

TO: All UC San Diego School of Medicine Faculty

FROM: School of Medicine Committee on Academic Personnel, Francesca Torriani (2021-2022 Chair)

Date: December 2022

Subject: Where SOMCAP Stood

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### **Committee Charge**

During this period, The School of Medicine Committee on Academic Personnel (SOMCAP) was composed of seven appointed School of Medicine Health Sciences (HS) faculty from different departments who reviewed salaried faculty in the HS Clinical and Clinical X series in the School of Medicine (SOM). The Committee includes a Chair and a Vice Chair. Committee members typically serve 3-year terms and report to the HS Faculty Council annually. Due to COVID-19 and related commitments of SOMCAP members, all 2021-2022 review meetings were held virtually; this worked well for committee members and support staff, increasing efficiency of meetings by eliminating commute time and parking challenges.

Since HS has delegated authority over the HS Clinical series, these faculty are not reviewed by the Campus Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) for appointments<sup>1</sup>, accelerations, appraisals, consecutive no changes, career reviews, promotions, or terminations. Based on their reviews, SOMCAP makes their recommendations on the proposed action to the HS Assistant Vice Chancellor (AVC) and the Associate Dean for HS Academic Affairs based on the department's criteria and consideration of the overall School of Medicine's files for the faculty in its purview, to ensure parity. SOMCAP also reviews and recommends actions for Clinical X faculty to the AVC/Associate Dean to include in their letter to CAP, but final authority over this series resides with the Executive Vice Chancellor or Chancellor.

While both the HS Clinical and Clinical X series require faculty to be evaluated on clinical work, teaching activities, scholarly / creative work, and University and public service, an effort to standardize criteria across departments started in 2021 and is ongoing. Variation is most striking for the scholarly/creative activity requirements within the HS Clinical series. Variation in criteria between departments continues to be substantial, ranging from vague, limited criteria to very stringent criteria. This variation creates inequity and does not allow for a level playing field across departments. The lack of consistency for evaluation of HS Clinical faculty also leads to inconsistent advancement, promotion, and acceleration requests across departments. SOMCAP commends the HSFC committee for starting this process and is eager to see it completed.

Please note, SOMCAP serves as an administrative recommending body and during their service, members generally abstain from formally voting in the department and should not be asked to provide letters of recommendation for faculty under review. If a SOMCAP member has provided a letter of recommendation as perhaps requested before their membership on SOMCAP, or if they have collaborated with a faculty member being reviewed, they will recuse themselves from the committee discussion and abstain from the SOMCAP vote. Additionally, current SOMCAP members should not be asked to provide guidance or review files that will be submitted for review in order to maintain the integrity of the committee and the process. Assistance in preparing the file should be provided by the department leadership, academic personnel analyst or previous SOMCAP members who may be able to provide their input. Guidance also is offered annually via a series of presentations from the HS Academic Affairs office as part of the Faculty Workshop Series.

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<sup>1</sup> Per the authority and review Chart, the Assistant Vice Chancellor and/or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs has final authority for all actions within the HS Clinical series, however appointment files align with the campus practice of requiring committee review for appointments made at the Associate and Full ranks and appointments in the Assistant rank above Step III.

## SOMCAP Activities in AY 2021-22

The Committee convenes during the Fall and serves through early Summer. If needed, the Committee has accommodated reviews on a case-by-case basis during the hiatus to support the clinical mission, depending on availability. The Committee strives to meet published deadlines to ensure timely review, particularly contested actions and Clinical X files that require two committee reviews (i.e., SOMCAP followed by CAP). All files are assigned to a primary and secondary reviewer. When both reviewers are completely aligned in their recommendation for 4<sup>th</sup> year appraisals, promotions, or appointments, reviewing them during a regular meeting may not be necessary. These files are designated as non-controversial – or “consent agenda” – files and are not slated for discussion. If the primary and secondary reviewers do not agree or if they wish to discuss the file with the entire Committee, the file will be discussed at the regular meeting.

In the 2021/2022 academic review year, SOMCAP held 22 regular meetings lasting up to 3 hours, and additionally reviewed files through 2 formal consent agendas and 4 one-off agendas (e.g., separate agendas outside the normally scheduled meetings) to accommodate urgent files. The Committee reviewed a total of 240 files, 198 of which were review files and 42 of which were appointment or change in series files. Of the 240 files, 145 (60%) were reviewed as consent agenda files and 95 (40%) required discussion. SOMCAP had an 82% rate of agreement with the proposed review actions and 81% also for the appointments/change in series actions.

### General Discussion

Reviewers appreciate the effort candidates take in preparing documents for their appointment or academic review. The inclusion of percent effort devoted to each review category discussed in the self-assessment (i.e., Clinical, Scholarly / Research, Teaching, and Service) reduced the number of requests for additional information made of faculty and their departments. Of the actions reviewed, [appointments](#) and accelerations, often times warranted further discussion. SOMCAP continued to receive requests for downward change-in-series that were not always well justified. Departments should continue to note PPM 230-278 (Appendix A), *“The Health Sciences Clinical Professor series should not be regarded as an escape or contingency appointment for faculty in other series who are expected to or fail to receive promotion in the original series.”*

Overall SOMCAP agreed with departmental recommendations but in certain cases SOMCAP deemed it necessary to ask for additional information or issue preliminary recommendations. When additional information was obtained, SOMCAP frequently was able to understand the reasoning behind the Department’s recommendation, however, as in previous years, sufficient justification or requested supporting materials were not provided resulting in SOMCAP unable to support the initial proposed action. Please remember that while departments have varying requirements for merits, accelerations, appointments and promotions, the Committee’s goal is to assure equity across the School.

The Committee also noticed that some faculty files were “double-dipping”, i.e., duplicating clinical roles for service such as Director of “X” Center, Division Chief, or Course Director listed both under teaching and service. While the Committee understands that these roles may fit into more than one category of review, these roles are best listed in the self-assessment under the single most pertinent academic area. In particular, compensated positions do not qualify as University service. Should additional service be performed with regards to a compensated position, the extenuating service should be described in detail in the self-assessment to better aid the Committee.

Another trend that led to requests for information was listing of non-peer-reviewed scholarly/creative works that were not included in the package. Examples include clinical guidelines, protocols, and handouts. Works-in-progress (section C) are similar: Per instructions<sup>2</sup> listed on the Biography/Bibliography document, a work-in-progress should be accompanied

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<sup>2</sup> This section is optional and should include only items for which there is actual material that will be submitted with the file for review.

by a reprint or an abstract. SOMCAP must review these documents to ensure that they meet the standard for scholarly/creative works.

**Department Letter:** As in prior years, reviewers noted that professionalism issues in the workplace should be clearly addressed in the Department Letter, in alignment with the University's Principles of Community and the Faculty Code of Conduct. When issues are raised in teaching/trainee evaluations or referee letters, reviewers are unable to render a judgment on the file if the issue is inadequately addressed. These issues must be addressed in the Departmental Letter, the self-assessment, or in response to the candidate Certifications (1A, 1B and/or 2). The summary should include the steps that have been taken for resolution. The Committee understands that this information may sometimes be sensitive and does not expect full details, rather the acknowledgment that the faculty and department are aware and are mutually addressing these issues. Addressing this in the departmental letter will reduce requests for information or preliminary decisions that are not in alignment with the proposed departmental action.

The Committee encourages Department Chairs or Division Chiefs to meet with faculty annually to discuss their progress, in the context of their upcoming file. This is particularly important with junior or newly hired faculty. If this annual review occurs, it should allow sufficient time to address problems and take corrective actions.

**Appointments:** As in prior years, the Committee reviewed complex proposals for new appointments. Complexities included prior service at UCSD or another institution, an MSP contract, or work in the community. Assessing the ideal appointment rank and step for candidates with complex histories can be challenging, particularly since the Committee is charged with assuring equity with existing faculty who have advanced within the UCSD system. As previously requested, SOMCAP asks that Departments include information of current department faculty at the proposed rank and step with comparisons of clinical, teaching, service, and creative activity and its impact. This proactive approach would increase transparency and help SOMCAP reviewers to reach a decision without delaying the appointment with a request for additional information.

**Appraisals:** For Assistant rank appointees, the fourth-year appraisal is critical. This review allows the appointee to obtain feedback concerning the likelihood of promotion at the time of their next review. During this past year, Departments tended to propose Favorable and Favorable with Recommendations (previously Favorable with Reservations) appraisals in the 40 fourth-year appraisal files reviewed. The outcomes of the appraisals by SOMCAP, included 16 Favorable, 22 Favorable with Recommendations, and 2 Problematic files. Overall, the agreement between Departments and SOMCAP was only 60%. SOMCAP recommends that departments take time to more accurately assess files and note areas that need attention so that faculty will be best equipped for successful promotion. As indicated, SOMCAP assessed the majority of files as Favorable with Recommendations and thus advises departments to more strongly consider this assessment. Favorable with Recommendations should not be perceived as a negative assessment, rather as constructive feedback that better prepares the candidate for promotion at the next review.

**Promotion Considerations at the Assistant rank:** While the normative time spent at the Assistant rank is 6 years before promotion to the Associate rank, faculty can be proposed for promotion at any time. As stated in the past, SOMCAP encourages Departments considering promotion of faculty who served less than 6 years at the Assistant rank to compare them with other faculty members in the Department/Division who are at the proposed rank and step and provide this comparison in the Department Letter to ease review and to better assure equity.

**Accelerations:** Compared to previous years, due to the notable efforts of the AVC and SOM in defining criteria, accelerations were less cumbersome for higher performing faculty in the HS Clinical series. We recommend that the

Department Letter clearly list which areas of accomplishment warrant acceleration. If the area is scholarly/creative activity, a change to the Clinical X series should be considered since this is preferred for recognition of scholarly/creative achievements over acceleration. Requests for acceleration on consecutive reviews need to be carefully considered and are in general discouraged. In the HS Clinical series, if consecutive requests for acceleration appear warranted, please focus on candidates who have excelled in their clinical work, and other aspects of the academic missions such as teaching and service. Per policy, acceleration files should have no weaknesses.

To align with the University’s goals of diversity, equity and inclusion, SOMCAP continues to encourage mentoring of women faculty and under-represented faculty to prepare their files to reflect their accomplishments and, when appropriate, to request acceleration.

**Candidate Statement:** The self-assessment is the candidate’s opportunity to describe how they meet the series criteria and highlight impact of their accomplishments. Reviewers encountered candidates whose performance was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In these cases, reviewers strongly encourage the candidate to include a COVID-19 Impact Statement in their self-assessment addressing how the pandemic has affected them, their effectiveness, their productivity, or their professional opportunities in any of the four review categories. This will provide an opportunity for reviewers to consider extenuating circumstances.

Reviewers reiterate that percent effort should be included for each review category. Faculty should provide details of their clinical responsibilities (e.g., patient load, number of clinics, and uniqueness of a clinic or inpatient service in the region). Providing clinical obligations, such as typical schedule and average number of patients seen, is very helpful to reviewers. This also better assures equity between faculty members and departments. Following is an example of how to provide this to the committee.

	<b>Effort</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Clinical</b>	90%	8 clinics/week, 250 patients/year
<b>Teaching</b>	5%	Rounding with residents and fellows
<b>Service</b>	3%	Department Clinical Competency Committee
<b>Scholarly</b>	2%	1 new presentation

**Scholarly and Creative Activities:** Faculty in the HS Clinical series should demonstrate some evidence of scholarly or creative activity. During the past year, SOMCAP reviewed several files that did not meet the department criteria for scholarly activity, yet advancement was still proposed. In contrast, some faculty who had impeccable clinical and teaching accomplishments asked for a no-change. Reviewers appreciate that full-time clinician-educators may not have sufficient time for substantial scholarly activity and remind candidates to include all activity, e.g., mentoring trainees who present or publish their work. We encourage faculty, divisions, and departments to find mentorship opportunities and alternative methods of disseminating their creative work. As HS Clinical faculty advance in their careers, continuing their scholarly activity remains important. In addition to quantifying scholarly products, self-assessments and Department Letters should provide a **detailed description** of the impact, quality, and dissemination of work to the intended audience. Department Letters should also include complete comments on the faculty vote. All scholarly products should be accessible to reviewers. If they are not published in a peer-reviewed journal, they should be included in the file in an accessible online location, such as Dropbox. The goal of reviewers is to confirm the existence of otherwise inaccessible scholarly products. Assessing the quality and impact of scholarly work is beyond SOMCAP’s charge and so should be explicitly addressed by the candidate and departmental letter.

SOMCAP encourages Departments to develop creative work advancement and promotion criteria in the HS series that also consider quality improvement projects, development of course content, curricula, and teaching content so as to recognize faculty who are excelling and being innovative in teaching and are meeting review guidelines in the clinical, and service categories, but who are not actively publishing their work in peer reviewed journals.

**Service:** The Committee recognizes that most faculty are very active in fulfilling the service criteria. As faculty reach higher ranks (full professor, barrier steps and especially, above scale), service outside of the department and sphere-of-interest (e.g., research area) should be actively pursued and clearly documented. A simple concept to consider is that service should not be “Self-Serving service” as was emphasized by our campus CAP colleagues this past year.

**Diversity:** SOMCAP commends continued departmental efforts to highlight the faculty’s contribution to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Final Thoughts**

The UC academic review process is complex and includes many layers of review. SOMCAP advises the AVC, Health Sciences and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and strive to serve and retain our outstanding faculty. While cumbersome and stressful sometimes, the academic review experience can be further improved and standardized to ensure a supportive, transparent, and equitable process for all faculty.

We encourage faculty to take advantage of the Academic Resource Center and the Division/Departmental liaisons who can provide valuable assistance with document preparation. SOMCAP encourages faculty to attend annual workshops on how to get promoted hosted by the Office of Faculty Affairs and to actively participate in the departmental review of academic files. This training and service will provide faculty with knowledge of the file preparation and review and will ensure constructive feedback and improvement of the academic review process.