some of the concerns expressed in our February 13th, 2015 letter. Nonetheless, during the discussion, several issues remained unanswered.

CPB opines that it would be helpful to learn more about how a similar program works at other universities such as UCSD.

Professorial Status Considerations

- CPB welcomes the idea of expanding the faculty roster in light of the increasing undergraduate student load, but CPB expresses concerns with respect to the extent to which “Teaching Professor” series will contribute to a two-tier, if not three-tier, faculty system that will disadvantage “regular faculty”, whose responsibilities include research and service as well as teaching. CPB members opined that our campus already has a two-tier system (“regular professor” & “clinical professor”), and that the creation of an additional hybrid professorial position might in fact deepen the divide among faculty (e.g., between lecturers and “regular professors”). CPB is concerned that the creation of a “Teaching Professor” series will inherently imply that Professor must be qualified as teachers or not teachers, and that this will signal, in a politically unhelpful way, that certain professors are primarily researchers, whereas others are teachers. From the perspective of budget and planning, CPB expressed concerns that this dichotomy could lead to undue pressure to increase the latter at the expense of the former.

- On the other hand, CPB does recognize the desirability of security of employment for lecturers, but also finds it disconcerting that this would come at the expense of having individuals with the professorial title, who had engaged in academic career preparation, would be steered away from research, which is one of the academic priorities of this university. CPB expressed concerns that the establishment of this new “Teaching Professor” series might appear to be a
way to accommodate faculty spouses, rather than being aimed principally at benefitting our students and our campus.

- CPB understands that the “teaching Professor” series might ultimately be particularly useful for language departments, where there is a chronic shortage of faculty especially in the less-commonly-taught languages. Nonetheless the convenience of this proposed series for a few departments is felt by CPB as another threat toward the establishment of an unwelcomed two-tier professorial system across the university.

**Budget and Planning Considerations**

- CPB opined that adopting the new series of “Teaching Professor” could reduce the already low intake of ladder faculty, thus placing further stress for departmental administration and university service on a decreasing pool of existing ladder faculty. As the FEC response notes, the College of Letters and Sciences is currently at 900. CPB is concerned that, if we assume that the number will remain at 900, we, as a campus, might increase the number of FTEs in the “Teaching Professor” series beyond 5% (45 faculty). It is not clear how this might affect the ability of this campus to grow beyond the 900 limit. The October 23rd, 2015 response fails to address this points satisfactorily, and simply states that “[T]his proposed series is not meant in any way to replace the need for ladder faculty renewal.” While this may be the case, CPB reiterates its concern that the establishment of the proposed “Teaching Professor” series might (or will) hamper the campus ability to grow beyond the 900 threshold. CPB deplores that fact that the administration’s commitment to ensuring the necessary FTE needed to support our curricular needs and to improve our programs on the graduate as well as undergraduate levels remains unclear. CPB anticipates that it is possible, and even probable, that the proposed “Teaching Professor” series will blunt the the growth of our “Regular Professors”, whose research bring indispensable indirect funds to our campus. In brief, CPB is concerned that, while possibly beneficial in some respects, the proposed “Teaching Professor” in point of fact undermines the mission our faculty is expected to engage in, which includes the creation of new knowledge, in addition to teaching and university service.

- A related concern expressed by CPB centers on the issue that new “Teaching Professor” hires are likely to compete for individual departmental resources, in addition to reducing the number of per capita research grants coming to the department and the campus.

- With respect to planning, CPB also raised concern about the modes of evaluation for “Teaching Professors”, compared to “Regular Professors”. For the purpose of Merit and Promotion, faculty are evaluated on the basis of teaching, research, and service. The teaching component is quantified based on student evaluations and peer evaluations. It is not clear to CPB how the equivalent professorial series of Teaching Professors should be skewed, and evaluated solely, or mostly, on the basis of teaching. The argument that teaching excellence should be assessed among Teaching Professors on criteria that includes additional rubrics of evaluation for pedagogical effectiveness appears fallacious since these new rubrics of teaching would likely benefit current ladder faculty as well.
CPB members questioned what will happen to lecturers and lecturers with SOE, and whether there is in actuality a significant difference between the two positions. CPB felt that the arguments presented in the original proposal and in the October 23rd, 2015 were sufficiently detailed. In particular, CPB noted that individuals in the lecturer series, presumably unlike the “Teaching Professors”, presently are unionized. This, in and of itself, adds another layer of complexity, such as the extent to which the establishment of the proposed “Teaching Professor” might threaten to disenfranchise the union on campus.

Directly related to the protection the union proffer lecturer, CPB expressed concern that, since the main focus of the new series is teaching, and the perceived benefit is focused on getting more teaching time out of this newly proposed faculty series, the potential is there loud and clear for abuse and overwork. The requirement to produce publications on pedagogical applied research, and putatively in curricular development and evaluation, both of course materials, and teaching quality of peers, while demanding a full teaching load from teaching professors adds to this problematic dimension.

Students Concerns

- The CPB student representative raised concern about how students would respond to the creation of a “Teaching Professor” series. The student perspective is that, on one hand it is exciting to create a series that is committed to teaching, but on the other hand, the question remains as to whether or not students might lose out on the opportunity to work with ladder faculty that have research and skills that students attend UCLA want to experience. In brief, student representatives expressed concern that the faculty recruited in the proposed “Teaching Professor” series might not provide them with the mentorship they expect and deserve from UCLA faculty.

In brief, CPB recognizes the merits of the proposed “Teaching Professor” series, but it is concerned that the zeal for teaching amongst the legislature might well transform our faculty into a non-support of research faculty. Therefore, CPB views the original proposal, and the October 23rd, 2015 as weak in a number of ways. It opines that the proposed “Teaching Professor” series, while beneficial to a few, will set into motion some actions and reactions about the structure of our faculty that could have negative long-term repercussions across the university. The proposed “Teaching Professor” series is not an appropriate response to the call of the legislature for increased quantity and quality of teaching by our faculty.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposal. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at fchiappelli@dentistry.ucla.edu or via the Council’s analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu or x62470.

Sincerely,
Francesco Chiappelli, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Susan Cochran, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
    Joel Aberbach, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
    Linda Mohr, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate Office
    Elizabeth Feller, Committee Analyst, Council on Planning and Budget
    Members of the Council on Planning and Budget