

September 15, 2017

SENATE RESEARCH OFFICERS COMMITTEE (ROC)

2016-2017 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.

Teaching Policy for Postdocs. The ROC has been advocating for several years now for a clear policy for non-research-related career development activities for postdocs. Partly in response to our efforts, the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research has developed new guidelines for incidental career development activities for postdoctoral research scientists, scholars, and fellows. This new policy will enable postdocs to gain valuable experience in many different areas including teaching and technology transfer. We thank Dr. Purdy and his office for the new policy.

University Recognition for the Columbia University Postdoctoral Society (CUPS). The ROC successfully advocated for university recognition of CUPS. Postdocs comprise about half of all officers of research but are represented by only one senator. However, the short tenure of postdocs at Columbia has made it difficult for the postdoc senator to effectively advocate for postdocs and thereby for the greater university. CUPS will provide the postdoc community with the continuity for an improved professional experience for both postdocs and the greater university. Recognizing this valuable contribution, the ROC is strongly committed to CUPS members' participating in the ROC, particularly members of the CUPS executive committee. CUPS' advocacy for postdoc issues, many of which span multiple schools at Columbia, makes them a natural addition to the ROC and the University Senate. The official recognition of CUPS by Columbia University allows them access to important Columbia resources (such as a Columbia web page, space, and financial support) to facilitate their mission.

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, which 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 revising the Staff Officer titles from two grades to six so as to reclassify the Staff Officers and repeat the study using titles that better reflect their levels 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 in a timely manner.

Meetings with university administrators and others

- Rory Flinn, Directory, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (18 Oct 2016).
- Chris Brown, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, and G. Michael Purdy, Executive Vice President for Research (22 Nov 2016 and 09 May 2017).
- Mark Newton, Director, Center for Digital Research and Scholarship; Amy Nurnberger, Research Data Manager (21 Feb 2017).
- Pearl Spiro, Associate Provost for Academic Appointments (21 Mar 2017 and 09 May, 2017).
- Michael E. Stokes, Co-President, Columbia University Postdoctoral Society (18 Apr 2017).

Some issues for the coming year

- Salary equity, annual raises, and salary minimum
- Promotions policy
- Teaching policy for Professional Research Officers
- Housing
- Staff Research Officers title change
- Postdoctoral researcher issues

Respectfully,

University Senate Research Officers Committee 2016-2017

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