

## What is expected of a Faculty Member?

The paragraphs below are designed to give you a broad sense of what is expected of you as a University of California (UC) faculty member. In large part, this would be the same as at any other research university, but there are some specifics to UC. No single brief summary can provide an adequate description of all the duties or the variance to be found among different departments. For more specifics of your field, talk to the faculty in your department or related departments and to your Chair. Have these discussions early so that you are fully aware of what is expected of you. If things aren't going well, seek help right away. We want you to succeed at UCR!

### Presence on campus

As a UC faculty member, you are now employed by the State and, absent specific leaves, are expected to be on campus or in an affiliated facility for the vast majority of your time during the academic or fiscal (depending on your appointment) year. To quote from the Academic Personnel Manual: 025-8 General Principles a. Obligations to the University: "In order to fulfill those obligations [to the University], faculty members must maintain a significant presence on campus, meet classes, keep office hours, hold examinations as scheduled, be accessible to students and staff, be available to interact with University colleagues, and share service responsibilities throughout every quarter or semester of active service." **Active service includes quarters during which you have no assigned classes.**

## The Relative Importance of Research/Scholarly activity/Creative activity, Teaching and Service varies with the Faculty Series into which you have been appointed

### The Job: Service and shared governance

Because it is often the least understood aspect of the job, we are starting with service. Expectations in regard to service vary with your rank: Assistant Professors are not expected to do as much as senior Professors. If you are a new Assistant Professor, you will likely not be asked to do much in your first year when your focus should be on setting up your research program and sorting out your classes. You may, however, be asked to perform tasks that could help you in one of these activities. For example, to organize a seminar series with outside speakers in your research area so that you begin to network in your professional community. As you progress, you will serve on more time-consuming committees in the department. After promotion to Associate Professor, you will be expected to participate in college, campus and systemwide governance. The University of California has true shared governance: <http://senate.ucr.edu/about/>.

The benefits of shared governance are that we all gain from the collective faculty wisdom on this campus and throughout the UC system. However, true shared governance means that all faculty must participate in the work.

Some committees tackle important issues that will have a substantial impact on an aspect of the institution that interests you greatly, but those committees may also be very time consuming. It is important to be involved, but also important to maintain a balance with the other expectations of your job. You will not be granted tenure if your research is lacking but you have been a wonderful citizen! Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that your contributions to service are a significant part of the evaluations for your merits and promotions. You will not, for example, be granted accelerations through the merit system if your contributions to service are not commensurate with rank. The service category includes UC service, professional service (in your research area, such as reviewing manuscripts, organizing symposia etc), and community service. The first two are expected, and the latter is encouraged. **You cannot just focus on professional service.**

### The Job: Teaching

Teaching loads vary with the discipline and as a new appointee it is likely that you were given a reduced teaching load for some period of time to help you get your research program up and running for the first time or after the disruption of a move. Make sure you take advantage of the extra time. You may be stepping into an established curriculum, in which case do not hesitate to ask your colleagues for advice/materials/coaching. In addition, there are many workshops on campus designed to help you become a good or better teacher. These will be posted as they become available on the Academy of Distinguished Teachers website: <http://academyteachers.ucr.edu/>.

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Creating new courses can require an enormous investment of time and energy, especially if you teach in a field or at a level where textbooks are rarely utilized. If you were hired to develop a new course and you are new to teaching, discuss the additional impact this may have on your time with your department chair.

Every campus has its own culture and so you may find UCR's students rather different. It is important to think about how your style of pedagogy fits with the prevailing culture of your new home and this is best done by talking with colleagues. e.g. UCR has many students who are the first in their families to attend college. Your expectations may not be as obvious to them as you anticipate. Be sure that your course description includes goals and objectives and the grading policy. These may not be changed once the course starts. Think about the economic situation of many of the students in terms of any required texts and let students know about books on reserve in the library or available free online. Also remember that many students have to work while attending UCR and the longer lead time they have for assignments, the more successful they are likely to be. Try to be flexible about office hours so that they can indeed find time to come see you.

Student evaluations are a significant source of information about the quality of your teaching during the academic personnel review process. The two most important pieces of advice are 1) to show the students that you care about doing a good job and that they succeed in the course (they will forgive a lot of imperfections under these circumstances) and 2) to ask for help from colleagues or the Academy of Distinguished Teachers as soon as you receive poor evaluations. Evidence that you have actively sought help and are trying to improve carries weight in the evaluation of personnel files. For clinical faculty, the medical school has learning specialists to help faculty and students, both in the traditional classroom as well as non-classroom, patient setting. For ladder rank faculty, supervision of graduate students is expected and the supervision of undergraduate research is encouraged.

When first teaching a class, you may not be entirely comfortable with the material. As long as you don't answer every question with *I don't know*, students will respect your saying it, assuming it is followed by *but I will find out* and that you follow through. Beware of guessing or pretending to know – someone in the class will likely look it up on an electronic device! Your job is to help them learn, not to be a repository of all knowledge.

### **The Job: Research/Scholarly activity/Creative activity**

*"The distinctive mission of the University [of California] is to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge. That obligation, more specifically, includes undergraduate education, graduate and professional education, research, and other kinds of public service, **which are shaped and bounded by the central pervasive mission of discovering and advancing knowledge.**"*

The level and/or type of research or creative activity varies with the faculty series into which you are appointed and also with discipline or subdiscipline. It is therefore important that you meet regularly with your department chair or mentor to discuss progress.

You are unlikely to ever get a clear answer to the question how much am I expected to publish for tenure. The best you can do is try to assess what recently successful candidates have done in similar fields. You need to be aware that different disciplines, even if closely related, may have different standards. Political scientists for example write books, economists write monographs and articles. If your primary medium of scholarly expression is relatively new (computer software, multimedia) or less usual (e.g., plays directed, dances choreographed, exhibitions curated) you need to discuss what measures will be used to judge the quality of your scholarly output with your department chair. E.g. It may be the reputation of the film festival or gallery that is important.

Don't delay sending out articles and manuscripts. While they need to be excellent, they will never be perfect in the eyes of all reviewers. You will likely have to revise on the basis of reviewers' comments. You need your work out there so that it has time to have an impact. One of the questions asked of reviewers writing letters for a tenure decision is "has the work changed thinking in the field?" Time is of the essence, and passes very quickly.

Yes, we want to encourage collaborations, but make sure that your collaborations are not always with the same person. If they are, it becomes difficult to assess who is the intellectual driving force behind the work. With a positive tenure decision comes a long and expensive commitment to you from the University. Remembering this will help you

gain perspective on what you need to demonstrate to gain tenure in your discipline. Have you demonstrated independent thought (i.e. moved beyond your PhD or postdoctoral work), is the work impactful in terms of quantity, quality and effect (this means it has to be published before the very last moment to make tenure), has it changed thinking in the field, is it sustainable?

## **The job: Holistic view**

While the job has been broken down into three components, any file being evaluated for a merit raise or promotion is examined holistically. You cannot just compare the number of publications between you and someone else; they may have taught more or received better teaching evaluations or chaired a senate committee etc.

## **Getting to Know Your Department**

Joining a department is like joining a family as an in-law. You may grow to love everyone, but then again you may not. At the very least, you need to get along in a respectful manner. People will have different views that will sometimes irritate and sometimes infuriate and just like any long term relationship, you need to work at it. One of the beauties of being in an academic environment is that you are surrounded by people who may think differently from you. This, in the long run, will expand your horizons. State your case and make sure it is substantiated by fact. You need to gain the respect of your colleagues. Be aware that some of your great ideas may have been tried before and failed for some reason. A common mistake of newcomers at the more senior level is to assume that the way things were done in their previous institution is more or less by definition better. This is not a way to make friends and influence people! Maybe that way is better, but find out the rationale for the difference before expounding.

There is a lot to learn as a new faculty member or when joining a new university. How much you have to learn initially varies by discipline. For example, while everyone has to learn how to register student grades and practices about make-up exams, workload per unit of credit, cheating, students you are worried about etc., those in the sciences also have to learn about Federal, State, UC, and local policies in regard to lab safety, animal welfare etc. UC is a big machine and there is probably a policy or procedure somewhere that describes just about everything! The web makes it easier to find information, but sometimes you don't know what to look for or what it is called locally. Ask your colleagues, ask your Chair, check with the support staff. No one expects you to know how things work.

Make an effort to join in with department social activities or start new ones.

## **Being a Professional**

As a professor you need to engender respect and create an appropriate social distance between yourself and your students. Be interactive, be social and friendly, but don't be best buddies with students. You need to have a degree of perceived objectivity since you will be assigning grades to students and responding to petitions etc. There is no specific dress code for the professoriate (except for example in clinical settings), but it can be useful to use your manner of dress when teaching to create some distance, especially if you are close in age to the students. There are things that are a question of personal style, but you may also find it useful to be Dr X in the classroom, even if outside of class you prefer use of your first name.

Acknowledgements: This document stole some ideas from the Berkeley career center.

### References:

1. Leaves: [APM 700](#)
2. Faculty Code of Conduct: [APM 015](#)
3. Privileges and Duties of Members of the Faculty: [APM 005](#)
4. Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty Members: [APM 025](#)