To: All UC San Diego Faculty

From: Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), Christina Schneider (Chair, 2025-26)

Date: August 14, 2026

Subject: Where CAP Stood (2026)

Overview of CAP's Role and the Review Process

The Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) plays a central role in the University's system of faculty self-governance. CAP serves as the primary faculty body that evaluates certain academic personnel actions, such as appointments, promotions, or accelerated merit advancements, and offers recommendations to the Executive Vice Chancellor (EVC), the Senior Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (Sr. AVC-AA), and, in some cases, the Deans or the Chancellor. Although CAP does not hold final decision-making authority, the rate of concurrence has been traditionally high. CAP's primary responsibility is to assess whether the action proposed by departments is supported by the evidence in the file, taking into account departmental standards, University policy, and, where necessary, long-standing campus Academic Personnel practice. A central objective of this review is to ensure the equitable assessment of faculty within and across departments. Because CAP reviews files from across the entire campus, it is uniquely positioned to identify inconsistencies in how standards and policies are applied and to promote fairness in the evaluation process as a whole.

CAP is composed of 14 faculty members representing the breadth of disciplines and series at UC San Diego.[1] This structure brings together diverse expertise and perspectives, which is essential for evaluating files drawn from all areas of scholarship, teaching, and service. During the 2025–26 academic year, CAP met 36 times and reviewed 714 academic personnel files and 70 above-the-line items,[2] with each meeting involving approximately 15–30 cases and actions. CAP members dedicate approximately 15–20 hours per week to CAP responsibilities. All members read and provide comments on every file, and the files are then discussed in weekly meetings that typically last 3–5 hours. The in-person discussions are characterized by collegiality, careful deliberation, and a shared commitment to fairness, equity, and rigor. Cases may be revisited during additional deliberations, either in discussions between CAP leadership and the EVC and Sr. AVC-AA or by the full committee as part of a reconsideration request. This iterative process reflects the complexity of many cases and the committee's efforts to arrive at well-calibrated recommendations. CAP has particularly appreciated the

[1] Of those, 4 are from the Health Sciences, 2 from the Social Sciences, 2 from the Arts and Humanities, 1 from the Biological Sciences, 2 from the Physical Sciences, 2 from Engineering, and 1 from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The faculty composition represents different series across the University as well, including faculty in the ladder rank, Clinical X, and Teaching Professor series, among others.

[2] Above-the-line items are personnel actions that require review and recommendation by CAP but are not part of a faculty member's regular merit or promotion review file. Examples include endowed chair appointments, policy transmittals, and other personnel actions that come before the committee outside the normal academic review cycle.

constructive discussions and excellent working relationship with the EVC and the Sr. AVC-AA over the last year.

Confidentiality is fundamental to this process. CAP deliberations are strictly confidential, and members are not permitted to discuss individual cases with anyone outside the committee. Faculty should not approach CAP members to inquire about specific cases. CAP communicates its reasoning through formal letters and through broader guidance documents such as *Where CAP Stood* (WCS), which aim to provide transparency about CAP's policy interpretations, campus practices, and expectations with the ultimate goal of supporting faculty success in the academic review process.

Despite the shared goal of fair and consistent evaluation, CAP and prior levels of review can occasionally disagree for several reasons. (1) CAP may assign a different weight to particular elements, misinterpret aspects of a case, or reach conclusions that reflect ambiguities or incomplete information in the record; such instances are taken very seriously and are addressed through discussions with the EVC/Sr. AVC-AA or reconsideration requests. (2) Departmental or school recommendations may not fully align with University policy, may apply departmental standards inconsistently, or may reflect advocacy that is not fully supported by the record when viewed in a broader, campus-wide context. The CAP recommendation letter and sometimes so-called CAP side letters[3] provide explicit rationales for why CAP's recommendations differ from departmental proposals and offer guidance on how to address existing misalignments. (3) Disagreements may stem from ambiguity in policy or standards, where reasonable differences in interpretation can lead to different conclusions about the merits of a case.

Reducing such disagreements is a central goal for CAP, as greater alignment across levels of review improves both the efficiency and perceived fairness of the process. CAP engages in several mechanisms to support this alignment. Regular discussions between CAP leadership and the EVC/Sr. AVC-AA provide opportunities to review outcomes and calibrate interpretations and judgements. CAP also meets with department chairs, deans, and other campus groups to communicate CAP practices, clarify expectations, share common concerns, and learn from departmental and School perspectives. CAP has found these exchanges invaluable in refining its own practices and in identifying areas where University policy would benefit from clarification or further development.

A key function of WCS is to contribute to this process. By documenting recurring themes, common sources of disagreement, and consistent interpretation of policy, WCS provides guidance to departments and faculty on how CAP evaluates cases. WCS seeks to clarify how existing policies are applied in some areas; in others, it highlights areas where departmental standards may need to be refined or where University policy may benefit from greater specificity. WCS serves both as a source of transparency and as a tool for promoting equity, consistency, and improved outcomes in academic review.

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[3] CAP side letters are letters sent to Deans and Departments to highlight broader issues identified during the review of a particular file that may have implications for future cases, departmental standards, or review practices.

The report begins by highlighting CAP's efforts in 2025-26 to clarify and develop University policy and Academic Personnel practices. It then presents key issues identified by CAP in this year's cycle, and offers guidance to faculty, departments, and Deans to support an equitable and successful review process.

Policy Developments and Institutional Initiatives

During the 2025–26 academic year, CAP engaged in several efforts to clarify policy, refine Academic Personnel practices, and respond to emerging challenges in the academic review process. CAP deeply appreciates the significant and challenging work of the Senate-Administration Working Group on the Academic Peer Review Process under the joint leadership of Marianne Beckett and Philip Roeder. The working group provided thoughtful recommendations aimed at streamlining aspects of the review process while maintaining rigor and equity. These recommendations will help shape CAP's work, particularly as campus considers how to balance efficiency with the need for equitable evaluation.

In collaboration with Senate Council leadership and the EVC, CAP contributed to discussions regarding the general application of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO). In light of COVID, industry strikes, and the current disruptions in the federal funding landscape, which will likely have significant effects on many of our faculty, updated guidance clarified that ARO considerations remain relevant, particularly for merit advancements, and in rare cases for promotion to the Associate rank. Consistent with prior policy guidance, ARO cannot be used to justify accelerated actions. ARO requests require careful justification, and CAP urges departments and affected faculty to identify the nature of the challenge, its duration, and its concrete consequences for the candidate's ability to engage in expected activities, rather than relying on broad or generalized statements. Faculty should clearly describe the disruptions and their impacts in their self-statement while also discussing their adaptive strategies and alternative contributions they made during the review period. Departments and Deans should provide additional context on department-wide or discipline-wide impacts and evaluate the academic files holistically.

CAP has worked closely with the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) to provide additional guidance on the evaluation of non-traditional research outputs, including patents, policy briefs, software, and other related products. CAP has long recognized that such outputs may constitute important scholarly contributions when they are widely accepted and valued forms of research dissemination within the relevant discipline. Efforts to provide more information about different types of non-traditional research products aim to support departments in updating their standards to discuss how such contributions should be evaluated in terms of quality, impact, scholarly significance, and independence. CAP evaluates these materials within the framework of departmental standards, and departments should therefore articulate how these products are expected to contribute to assessments of research productivity and achievement relative to traditional scholarly outputs. A related issue concerns the evaluation of restricted or classified research, which by its nature is not peer-reviewed or publicly

accessible. The review of faculty who engage primarily in this type of research has been challenging because it limits the ability of CAP and independent external reviewers to assess the quality, impact, and independence of the research. In consultation with Senate Leadership, CAP has worked with ORI to establish a process whereby a University of California *ad hoc* committee composed of UC faculty with appropriate security clearances may be convened to evaluate such work and provide an *ad hoc* report that CAP and subsequent reviewers can use to inform its deliberations.

CAP continued its collaboration with the Holistic Teaching Oversight Committee in support of more comprehensive approaches to evaluating teaching effectiveness. This collaboration has been highly productive, and several of the recommendations discussed in this report reflect ongoing efforts to align CAP review practices with the move toward holistic teaching evaluation.

CAP also worked closely with Academic Personnel Services, Deans, Department Chairs, and Academic Personnel staff to address growing challenges related to file preparation and policy compliance. While most review files are prepared carefully and professionally, CAP has observed an increase in files requiring clarification or correction because of missing information, inconsistencies, or procedural issues. CAP greatly appreciated the constructive discussions and suggestions regarding these challenges and strongly supports efforts to improve training and support for departmental and School Academic Personnel staff, provide clearer guidance on common file preparation issues, and identify appropriate thresholds for returning files for correction before review. CAP believes these efforts will help faculty and departments prepare stronger files, decrease the burden of file preparation for faculty and staff, reduce avoidable delays, and ensure that cases are evaluated on the fullest and most accurate presentation of the candidate's accomplishments.

Finally, CAP engaged in extensive discussions regarding the implications of generative artificial intelligence (AI) for academic review, including confidentiality, transparency, appropriate use in file preparation, and the broader effects of AI on research productivity, teaching, assessment, academic integrity, and departmental standards. CAP welcomes discussion of how AI might improve the efficiency of the review process, but notes that, at present, AI tools should not be used in the academic review process itself because of concerns regarding confidentiality, transparency, and the appropriate exercise of academic judgment. CAP anticipates that AI will remain an important issue in future review cycles and is pleased that the University administration and Academic Senate Council have made this issue a priority. The committee is already observing the effects of generative AI in cases that come before it. In research, CAP has reviewed cases with exceptionally high levels of scholarly output, in some instances far exceeding traditional disciplinary expectations, raising questions about how productivity, independence, originality, and scholarly impact should be evaluated as AI-assisted work becomes more common. In teaching, CAP has encountered growing concerns regarding the effects of AI on course design, student learning, assessment practices, academic integrity, and the interpretation of teaching evaluations. These developments have implications not only for individual reviews but also for the calibration of departmental standards and expectations.

Key Issues 2025-26

This section highlights key issues that emerged in CAP deliberations during the 2025–26 review cycle, focusing on areas that most frequently shaped review outcomes and raised broader questions about policy, standards, and practice.

Teaching Professor and Clinical-X Standards

CAP continues to experience significant challenges in the evaluation of faculty in the Teaching Professor and Professor of Clinical X series. While both series place primary emphasis on teaching (and, for Clinical X, also clinical excellence), the standards used to assess advancement, particularly accelerated advancement, remain insufficiently defined and unevenly applied across departments.

For the Teaching Professor series, CAP has noted substantial divergence in departmental standards and limited standardization in how teaching effectiveness, educational leadership, and pedagogical impact are evaluated. CAP recognizes that local disciplinary and departmental cultures may appropriately lead to some variation in expectations and evaluation practices. However, the current level of variation often makes it difficult to identify shared benchmarks for advancement. This issue becomes particularly important for promotion and career reviews for senior Teaching Professors, where University policy requires evidence of distinction and recognition beyond the local instructional setting. While departments frequently cite activities such as course development, curricular leadership, dissemination of teaching practices, pedagogical scholarship, and educational innovation, standards often provide limited guidance regarding how the impact, scale, and significance of these contributions should be evaluated. Greater clarity regarding what constitutes educational distinction and broader recognition would promote more consistent and equitable review.

CAP also notes that greater clarity is needed regarding the role of professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity, including creative activity, in the Teaching Professor series. Excellence in teaching alone does not fully distinguish the series from the Unit 18 Lecturer series. Departmental standards should therefore clearly articulate what forms of professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity are expected, how they are evaluated, and how they contribute to merit and accelerated merit advancement and promotion decisions.

For the Professor of Clinical X series, CAP observes a similar lack of clarity in the evaluation of teaching and clinical excellence, as well as significant variation in standards across departments. CAP is concerned that both standards and departmental evaluations often place substantial emphasis on research or research-adjacent activity, even though teaching and clinical contributions are the primary criteria for advancement. According to PPM 230-275-4, "*titles in this series are assigned to academically qualified individuals who are occupied full time in the service of the University, whose predominant responsibilities are in teaching and clinical service, and who also engage in creative activities*." In

contrast to the Teaching Professor series, where "professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity" may encompass a broad and variably defined set of pedagogical contributions, research output in the Professor of Clinical X series is often more clearly defined and more readily comparable across candidates. This distinction can lead to disproportionate weight being placed on research activity in Professor of Clinical X cases. CAP also notes that faculty in this series have limited or no protected time for teaching and service, making it more difficult to demonstrate sustained excellence in these areas.

A related challenge is the assessment of clinical excellence itself. Unlike research accomplishments, which are often evaluated by external referees and more standardized indicators of scholarly impact, clinical contributions are difficult for CAP to assess consistently across departments and specialties. Historically, review files frequently included analyses from the School of Medicine Committee on Academic Personnel (SOMCAP) or the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Committee on Academic Personnel (SSPPSCAP), which provides an independent assessment of the clinical dimensions of a candidate's record. CAP does not see the SOMCAP/SSPPSCAP recommendation anymore, and only infrequently sees the recommendations of the departmental academic personnel committee. The absence of a systematic assessment of clinical excellence may contribute to a greater reliance on research accomplishments when evaluating advancement and acceleration cases. CAP therefore believes that renewed consideration should be given to incorporating SOMCAP/SSPPSCAP evaluations into review files.

Across both series, CAP notes ongoing challenges in the evaluation of accelerations as they are often not suggested on the basis of performance in the candidate's primary area of activity. While some cases clearly exceed expectations solely on teaching, often due to extensive curriculum development, exceptional teaching above load or clear teaching innovations adopted beyond campus, because normal merit advancement in the Teaching Professor series already requires excellence in teaching, it is often unclear how to distinguish between the level of performance expected for a normal merit and the substantially higher threshold implied by acceleration (i.e., how to establish "double teaching excellence"). Similarly, in the Professor of Clinical X series, the absence of well-defined expectations for exceptional teaching and clinical distinction complicates the identification of truly outstanding cases. As a result, departments have increasingly relied on contributions in secondary areas to justify accelerations. For Teaching Professors, a broad range of activities may count toward creative activity, often with relatively low or undefined departmental expectations. For Professor of Clinical X faculty, standards frequently permit a wide range of scholarly outputs beyond peer-reviewed research, including reviews, case reports, and other non-peer-reviewed work. Consequently, proposed acceleration cases may exceed expectations in these secondary areas even when the primary areas of teaching or clinical excellence are not clearly exceptional, creating a risk that accelerations are driven by activities that are not the central basis for evaluation in these series.

These concerns are reinforced by findings from the Senate-Administration Working Group on the Academic Peer Review Process, which documented substantially higher rates of acceleration proposals

in the Teaching Professor series than in other faculty series, echoing concerns raised in prior WCS reports. CAP emphasizes that this pattern should not be interpreted as evidence that Teaching Professors are not performing at an exceptional level; many make extraordinary contributions to teaching and educational leadership. Rather, it may reflect the absence of clear and consistently applied standards distinguishing the excellence expected for normal merit advancement from the substantially higher threshold implied by acceleration. Unlike ladder-rank faculty, whose accelerations are typically driven by extraordinary research accomplishments, Teaching Professors (and Professors of Clinical X) may receive accelerations based on exceptional performance in either their primary area of teaching or clinical excellence or in research and creative activity, provided the overall record is otherwise strong. This broader set of qualifying criteria may contribute both to the higher frequency of proposed accelerations and to continued uncertainty about the threshold separating meritorious from acceleratable performance.

These challenges are compounded by ambiguity in current policy. APM 220-18 and PPM 230-220-88-1(a) state that, for series in which research or creative activity is among the criteria, above-average performance in that domain is a prerequisite for acceleration. At the same time, PPM 230-220-88-2 allows for accelerations based primarily on exceptional contributions in other areas, provided there is no weakness elsewhere. In series such as Teaching Professor and Professor of Clinical X, where teaching and clinical excellence are the primary bases for advancement, this language creates uncertainty regarding the appropriate role of research or professional and/or scholarly achievement and activity in acceleration cases.

CAP welcomes the Working Group's attention to this issue and continues to believe that additional clarification is needed. CAP strongly supports efforts to revise existing policy to better distinguish acceleration criteria in the Teaching Professor and Professor of Clinical X series from those in the ladder-rank Professor series. More broadly, CAP encourages the development of clearer standards regarding what constitutes exceptional teaching, educational impact, and clinical distinction sufficient to justify acceleration; how such achievements should be documented and evaluated; and how accelerations should be distinguished from normal merit advancements in series where excellence in teaching is already expected. Given the substantial variation in expectations across departments and Schools, CAP believes these questions may warrant a dedicated working group and should also be considered at the systemwide level, including through the Systemwide University Committee on Academic Personnel (UCAP), to promote clarity, consistency, and equity across the University.

CAP further encourages departments to ensure that departmental recommendation letters and candidate self-statements clearly and prominently assess teaching effectiveness as the primary basis for evaluation in these series. In particular, for proposed accelerations, departments should explicitly articulate how the candidate's teaching (and, where relevant, clinical) contributions exceed the standard required for normal merit advancement.

Acceleration Requests in Abbreviated Review Periods

CAP has observed an increase in requests for accelerated actions and Bonus Off-Scale (BOS) salary components during abbreviated review periods,[4] most commonly in a faculty member's first review following their appointment at UC San Diego. Historically, accelerations and BOS components during abbreviated review periods have been uncommon. These cases are challenging because the shortened review window provides limited evidence regarding teaching and service and may not fully demonstrate sustained performance within the UC San Diego environment. In many cases, departments apply lower expectations during the initial review period not only due to the shortened number of years, but in recognition of the challenges associated with transitioning to a new institution, establishing a research program, setting up laboratories, developing new courses, and building service commitments. Faculty may also receive teaching relief during this period, further limiting the evidence available for evaluation.

CAP has evaluated proposed accelerations during abbreviated review periods against expectations for a full review period rather than the abbreviated interval itself. CAP's rationale is that it is generally not possible to determine how a candidate's record would have evolved under a normal review timeline, including whether productivity would have remained at the same level throughout a full review cycle. While accomplishments prior to joining UC San Diego may provide useful context, CAP places particular emphasis on whether the record demonstrates sustained excellence in their time at UC San Diego consistent with the standards expected for acceleration. Although there is no formally documented campus practice regarding BOS components during abbreviated review periods, CAP has generally applied the same reasoning used in acceleration cases.

CAP recognizes that many newly hired faculty arrive with exceptionally strong research records and, in some cases, continue to perform at a very high level during their initial years. In such situations, recalibration at the time of promotion or career review provides a more appropriate mechanism for recognizing sustained achievement.

Service Expectations and University-Wide Engagement

University policy provides general guidance on service expectations and indicates that expectations increase with rank and step, but it does not clearly specify how service should be distributed across departmental, school, campus, and professional activities at different stages of the career. In the absence of clearly articulated expectations, differences in service engagement can create inequities, potentially advantaging some faculty in the review process over others. As a result, CAP has relied on long-

[4] A BOS is a temporary salary bonus awarded for performance that significantly exceeds normal expectations yet does not rise to the level of achievement for acceleration. Unlike an acceleration, which permanently advances a faculty member to a higher step, a BOS provides additional compensation for the current review period only and does not permanently alter the faculty member's placement in the rank-and-step system.

standing practice to guide its evaluations, and the SAWG report indicates a similar standard is applied at nearly all UC campuses. Consistent with prior *WCS* reports dating back to at least 2014-15, CAP has applied the principle that:

> "While Assistant Professors are expected to perform some service, expectations are limited and usually satisfied by some departmental service. Associate Professors are expected to perform more extensive service, including some service outside of their department and often in their School. Full Professors and especially faculty members approaching Step VI are expected to perform University service outside of their Department and School and outside of their area of research, with increased leadership in their service activities as they approach Above Scale. Performing more Departmental service does not necessarily make up for a lack of wider University service at the higher ranks."

This practice is intended to promote equity and consistency in the review process by establishing stable, shared expectations across departments and over time. CAP recognizes that this approach is not without challenges. The growth in faculty size, combined with a limited number of visible service opportunities in some areas, can make the distribution of service uneven and, at times, difficult to coordinate, even as many University-wide committees remain very challenging to staff. In some instances, faculty do not serve on University-wide committees, but they provide significant and valuable service at the departmental, School, or professional level. CAP considers the current approach to provide a transparent basis for evaluating service in an equitable manner. These expectations also reflect long-standing norms of faculty self-governance. Within this framework, it remains important that service responsibilities increase with rank, both to support institutional needs and to protect junior faculty from excessive service burdens. Importantly, recent findings from the Senate-Administration Working Group indicate that UC San Diego's CAP practices in this area are closely aligned with those at other UC campuses, suggesting that these expectations reflect system-wide norms rather than local idiosyncrasies.

CAP emphasizes that evidence of meaningful University-wide service and leadership is an important component to support a favorable recommendation only for higher-level and relatively rare actions, including advancement to Step VI, accelerations at or above Step VI, and advancement to or further Above Scale. CAP also stresses that University-wide service extends beyond formal Academic Senate committees. Faculty contribute in many ways across the University, including through service in the colleges, participation in program and unit reviews, and other forms of institutional engagement. Recognizing the challenges, CAP has evaluated service holistically and encourages candidates at Step VI or above to articulate how their service contributions extend beyond advancing their immediate research interests and serve the broader University community, rather than just listing committee memberships.

CAP has observed a growing number of Assistant Professors serving on campus-wide committees. While such contributions are commendable, they may run counter to the shared goal of limiting the service burden for our junior faculty. Department Chairs play an important role in guiding service

assignments and are encouraged to direct more senior faculty toward these roles, reserving junior faculty effort for activities that support their progression toward promotion.

To address concerns about access to service opportunities, CAP has worked with Deans and Department Chairs to encourage greater transparency in the availability of service roles. Improved coordination between departments and the administration, and appropriate distribution of service across ranks, may help ensure that such opportunities are more broadly distributed and aligned with faculty rank and experience.

Equity and Transparency in Endowed Chair Selection

Endowed chair appointments continued to be an important topic of discussion, particularly with respect to the clarity and transparency of the selection process. CAP observed that the process by which faculty were selected was often not clearly documented or appeared to involve consideration of a single faculty member without a broader evaluation of eligible faculty. Such practices raise concerns about whether all qualified faculty have been given equitable consideration for these prestigious appointments. These concerns are especially salient for endowed chairs with broad or flexible criteria, where a larger pool of potentially eligible faculty may exist.

CAP has also seen strong examples of equitable and transparent practices. In some cases, departments and schools have established clear nomination processes, allowed for self-nominations, or convened *ad hoc* committees to review all eligible faculty, ensuring that selections are based on a systematic and comparative evaluation. CAP views these approaches as effective models that promote fairness, clarity, and confidence in the process. Given the important recognition, resources, and opportunities that often accompany endowed chair appointments, it is particularly important that selection processes be viewed as fair, transparent, and equitable.

Departmental Standards

In addition to University policy, departmental standards are the backbone of the review system at UC San Diego because they establish the expectations against which faculty accomplishments are assessed and help promote consistency, transparency, and equity in academic review. These standards provide important guidance to CAP regarding disciplinary expectations, evaluation criteria, and norms for advancement. CAP wishes to emphasize that departmental standards are departmental documents. They are not approved by CAP, the EVC, or the Academic Senate, and responsibility for developing and maintaining them rests with departments and Schools.

CAP has been pleased to see increasing attention devoted to departmental standards in recent years. Many departments have revised their standards to provide greater specificity regarding expectations for research, teaching, mentorship, and service. More detailed standards facilitate more consistent and

equitable evaluations and help faculty better understand expectations for advancement. At the same time, CAP continues to identify areas where further development and clarification would be beneficial. For example, as the campus transitions toward a holistic evaluation of teaching, departmental standards should reflect the broader range of evidence now required by policy and practice. Many standards, for example, provide limited guidance regarding mentorship expectations. Because mentoring norms vary substantially across disciplines, CAP encourages departments to articulate what constitutes appropriate mentoring activity within their fields and how such contributions are evaluated.

CAP also encourages departments to provide greater clarity regarding the evaluation of scholarly productivity and impact. CAP increasingly notices significant heterogeneity in publication patterns within departments. Where departments employ different expectations for different faculty roles, subfields, methodologies, appointment types, or research environments, these distinctions should be clearly articulated in the standards and applied consistently across cases. CAP recognizes that different areas of a discipline may have different publication practices, authorship conventions, funding expectations, teaching responsibilities, or forms of scholarly output. Explicitly documenting such differences promotes transparency and consistency in the review process. Where publication venues play an important role in departmental assessments, departments should identify representative journals, publishers, conferences, exhibitions, performances, or other outlets that are regarded as particularly significant within the field, and these should be applied equally to all candidates in that field.

Similarly, standards should clearly explain how collaborative and co-authored work is evaluated, how credit is assigned for different forms of contribution, and what constitutes evidence of independence and leadership. For example, CAP appreciates when departments indicate what role senior authorship has in establishing independence, and when they provide information about the candidate's mentor(s). Increasingly, CAP reviews files involving "highly collaborative," "big science," or "team science" research environments in which traditional indicators of independence may be less straightforward to assess. This also includes publications in which the candidate serves as "co-first," "co-corresponding," or "co-senior" author. In some disciplines (e.g., astrophysics, particle physics, biostatistics, and some areas of genetics), most publications result from large collaborative projects involving many authors, and first or senior authorship may not be the primary indicator of scholarly independence or leadership. In such cases, CAP urges departments to provide a clear assessment of the candidate's specific intellectual contributions to collaborative work and to document other evidence of scholarly standing and leadership, such as prizes and honors, invited presentations at leading institutions, competitive funding as principal investigator, and external letters that directly address the candidate's independence, leadership, and scholarly reputation. Departments, senior faculty, and mentors should also work proactively with junior colleagues to ensure that, by the time of tenure or promotion, candidates have had appropriate opportunities to develop and demonstrate scholarly independence and research leadership, and that these contributions are clearly documented in the review file. Similarly, departments should specify how non-traditional scholarly outputs such as software, datasets, policy products, patents,

devices, performances, or other creative works are evaluated and how they contribute to assessments of scholarly productivity, impact, and innovation.

Similarly, CAP encourages departments to articulate service expectations at different ranks and steps, particularly expectations regarding University-wide service, leadership activities, and contributions to faculty governance, such that they align with University-wide norms and expectations.

Finally, CAP encourages departments to periodically review whether their standards remain appropriately calibrated to current disciplinary norms. CAP has reviewed acceleration files in which candidates substantially exceeded the quantitative expectations described in departmental standards, in some instances by factors of 3 to 10. While exceptional candidates certainly exist, such cases raise questions about whether existing standards accurately reflect contemporary expectations within the discipline. Where departments choose to articulate numerical expectations, CAP encourages them to explain the basis for those benchmarks and, where possible, relate them to norms within their department, at comparable institutions, and within the broader discipline. Departments may also wish to consider how emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and AI-assisted research, may affect future expectations regarding productivity, scholarly contribution, authorship, and research evaluation. Well-calibrated standards should distinguish clearly among expectations for normal advancement, acceleration, promotion, and career review, while balancing quantitative indicators with qualitative assessments of quality, impact, originality, independence, and scholarly significance. Regular review of departmental standards is particularly important as publication practices, collaborative research models, and scholarly productivity continue to evolve.

File Preparation Guidance

The best way to support colleagues in the academic review process is to submit a well-prepared file, keeping in mind that reviewers at all levels, who are often from outside the candidate's discipline, must rely exclusively on the information contained in the file to evaluate the proposed action in accordance with policy. CAP assesses whether the evidence presented demonstrates that the candidate meets departmental standards and university policy. CAP members are expected to base their evaluations solely on the materials contained in the review file and may not rely on personal knowledge of a candidate or information obtained from external sources, such as websites. Well-prepared files facilitate timely review, reduce the need for requests for additional information, and allow reviewers to focus on the merits of the proposed action rather than resolving ambiguities or inconsistencies.

The following guidance highlights common issues that can be readily addressed by faculty and departments and help support the best possible review outcomes. Before discussing issues pertaining to individual components of a case, CAP notes a recurring challenge in many review files: inconsistency and unnecessary duplication across different parts of the dossier. While different levels of review may appropriately reach different conclusions about a case, factual information should be presented

consistently throughout the file. CAP frequently encounters discrepancies regarding publications, grants, courses taught, service assignments, and dates.

Each component of the file serves a distinct purpose and should contribute the perspective, expertise, and context appropriate to that level of review. CAP encourages reviewers to avoid excessive redundancy or extensive copying and pasting from other materials in the file. The strongest cases are those in which each level of review adds independent analysis while clearly explaining any differences in interpretation or recommendation. Together, these materials should provide a complete and accurate assessment of the faculty member's record.

Faculty should address recommendations or concerns raised during prior reviews. CAP pays close attention to prior CAP recommendations and finds it helpful when candidates explain how these recommendations have been addressed during the current review period and how their record has developed since the previous review.

In addition to teaching evaluations and other supporting documentation, CAP typically reviews several statements and evaluations prepared at different levels of the academic review process. Each serves a distinct purpose and contributes different information to the overall assessment.

Biography/Bibliography (Bio Bib): Provides the factual record of the candidate's accomplishments, including publications, grants, teaching activities, mentorship, service, awards, and other professional contributions. The BioBib serves as a foundational document for the review process and should be accurate, complete, and consistent with other materials in the file.

Faculty Candidate Statement: Provides the candidate's own assessment of their accomplishments, impact, trajectory, and contributions in research, teaching, mentorship, and service. The statement should help reviewers outside the discipline understand the significance of the candidate's activities and provide context that may not be apparent from the BioBib alone.

External Referee Letters (when applicable): Provide an independent assessment of the quality, impact, originality, and standing of the candidate's scholarly contributions within the broader discipline.

***Ad Hoc* Committee Report (when applicable):** Provides an expert assessment of the candidate's record, often with particular attention to the quality, impact, and significance of research contributions within the faculty's field.

Departmental Recommendation Letter (or equivalent): Serves as the department's independent evaluation of the case and provides the official recommended action for the candidate undergoing review. The department is responsible for establishing and maintaining the standards against which candidates are assessed and for explaining how the candidate's record meets those standards. The

departmental letter should clearly articulate the basis for the proposed action and provide sufficient context for reviewers outside the discipline.

Dean's Recommendation Letter (or equivalent): Provides School-level (or equivalent) review and oversight. The Dean evaluates the case in light of School expectations, University policy, and practices across departments within the School and may provide additional context or analysis beyond the departmental recommendation.

Across these components, CAP evaluates whether the file provides sufficient evidence in the relevant areas of review: research or creative activity, teaching and mentorship, and service. The relative weight of these areas varies by faculty series, rank, step, departmental standards, and University policy, but the file should make clear how the candidate's record supports the proposed action. For research and creative activity, this includes evidence of quality, impact, independence, contribution, and disciplinary significance. For teaching and mentorship, this includes evidence of effectiveness, reflection, course design and pedagogy, mentoring and advising, and growth over time. For service, this includes evidence of the level, scope, workload, leadership role, and broader impact. Across all areas, expectations increase with rank and step.

CAP reminds departments that faculty should be apprised of departmental standards and provided access to the appropriate contents of their review file at the time they complete the required certifications. After the review process is complete, departments should also share the final outcome materials with the faculty member, including the Dean's recommendation, CAP's recommendation, and the final decision letter where applicable. Access to these materials is important because prior review letters often contain specific guidance that CAP expects to see addressed in subsequent review periods.

Biography/Bibliography (BioBib)

The BioBib remains one of the most important documents in the review file. It presents the factual record of a faculty member's accomplishments and serves as a primary source of information for reviewers at all levels. CAP considers this the primary record of achievement, and relies heavily on the information within the BioBib, especially when there is disagreement across reviewers or personal statements. Because many evaluations in the file rely on information reported in the BioBib, accuracy and completeness are essential.

CAP continues to encounter a number of recurring issues related to the preparation of BioBibs. The most common concerns involve the placement and classification of activities. Examples include non-peer-reviewed materials being listed as peer-reviewed publications, mentoring activities being reported under service rather than teaching, and activities appearing redundantly in multiple sections of the BioBib. CAP also continues to encounter instances of double counting, such as listing both a book chapter and the edited volume in which it appears in ways that overstate scholarly output. Careful

attention to the structure and definitions of BioBib categories can limit delays in the review process and minimize the likelihood of negative review outcomes.

CAP also notes that all new publications from the review period should be included as part of the publink. For career reviews, candidates should consider selecting a few foundational publications that highlight some of their significant career papers and add those to the publink.

The University service section of the BioBib benefits from a clear organization of activities. CAP encourages faculty to distinguish departmental, School, and campus activities whenever possible. Such distinctions help reviewers understand both the scope and level of engagement. For faculty undergoing career reviews, a complete service record covering the entire career is helpful. Faculty should also ensure that service assignments and dates are regularly updated. CAP occasionally encounters service activities that appear to extend over implausibly long periods of time or remain listed long after the appointment has ended, creating uncertainty about the accuracy of the record. Finally, CAP encourages faculty to focus on substantive service contributions rather than providing extensive lists of routine activities that are generally expected as part of normal departmental membership.

CAP notes that the BioBib is intended to provide a factual record rather than an evaluative narrative. Lengthy descriptions or contextual statements are more appropriately included in the candidate statement, where their significance and impact can be discussed in greater detail.

Finally, information reported in the BioBib should be consistent with the supporting documentation provided in the file. CAP occasionally encounters discrepancies between BioBib entries and the underlying publications or other materials, including differences in authorship, publication status, publication venues, or other bibliographic information. Such inconsistencies require additional clarification and can delay review. Materials accepted, published, funded, or awarded after the campus file deadline cannot be considered. Faculty and departments should ensure that all relevant documentation is included in the file at the time of submission.

Candidate Statement

CAP considers the candidate statement an essential component of a well-prepared review file and strongly encourages all faculty to include one. While the overwhelming majority of faculty now routinely submit self-statements, CAP continues to encounter occasional files without them. The absence of a self-statement limits the ability of reviewers to assess the candidate's accomplishments in the context in which they occurred and the significance of the record as a whole. An effective self-statement provides a clear, concise, and accessible narrative explaining how the candidate has met departmental expectations and University policy across research, teaching, mentorship, and service. The candidate statement and departmental recommendation letter serve distinct purposes and are most effective when each provides an independent perspective.

Given CAP's interdisciplinary composition, the self-statement should provide the relevant disciplinary details but also remain accessible for a broader academic audience. The purpose of the statement is not simply to repeat information contained elsewhere in the file, but to provide relevant context and explain (sub)disciplinary significance, thereby helping reviewers understand the quality, impact, and trajectory of the candidate's contributions:

Research Productivity and Impact: A clear explanation of the impact and significance of research contributions, including the candidate's role in collaborative work, the trajectory of their scholarly agenda, and any disciplinary norms that may not be apparent to reviewers outside the field. Because CAP members and other reviewers often come from different disciplines, candidates should not assume that co-authorship conventions, the significance of particular journals, publishers, awards, datasets, software products, exhibitions, or other scholarly outputs will be self-evident. The self-statement is an important opportunity to provide this context.

Teaching: A concise and holistic discussion of teaching that explains course design, pedagogical approaches, innovations, evidence of effectiveness, and efforts to improve teaching over time. CAP recognizes that effective teaching often involves experimentation, reflection, and refinement, and thoughtful discussion of successes, challenges, and lessons learned can be particularly valuable. Because teaching evaluations, syllabi, and other instructional materials are already included elsewhere in the file, the self-statement is most useful when it contextualizes this evidence rather than reproducing it.

Consistent with the University's holistic approach to teaching evaluation, candidates may find it helpful to present a concise discussion of aspects of course design, instructional strategies, achievement of learning outcomes, classroom climate, mentoring and advising practices, and their own growth as educators. Particularly valuable are reflections on how teaching practices have evolved over time, how feedback from students or peers has informed instructional decisions, and how candidates assess the effectiveness of their teaching approaches. CAP also values rigor in grading and assessment of students and recognizes that high expectations and demanding learning environments may not always be associated with the highest student evaluation scores. Candidates are encouraged to discuss how they balance rigor, student learning, and instructional effectiveness, and to reflect on evidence that students are achieving meaningful learning outcomes. Thoughtful discussion of both strengths and areas for improvement is more informative than just presenting favorable evaluation metrics. CAP has found holistic teaching statements and portfolios to be among the most helpful additions to review files in recent years. In many cases, these materials have substantially improved candidates' ability to demonstrate their teaching effectiveness effectively. CAP therefore strongly encourages faculty preparing their files to consult the most recent HTOC guidance. At the same time, CAP also strongly urges faculty to keep those statements concise. The teaching portfolio should be around 20 pages, including materials such as syllabi and lecture slides (excluding teaching evaluations). The HTOC website offers helpful guidance on how to prepare the most effective statements.

CAP continues to distinguish between systematically collected teaching evidence and individual student testimonials. Candidate-provided student letters or unsolicited testimonials carry little weight in CAP's evaluation and cannot substitute for teaching evaluations, student comments, peer observations, teaching statements, or other forms of systematic evidence.

Mentorship: A discussion of mentoring activities, including the nature of the mentoring relationship, the time and effort involved, and the outcomes achieved, recognizing that mentoring expectations and practices vary considerably across disciplines. In disciplines where co-authorship with students and postdoctoral scholars is common, candidates should provide evidence that their mentoring fosters intellectual and professional independence. Evidence may include mentees assuming leadership roles in collaborative projects, publishing independently, securing positions or funding, and establishing distinct research agendas.

University and Disciplinary Service: A contextualized account of service contributions, including the scope of the activity, leadership responsibilities, workload where relevant, and the broader impact of the service provided. Committee names and administrative titles are not always self-explanatory to reviewers outside the department, School, or discipline. Faculty are encouraged to explain the purpose of the activity, their specific responsibilities, the level at which the service occurred, and the time and effort involved where appropriate.

External referee letters

Independent external referee letters provide valuable evidence regarding the quality, impact, and standing of a candidate's scholarly contributions because they come from experts who are not closely connected to the candidate's research program. CAP was pleased to see fewer concerns with external referee independence this review cycle, yet the committee continues to encounter cases in which external referees are classified as independent despite the presence of clear professional relationships with the candidate, including recent collaborations, coauthored publications, mentorship relationships, or other substantial scholarly interactions. CAP encourages departments to classify external referees carefully and accurately and to provide information regarding the nature of any relationship between the external referee and the candidate. Departments may also want to consider obtaining information regarding potential conflicts or prior relationships before formally soliciting letters. Such pre-solicitation inquiries may reduce the burden on referees and departments by identifying independence concerns before letters are written and submitted.

In addition, to allow for comprehensive evaluations of faculty in teaching-focused series, CAP recommends that departments share the faculty's teaching portfolio with external referees.

Department recommendation letter

The departmental recommendation letter is a central document in the review file and must provide a clear and independent assessment of the candidate's record. It should explicitly state the department's recommendation and vote (if applicable), including any substantive comments made by faculty in the voting process, describe the relevant departmental standards, and explain how the candidate meets or exceeds those expectations for each of the series criteria and for the proposed action(s). When multiple actions are proposed (e.g., merit, promotion, acceleration), each action needs to be justified separately. CAP finds departmental letters most persuasive when they provide a balanced assessment supported by evidence and reasoning rather than relying primarily on advocacy or conclusory statements.

CAP encourages departments to ensure that all areas of review are addressed in a balanced and consistent manner. The evaluation of research should include a clear discussion of quality, impact, originality, and contribution, applied consistently across files rather than selectively. CAP finds it particularly helpful when departments evaluate the significance and influence of accomplishments rather than relying primarily on quantitative indicators such as publication counts, grant totals, or service activities. For collaborative work, the candidate's specific role and contributions should be clearly articulated.

The departmental recommendation letter should explain not only whether departmental standards have been met, but how the candidate's record satisfies those standards and why the proposed action is warranted. Where disciplinary norms differ substantially from those in other fields, for example with respect to publication practices, authorship conventions, mentoring expectations, or forms of scholarly output, the department should provide sufficient context to allow reviewers outside the discipline to evaluate the record appropriately.

Departments should also address any relevant contextual factors. For example, if collegiality concerns have been raised, the Chair should discuss these and provide documentation where appropriate, following APM 210.1.a. CAP notes, however, that it has found it challenging to incorporate concerns regarding collegiality into academic review unless those concerns have a clear connection to a candidate's research, teaching, or service record. This reflects both concerns about procedural fairness and equity, and the lack of clear policy guidance regarding how collegiality should affect review outcomes. For another example, appointment files should include a clear justification for the proposed step, particularly at senior levels (e.g., Step VI or Above Scale), where external UC letters can be especially helpful given familiarity with the step system. CAP also continues to encounter appointment cases in which faculty appear to have been hired at ranks or steps below those supported by their records. Such appointments can create challenges during subsequent reviews, complicate future recalibration efforts, and raise equity concerns when faculty are compared to colleagues who entered the University at more appropriate ranks and steps. CAP encourages departments to give careful consideration to rank and step at the time of appointment and, where appropriate, to conduct searches at

the rank that best reflects the anticipated candidate pool. Attempts to hire faculty whose records are more consistent with a tenured appointment through searches designed primarily for junior candidates can cause serious equity concerns.

Where applicable, re-engagement plans should be included and discussed. CAP also encourages departments to address significant recommendations or concerns raised in prior reviews and explain how these have been addressed during the current review period.

CAP reminds departments that individuals with a conflict of interest should not prepare or sign key evaluative documents in a review file. In particular, a Department Chair with a documented conflict of interest should not write the departmental recommendation letter, solicit external referee letters, or otherwise shape the evaluative record.

Dean recommendation letter

CAP appreciates the efforts of Deans (or equivalent) to write concise letters. While avoiding redundancy with the departmental letter is appropriate, the Dean's recommendation letter plays an important role in providing a School-level perspective and helping ensure that departmental recommendations are consistent with departmental, School, and University standards. CAP particularly appreciates recommendation letters that provide an independent and candid assessment of the record, including cases where the Dean's evaluation differs from that of the department. Such assessments provide valuable context and contribute to the integrity and fairness of the review process.

Deans should therefore clearly state their recommendation and, where it differs from the departmental recommendation, provide a detailed explanation of the basis for that divergence. CAP occasionally encounters letters that raise concerns or express reservations without making clear whether those concerns affected the recommendation. Such ambiguity can make it difficult for subsequent reviewers to assess the extent of agreement across levels of review and to evaluate the basis for any differences in judgment. CAP also finds Dean's recommendation letters particularly helpful when they identify broader contextual factors at the School level, including efforts to ensure consistency in standards and expectations across departments. Clear recommendations and explanations promote transparency, facilitate effective review, and strengthen confidence in the academic review process.

Administrative and Compensated Roles

CAP often reviews files involving faculty who hold compensated administrative appointments or receive formal workload adjustments, including course releases, as part of their responsibilities. Examples include Deans, Chairs (in certain departments), College Academic Program Directors, Writing Directors, ORU Directors, Center Directors, and other administrative leadership positions. In such cases, it is important that review files clearly distinguish between activities that are part of the compensated responsibilities of the position and activities that represent contributions beyond the expected and

compensated duties. CAP is not suggesting that administrative responsibilities lack value. To the contrary, many such positions require substantial effort and provide important service to the University. However, for purposes of academic review, it is necessary to distinguish between performance of assigned responsibilities and contributions that provide evidence of achievement in teaching, research, mentorship, or service beyond the baseline expectations of the appointment. Departments are encouraged to describe the scope of compensated administrative roles, including any associated workload adjustments, course releases, stipends, or other forms of support, so that reviewers can evaluate accomplishments against an appropriate baseline.

This distinction is particularly important when evaluating service. Faculty holding administrative appointments often participate in committees, oversight activities, and leadership functions as part of their assigned role. Files should therefore make clear which activities are required responsibilities of the position and which represent additional discretionary service to the department, School, University, profession, or public. Similar issues may arise in teaching and mentoring. For example, faculty serving as Writing Directors or in comparable educational leadership roles may engage in curriculum development, assessment activities, faculty training, or other instructional initiatives as part of their compensated responsibilities. Review files should clearly explain how such activities relate to the expectations of the administrative appointment and whether they represent performance of assigned duties or achievements beyond those expectations.

Series & Step Specific Guidance

Accelerations

CAP continues to support **accelerated merit advancements** when the record clearly exceeds the expectations for normal advancement. While specific criteria vary across faculty series and disciplines, accelerations are generally based on exceptional achievement in the primary area of evaluation for the series, with no weaknesses in other areas. For ladder-rank faculty, accelerations most commonly reflect research or creative accomplishments. In the Teaching Professor/Professor of Clinical X series, accelerations should ordinarily be based on exceptional teaching, educational leadership, and pedagogical impact. Regardless of series, accelerations should represent truly unusual levels of achievement relative to disciplinary and departmental norms and should not be awarded solely on the basis of satisfactory performance across all areas.

CAP emphasizes that expectations beyond a standard acceleration are not linear. Actions that combine an **acceleration with a half-step bonus off-scale salary component (BOS)** are reserved for exceptional cases and should be supported by evidence of distinction substantially beyond that required for a standard acceleration. **Double accelerations** are exceedingly rare and represent one of the most exceptional forms of advancement available within the merit system. Such actions typically require exemplary performance across research or creative activity, teaching and mentoring, and service,

together with evidence of truly extraordinary achievement in the primary area of evaluation. Departments proposing these actions should clearly articulate why the record exceeds the already demanding standards for a standard acceleration and why a more exceptional action is warranted and not simply rely on a linear accounting of activities.

CAP also notes that repeated or **serial accelerations** present unique challenges for academic review. CAP has seen an increasing number of cases where faculty have progressed rapidly through the Assistant and Associate Professor ranks on the basis of exceptional research productivity, with a number of recommendations for promotion to the Full Professor rank even though the candidate had only spent two years at the Associate rank. These cases can raise concerns, and such proposals should only be made in compelling circumstances. One concern is that while candidates might have significant research productivity in the review period, it is often not evident (or clearly discussed) that the candidate's overall research productivity meets or exceeds expectations for expected productivity and impact at rank. In addition, faculty accelerating through the ranks have had less opportunity to develop teaching, mentorship, and service records commensurate with the rank and step for which they are subsequently being evaluated. This can create difficulties during promotion, career review, or advancement to senior ranks, where excellence across multiple areas of review becomes increasingly important. Exceptionally rapid advancement through the rank and step structure, especially if it occurs for many faculty within a department, may further raise broader questions regarding the calibration of departmental standards.

Accelerated advancement to Above Scale is possible but exceedingly rare. As an exception to the normal expectation that faculty serve at least four years at Step IX prior to advancement to Above Scale, such proposals must meet the particularly high standard of being both "rare and compelling." Consistent with University policy and long-standing practice, these actions should be reserved for candidates with exceptionally strong records across all areas of review and evidence of distinction substantially beyond that expected for advancement to Step IX. Departments proposing such actions should clearly articulate why the case is rare and compelling and why advancement through the normal progression would not adequately recognize the candidate's achievements.

Bonus Off-Scale Salary Components (BOS)

A BOS is a temporary salary increase that may be used to recognize accomplishments that exceed the expectations for a normal merit advancement but do not justify an accelerated merit advancement. Unlike a step advancement, a BOS does not permanently change a faculty member's rank or step and may be adjusted in future reviews. As with accelerations, BOS components are intended to recognize special achievement and should not be viewed as a routine component of the merit process. The specific basis for a BOS request should be clearly articulated in the departmental recommendation letter and supported by evidence in the file. Requests that do not identify the accomplishments being recognized or that rely primarily on general statements of excellence are unlikely to be persuasive.

The strongest BOS proposals are typically supported by accomplishments that substantially exceed expectations in the primary area of evaluation for the faculty series but fall short of the threshold required for acceleration. For ladder-rank faculty, this most commonly involves research productivity or recognition that exceeds expectations for a normal merit advancement. In teaching-focused series, exceptional teaching, educational leadership, pedagogical innovation, or curricular contributions may similarly justify a BOS. Distinguished awards, honors, or other forms of significant external recognition may also provide strong support for a BOS across series. Although BOS components may occasionally be supported by accomplishments in other areas of review, such cases are less common and generally require evidence of exceptional impact or leadership. Examples include distinguished mentorship or major University service, particularly in multi-year leadership roles such as Department Chair. Routine service activities and the performance of expected administrative responsibilities are generally not sufficient justification for a BOS.

CAP also notes that BOS components, like accelerations, should remain relatively uncommon. While departments may appropriately differ in how frequently they propose BOS actions, consistently high rates of BOS recommendations may raise questions about whether departmental standards and expectations for normal merit advancement are appropriately calibrated. As with accelerations, BOS components are most effective when reserved for accomplishments that are truly distinctive relative to departmental and disciplinary norms.

Career Reviews, Recalibrations, and Career Equity Reviews

Career reviews are major personnel actions associated with advancement to key career milestones, including promotion to Associate Professor, promotion to Full Professor, advancement to Step VI, and advancement to Above Scale. Unlike normal merit reviews, career reviews evaluate a broader body of accomplishments and often require assessment of a faculty member's cumulative contributions, trajectory, and standing within the discipline. CAP continues to encounter variation in how departments evaluate research accomplishments during career reviews. Some departments emphasize accomplishments since appointment at UC San Diego, while others consider a broader portion of the candidate's scholarly record. CAP encourages departments to articulate the period of evaluation used in career reviews in their departmental standards (i.e., are publication expectations for promotion to Associate Professor based on the total career productivity or the productivity since arriving at UC San Diego) and to ensure that standards provide guidance regarding the appropriate balance between cumulative career accomplishments and achievements during the review period. Greater clarity on these issues would promote consistency and equity across cases.

Career reviews may also involve a **recalibration**. Recalibration occurs only in conjunction with a career review and provides a mechanism for adjusting a faculty member's step placement when their cumulative accomplishments are not adequately reflected by their current rank and step. The purpose of recalibration is to ensure that faculty are appropriately placed within the salary and advancement

structure based on the entirety of their record and career trajectory at the time of the review. Recalibrations are most commonly supported when a faculty member was initially placed too low within the rank-and-step system or when sustained achievement over multiple review periods has produced a cumulative record that exceeds the expectations of the current step, even though no single review period would have justified an acceleration. CAP encourages departments proposing a recalibration to justify the recalibration explicitly.

A related but distinct process is the **Career Equity Review** (CER). Unlike recalibration, a CER may be initiated by the faculty member at any point in their career and is not tied to a promotion or other career review action. A CER provides a mechanism for evaluating whether a faculty member's current rank or step appropriately reflects their accomplishments relative to comparable faculty. CER requests should be supported by a specific and well-documented rationale. Possible justifications include evidence that a faculty member was initially appointed at a rank or step below that supported by their record, or that subsequent developments have created a significant disparity between the faculty member's accomplishments and placement within the rank-and-step system. Such claims should be supported by careful analysis and evidence. For example, arguments that a faculty member was hired too low should be accompanied by appropriate comparisons to similarly situated faculty and evidence that the proposed placement is consistent with departmental, School, and University expectations. CAP also emphasizes that CERs involve evaluation of the faculty's overall record rather than research accomplishments alone. Teaching, mentorship, service, professional activities, and other relevant contributions are important components of the assessment. In particular, cumulative teaching and service records should be considered alongside research accomplishments when determining whether a faculty member's current placement appropriately reflects their overall contributions to the University.

Fourth- Year Appraisal

Fourth-year appraisals serve an important developmental function in the process leading up to promotion to the Associate rank. CAP continues to observe appraisal files that focus primarily on evaluating accomplishments in the review period without providing a sufficiently clear assessment of progress toward promotion based on a career review. CAP encourages departments to use appraisals not only to assess the current record but also to identify areas of strength, areas requiring further development, and specific recommendations that may assist faculty in preparing for a successful tenure review. Departments should also explain how accomplishments prior to joining UC San Diego are being considered and how those accomplishments inform expectations for future progress.

CAP notes that the overwhelming majority of appraisal cases receive a *Favorable With Recommendation* (FWR) rating. A *Favorable* appraisal remains relatively rare and is generally reserved for cases where there are no recommendations regarding progress toward promotion. Consequently, an FWR should be interpreted as a positive outcome and as evidence that a candidate is on track for

promotion. It reflects CAP's effort to provide constructive feedback and identify areas where continued development would strengthen the eventual promotion case.

Advancement Further Above Scale

CAP continues to emphasize that advancement further Above Scale differs fundamentally from advancement through earlier stages of the rank structure. Unlike progression through the Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor ranks, there is no expectation that faculty will continue to advance once they have reached Above Scale. As a result, advancement further Above Scale requires particularly strong evidence of continued distinction. As University policy notes, continued good service alone is not an adequate justification for a further advancement; each proposed action must be supported by new evidence of merit and distinction.

Consistent with University policy, files proposing a 100% further Above Scale merit advancement must demonstrate exemplary performance in all areas of review. Unlike accelerations at lower ranks and steps, where exceptional achievement in one area may sometimes offset a less developed record in another, a 100% advancement further Above Scale generally does not permit less than exemplary performance in any area of evaluation. Actions proposing more than 100% of the difference between the top two steps of the salary scale require significant evidence of distinction and should be supported by compelling evidence of extraordinary achievement and impact. In practice, actions at the 150% level are uncommon and typically involve substantial external recognition. Actions approaching 200% are exceedingly rare and are generally viewed as representing the upper end of what can reasonably be justified within the salary system. Such cases should demonstrate extraordinary and sustained achievement, broad national or international recognition, and impact well beyond that normally associated with advancement to Above Scale.

Joint Appointments

CAP encourages departments to ensure that their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for joint appointments clearly specify the standards and expectations governing future academic reviews, including how differing departmental standards will be reconciled if they lead to different recommendations. Expectations regarding research productivity, scholarly impact, independence, teaching, mentoring, and service often vary substantially across disciplines. Without clear guidance, faculty with joint appointments may effectively be held to multiple (and at times incompatible) sets of expectations, creating inequities relative to colleagues in single departments. Establishing transparent review standards and procedures at the outset helps ensure equitable evaluations while supporting the University's commitment to interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Reconsideration

Despite its best efforts and extensive discussions, CAP realizes that the committee might not always arrive at the correct decision. Candidates can request a reconsideration if the preliminary decision diverges from the initial departmental proposal. CAP takes these requests very seriously. CAP reminds departments that reconsideration requests are most effective when they provide new information, correct factual errors, address misunderstandings, or respond directly to concerns identified during the review process. A reconsideration request is generally less effective when it restates arguments already contained in the original file.

Concluding Remarks

The 2025-26 academic year was another busy year for CAP. In addition to reviewing a large number of cases, the committee engaged in important discussions regarding standards, policy, and the future of academic review at UC San Diego. As this report illustrates, many aspects of the academic personnel system continue to evolve, requiring ongoing reflection, clarification, and collaboration across the campus community.

It has been a tremendous honor to serve as Chair of CAP. The experience has provided a unique opportunity to learn from colleagues across every discipline on campus and to gain a deeper appreciation for the extraordinary breadth and quality of research, teaching, mentorship, clinical work, and service performed by UC San Diego faculty. CAP members are routinely reminded of the remarkable accomplishments of our faculty and the dedication with which they pursue their work. I am deeply grateful to my fellow CAP members for their commitment, professionalism, and collegiality. I also greatly appreciate the constructive working relationship with the Executive Vice Chancellor, the Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Senate leadership, Department Chairs, and Deans. I am especially indebted to the CAP analyst, Brandy Cheshire, whose expertise, institutional knowledge, and tireless support make the committee's work possible.

Perhaps most importantly, serving on CAP provides a unique perspective on the importance of faculty self-governance. The academic review process depends not only on policies and standards, but also on evolving practices, mutual trust, and ongoing dialogue among departments, Schools, Senate committees, and the administration. CAP hopes that this report contributes to that dialogue and helps support a review process that remains rigorous, equitable, transparent, and responsive to the changing needs of the University.