

September 23, 2016

SENATE RESEARCH OFFICERS COMMITTEE (ROC)

2015-2016 ACADEMIC YEAR FINAL REPORT

Here we provide brief summaries for a few of the highest-priority issues that the ROC addressed during the past year.

Health Insurance for Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PdRFs): We are excited that the Office of the Provost has introduced a new policy ensuring that PdRFs will have access to affordable health care through the University. We have been advocating for this since 2006. Previously, PdRFs had to cover their own health insurance costs from their fellowships, some of which do not include such funds. The new policy enables all full-time PdRFs to enroll in the UHC POS80 health care plan at a single, employer-subsidized premium rate, thereby significantly reducing their insurance costs. This is in line with what many of our peers are already doing. The 300+ PdRFs at Columbia, who represent the best of their generation, will no longer be penalized for choosing to do their research at Columbia. We want to thank the members of Office of the Provost, the Office of the Executive Vice Provost for Research, and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs for all their hard work in bringing this long-sought change to fruition.

Staff Officer Title Changes/Salary Equity Report: In February 2014, the Office of the Provost released its latest Salary Study of Officers of Research. This was a follow-up to a previous study, released in May 2010. That study found a number of statistically significant differentials in pay by gender and race/ethnicity and included recommendations for addressing this issue. The follow-up study found almost exactly the same pay differentials. Some of the largest differentials were among the Staff Officers. The Office of the Provost is currently working on revising the Staff Officer titles from two grades to six so as to reclassify the Staff Officers and repeat the study using titles which better reflect their level of experience and responsibility. The ROC is providing advice on the proposed new title definitions. We look forward to the administration completing the reclassification and follow-up salary equity study on a timely basis.

Columbia University Postdoctoral Society (CUPS) is a new postdoc organization at Columbia with the aim of improving the postdoctoral community. CUPS was founded as a collaboration between the postdocs of Columbia and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in late 2015, and has been actively involved in organizing career building and networking events for postdocs. CUPS serves as an important channel of communication between the administration and the postdoctoral community, and has maintained constant representation on the ROC since its inception. CUPS is a valuable opportunity to gauge possible issues and problems within the postdoc community. The organization plans to continue working with the University by participating in the ROC and increasing postdoc involvement in the Senate. The CUPS executive leadership has been working with

Columbia to achieve official recognition by the University, which will allow them to make use of University resources on campus.

Meetings with university administrators and others

- Joan Waters, University Ombuds Officer (17 Nov 2015).
- Chris Brown, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, and G. Michael Purdy, Executive Vice President for Research (19 Jan 2016, 19 Apr 2016).
- Jane Booth, General Counsel; John Coatsworth, Provost; Sharyn O'Halloran, Chair of the Senate Executive Committee; G. Michael Purdy, Executive Vice President for Research; and Anne Sullivan, Executive Vice President for Finance and Information Technology (Joint meeting with External Relations and Research Policy Committee, 23 Feb 2016).
- Geraldine Mc Allister, Senate Director (10 May 2016).
- Chris Brown, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; G. Michael Purdy, Executive Vice President for Research; Naomi Schrag, Associate Vice President, Research Compliance; and Zeid Sitnica, Senior Research Analyst, Office of the Provost (07 Jun 2016).
- Rory Flinn, Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (02 Aug 2016).

Some issues for the coming year:

- Annual raises
- Teaching policy for ROs
- Salary equity study – implementation of recommendations
- Timely reappointments
- Postdoc issues
- Staff officer title changes
- Parental/family leave, child care
- Effort reporting
- PRO/SRO survey
- Benefits for part-time ROs

Respectfully,

University Senate Research Officers Committee (2015-2016)

Daniel Wolf Savin, Chair, *Senior Research Scientist*, Astrophysics Laboratory

Kunal Chaudhary, *Postdoctoral Research Scientist*, Radiation Oncology

Aditya Dutta, *Associate Research Scientist*, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center

Nancy LoIacono, *Associate Research Scientist*, Environmental Health Sciences

Smaranda Muresan, Vice Chair, *Research Scientist*, Computational Learning Systems

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