

## Statement Regarding Recent Senior Leadership Appointments

September 22, 2020

The Association is seriously concerned about a number of issues related to recent senior leadership appointments, only one of which (AVP Research) having been made through the regular process of appointment and ratification. The Association has no concerns with the individuals appointed to these positions; they are impressive individuals who bring relevant knowledge and dedication to these positions and we wish them well.

First, we wish to make clear that while the University states that the appointments were made following consultation, the Association was not consulted at all on any of these appointments. It appears that there was no consultation below the level of Deans. This is particularly disappointing given that we had a meeting with the President and VP Academic just a few weeks ago to express our concerns over the lack of consultation with the Association on a range of COVID-related administrative changes (including the implementation of Brightspace). We were assured that the situation would be improved moving forward. Perhaps the Administration does not consider it necessary to consult with the Association on matters related to the appointment of our leaders. If so, we remain concerned that the statement about consultation in yesterday's email leaves the impression that a broader level of consultation happened than what actually occurred.

A second issue is the continual increase in the size and cost of the senior administration relative to faculty members. Some of this increase is necessary and is part of a broader trend across Canada, given the increased accountability requirements imposed by provincial governments. However, some of this increase seems less justified. This is particularly the case when increased bureaucracy serves to unnecessarily increase the administrative workload of faculty – particularly Chairs and Directors. These increases in administrative workload detract from the core academic mission of faculty and the University as a whole.

The Association supports the proposal to do a preferential hire for Vice-Provost, as a long overdue move in the right direction. However, we have some concerns that since the position is not at the Vice Presidential level, that the incumbent may face challenges in moving the Administration forward on issues of equity, diversity, anti-racism and reconciliation. More generally, at a time when the University is laying off staff and clawing back funds from faculties and departments, it does not seem the best moment to be hiring into new administrative positions or promoting individuals into acting positions that will require higher remuneration.

UVic is uniquely privileged to have ratification procedures for our academic leaders — colloquially known as the [Petch Procedures](#) after President Howard Petch who introduced them. To our knowledge, at no other Canadian university do faculty members have the power to vote on the appointment and reappointment of their academic leaders, from Chairs to Vice-Presidents. This right is core to UVic's unique tradition of collegial governance and is also a responsibility that must be used wisely by our members.

The Administration has not over-stepped the letter of its policies in its recent acting appointments. However, while Acting Chairs and Deans must be ratified by the membership if they serve for more than six months, there is no limit on the length of time Acting Vice-Presidents, Acting Associate Vice-Presidents and Acting Vice-Provosts can be appointed for without ratification (although the assumption is that they will serve until a permanent appointment is made). The Association has previously expressed our concern with the discrepancy between ratification policies for Deans and more senior leaders and hope that our members serving on Senate and the Board of Governors will help to amend these policies in the future.

Further, while the Association has only admiration for the two Special Advisors who are being appointed, and we are sure they will do important work for the University, we are concerned that the University is increasingly appointing Special Advisors to be part of the senior administration. These appointments are not part of UVic's governance structure and thus are not subject to ratification, regardless of the length of their term.

While the Administration has not done anything that explicitly contravenes their policies, and we have no concerns about any of the individuals appointed, the Association wishes to express our serious concern about the announcement of four senior administrative positions, appointed with no consultation beyond the senior administration. This suggests a troubling direction for UVic's governance at this time and we hope the Administration will seek a more collegial path going forward.