Committee on Appointment, Promotion and Advancement
Librarians Association of the University of California, Santa Cruz
2009-2010 Annual Report

October 8, 2010

Members: Lee Jaffe, chair; Greg Careaga, vice-chair/chair-elect; Christine Caldwell, general member; Kerry Scott, general member

Summary of Activity

PAPA/LS Revisions for Represented Librarians
During the Fall, CAPA reviewed a draft revision of PAPA/LS for represented librarians addressing several important changes. The revision included new policies and procedures regarding 1) no-action reviews and 2) line-AULs. This document also replaced references to the APM with those for the MOU, as appropriate. While some changes were considered critical to have in place for the upcoming review cycle, it was felt that we should not pass up the opportunity for a more thorough revision of PAPA. With these considerations in mind, CAPA recommended that the LAUC membership provisionally accept the proposed revisions as a "working document" with the understanding that CAPA would work with the AUL, AS to produce a new revision. Members endorsed this recommendation at the November 23, 2009 general membership meeting http://internal.library.ucsc.edu/comm/lauc/minutes/genmem_11-23-09.html

A draft outline of the proposed revision was presented at the May 6, 2010 General Membership Meeting. A copy is available via Google Docs at http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0Ac2c3WI1bDIWZGQ3c25ocHJfNDJnNGdkeHpkNw&hl=en&authkey=CNOEr6EI

Counter Offer Task Force Recommendations
CAPA reviewed and made recommendations on the Counter Offer Task Force's draft recommendations. Our comments focused on distinguishing between counter offer measures related to advancement and promotion that are under the purview of CAPA and other measures that are not. CAPA suggested stream-lined procedures when a formal review had taken place within the previous year. These recommendations were incorporated into the final version.

Review Initiator Workshops
As a follow-up to "Issues" from the 08/09 CAPA report (item vi.), the chair participated in two training sessions for review initiators.

CAPA Workshop
The CAPA Workshop was held December 9, 2009. A copy of the handout distributed at the workshop can be found at http://internal.library.ucsc.edu/comm/lauc/capa/CAPA_workshop_09_10.pdf. No minutes were produced.

Recruitment
CAPA reviewed the position description and nominated a slate of librarians for the ad
hoc selection committee for the Grateful Dead Archivist recruitment. We later reviewed and responded to the hiring supervisor's recommendation for appointment.

CAPA reviewed the job description, résumé and hiring supervisor's letter and made a recommendation for a temporary assistant librarian appointment, for which the Library had received a waiver of recruitment.

Performance Reviews
CAPA participated in eleven librarian reviews this year. Ad Hoc members were recruited to review one file. In addition to ten reviews on the regular schedule, one candidate requested an accelerated review. In addition to normal merit (one-step) reviews, two for promotion to Associate Librarian with career status, and two for promotion to Librarian. CAPA concurred with the review initiators' recommendations in nine cases. The deciding officer concurred with CAPA's recommendation in ten out of eleven cases. [Note: Information about recommendations CAPA received has been omitted where the candidate could be identified and confidential information would have been compromised as a consequence.]

We received only six files before the end of April, the time we should have received all files when the review calendar is followed. We acknowledge that the library fire on 4/15/10 may have contributed to tardy submissions in some cases. We also note and appreciate that adherence to the review timeline has improved over the last couple of cycles. However, there is still room for improvement. For example, two packets were not received by CAPA until June. Our quickest turnaround from receipt of a packet to returning it with our recommendation was ten days and our longest was eight weeks (due in part to requests for additional information), with an average of three weeks.

CAPA experimented with using Google Docs to securely share and co-edit review letters. This allowed us to make more efficient use of our weekly meetings and helped us to complete files in a more timely manner. Because it had been our practice for one member to take the lead to draft the letter and incorporate feedback for any given file, this co-editing also improved the quality of review letters since members were able to express their views directly rather than rely upon a colleague's ability to represent their opinions second-hand.

Previous Recommendations
The 08/09 CAPA Report identified nine items under "CAPA Issues":

i. PAPA/LS revisions - underway
ii. Secondary supervisor roles - raised by administration during 08/09; no further action
iii. Refresh guidelines for candidate's review packets regarding cumulative material - address as part of PAPA/LS revision
iv. Reinforce RI’s responsibility for technical aspects of packets - done
v. Explore balance between review criteria, esp. II-IV, in light of increased workloads - addressed below
vi. Provide RIs with overview of review process, recommendation, etc. from CAPA
vii. Clarify AUL role in reviews and recruitments - addressed in provisional PAPA/LS revision
viii. Clarify criteria for accelerated advancement - to be addressed in new PAPA/LS revision
ix. Clarify steps re: contrary decisions - to be addressed in new PAPA/LS revision

Comments

CAPA Issues

Review File Errors

In line with the concerns expressed in last year's CAPA report (number iv., above) we also noted frequent instances of technical problems with the review packets received this year. While some issues were relatively minor (e.g., incomplete and incorrectly dated forms), the documentation accompanying the review packet exists for the protection of all parties involved and needs to be handled with as much care and accuracy as is possible.

In some cases, errors in the file had greater potential for affecting the the review. In one instance, the action indicated on the Recommendation form did not match that in the review initiator's letter. In another file, the Checklist indicated the list of names for confidential letters had been requested and received, but this item was not listed on the Contents form and the document was not included in the packet. CAPA raised these concerns in our annual meeting with the University Librarian and, at her request, we furnished her with a list of specific issues to watch for in the coming review cycle.

At the same time, we should be clear that everyone involved in the review process has a share in assuring the completeness and accuracy of review packets. We especially want to note the need for RIs and candidates to initial and date items on the Contents and Checklist forms as steps in the review process are taken or completed. In particular, items 1-4 on the "Checklist" ("Candidate was notified of the impending action" etc.) refer to the meeting between the RI and the candidate that should take place shortly after the Call and should be dated accordingly. Please take an final scan of the packet in order to make sure that the forms are accurate and complete and all the contents are present and accounted for before forwarding it to the AUL,AS.

Recommendation 1: As an aid to documenting the review process, CAPA recommends that the "Checklist to Assure Fairness" be revised to show, separately, when items were requested (to be initialed by the candidate) and when they are received (initialed by the RI). Currently, items are only checked if submitted, rendering it ambiguous whether an item was requested but not received or never requested in the first place.
Persons Recommended ... for Confidential Letters

During this review cycle, we noted that candidates only listed one person as a potential referee for each area of activity on the "Persons Recommended by Candidate for Confidential Letters of Reference" form. Past practice was to provide names of more than one person for each area so that the candidate did not know from whom the RI asked for a letter, thus promoting confidentiality of letters. Though there is no written requirement for candidates to provide multiple names, we believe the past practice was preferable and suggest that Review Initiators restore this practice as a means of protecting letter writers.

RI Evaluations

Last year's CAPA report identified issues with RIs' letters and recommended that CAPA participate in training sessions for supervisors (number vi., above) as a means of addressing these concerns. CAPA was invited to participate in this year's training sessions, which seemed well-received by the RIs. We hope to continue this practice in the coming year.

We did still encounter some issues with RI letters which we think should be addressed. We believe the process works best when the RIs' letters are thorough: they provide an explicit assessment of the candidates' contributions related to the criteria and the Library's goals and objectives and bring forward documentation supporting the recommendation. "The evaluation should be written as a persuasive document. The supervisor should clearly indicate the basis used in reaching a decision and the line of reasoning, so that an outside, impartial observer could, based solely on the documentation, reach the same conclusion." ("Content and Format of Written Reviews" - old Appendix XII)

CAPA focuses much of our assessment on the RI's evaluation, looking for specific points we can bring forward, with the supporting material, in our recommendation. From our perspective, the RI letter is most effective when it addresses the following: what the candidate did, the value of those contributions, and an assessment of how these relate to the criteria and the Library's strategic directions.

CAPA consulted with the AUL,AS about how to address our concerns with the review letters during the year and raised the issue in our end-of-year meeting with the University Librarian. From this discussion, we believe the UL understood our concerns and was willing to address the issue by arranging for further mentoring of RIs.

In further support in this area, CAPA makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 2: The CAPA chair continue to participate in training and orientation sessions for RIs conducted by the AUL,AS.

Recommendation 3: CAPA and the AUL,AS develop a model RI evaluation showing the basic components this document should contain.
Balancing Criteria

Finding a successful balance between "professional competence and quality of service within the library" and the other, external criteria (II-IV) for advancement and promotion is a long-standing concern among UCSC librarians and a regular point of discussion at the CAPA workshop. During this year's review process, CAPA was confronted with this issue when a candidate described how they rebalanced their external activities in response to feedback they received from the deciding officer during the previous review. Unfortunately, the particulars of the deciding officer's feedback were not documented in the review packet and CAPA was left to evaluate the relevance of this information based only on a second-hand account. The case raised several points CAPA feels should be shared with the membership.

First, any information useful to the assessment of the candidate's contributions should be documented within the packet. This includes material from earlier reviews if it affects the assessment of the candidate's work and the RI's recommendation. If the candidate and/or the RI believe that the deciding officer's letter is important, that material should be included (for instance, quoted within the RI's evaluation). CAPA may also consider requesting it as part of the "additional information" process if we deem it important to our assessment.

Second, when an assessment of a review depends upon understanding how a librarian balanced their inside and outside activities — regardless of the source of the impetus to make that change — it helps to understand what goals were to be achieved as a consequence. Whether the candidate was directed by a supervisor or decided for their own reasons, it is important to put that decision in context and indicate the overall benefit to the Library's goals and objectives.

Finally, a diminished librarian contingent means that "doing more with less" is going to be a standing concern for the foreseeable future. This puts a special onus on the candidates and RIs to find the appropriate balance between a candidate's primary responsibilities and other professional contributions. How should CAPA assess candidates' contributions in reviews where "service within the library" appears to take precedence over the other criteria for advancement and promotion set down in the APM and MOU?

CAPA raised these questions in our end-of-year meeting with the UL and we were reassured that she understands these concerns. The UL made it clear that the codified criteria for advancement and promotion are still the primary consideration. She assured us that any recommendations she provides as deciding officer are meant to provide guidance with respect to the criteria, not in opposition to them. The UL also agreed that relevant information from previous reviews should be excerpted as part of the packet when it relates to the committee's recommendation.

LAUC Member Comments
Guidance for Compiling Reviews: CAPA received comments from members about the difficulty in understanding the review process in general and assembling the review packet in particular. While acknowledging that reviews can be stressful, especially to newer librarians, we note that there are extensive resources available for candidates, at all levels, to help navigate the process. The candidate’s first point of contact is the review initiator who, as the title implies, holds primary responsibility for managing the review process. Good communication between the candidate and review initiator throughout the review is crucial to the success of the process generally and can provide the candidate the best guidance as to what is expected. In addition, the review initiator and the candidate can both refer questions about policy and process to the AUL, AS as needed. Further, new librarians are provided with a mentor at the time of appointment and this person is often a good source for collegial advice related to the review process, especially at the beginning of their career at UCSC. Candidates can also ask past members of CAPA for guidance. Copies of model reviews are kept in the Library Office (though these are in need of refreshing). Last but not least, specific sections of PAPA provide clear guidelines about the content and format of review documents. These resources are usually reviewed during the annual CAPA workshop.

Confidential Letters: Members continue to raise concerns about when it is appropriate for RIs to solicit letters, a point of discussion at this year’s CAPA workshop as well. Generally, the custom at UCSC has been to dispense with confidential letters for “routine” reviews. It is therefore a potential cause of concern for candidates when an RI requests letters in those circumstances. However, RIs have a lot of latitude in requesting letters. In line with the mandate to assemble a persuasive packet, when RIs feel they cannot assess candidates’ contributions in an area because of a lack of direct experience and those contributions are not otherwise documented, requesting letters is appropriate. Further, if an RI is trying to decide whether to recommend an accelerated advancement or other unusual action, they may request letters in order to determine whether there is a strong case. No matter the circumstances, the process works better when there is good communication between the RIs and candidates, allowing candidates to understand what is going on and not be surprised or alarmed by actions, such as requests for letters.

We also received requests for clarification about the number of letters requested and how far removed from the Library referees should be, particularly in relationship to the rank of the librarian being reviewed. We are not aware of any formulas that address these points. The guiding principle for letters, as well as any material included in the review packet, is that they should contribute to a persuasive dossier in support of the RI’s recommendation. If a letter from a particular person will not contribute to making the case, it should not be requested. If important evidence is missing from the packet because a letter is not included, then CAPA may request a letter. There is no hard-and-fast rule; the coherence and effectiveness of the packet is the crucial consideration.

We also received comments about how to deal with "negative" confidential letters.
While the possibility of negative comments in confidential letters is inherent in the review process, candidates have some control in this matter: they can check with potential referees and determine whether those people are willing to provide a letter before giving their names to their RIs. However, there is no guarantee that letters will not inject criticism or questions about a candidate's performance. When this happens, there are informal as well as formal recourses. The candidate can talk with the RI about possible responses, including additional letters and addressing them in the RI's evaluation. If the candidate is not satisfied that negative comments have been addressed otherwise, the review process provides an opportunity to respond.

In our meeting with the UL, she was particularly concerned about asking the same people to provide letters again and again. She also observed that some letters may provide little substance in support of the review process.

**Distinguished/Barrier Step:** CAPA received a request for clarification of the barrier step between Librarian V and VI. In part, the comments directed to CAPA argue that there is no legitimate basis for such a distinction. However, CAPA finds the language in both forms of PAPA to be conclusive in establishing the barrier step.

> Advancement from Step V to Step VI is reserved for Librarians with a distinguished career history who have demonstrated significant achievement since attaining Step V.

Until this language is altered, these are the guidelines CAPA must use to make recommendations for reviews at this step. Even if CAPA accepted a different interpretation, the barrier step requirement effectively would remain in place as long as the deciding officer considered this to be a valid guideline for advancement at this step.

We note that task forces at UCB and UCLA have recently addressed this question. The UCB report strongly questions the basis of the barrier step as currently practiced and offers four options for LAUC-B to consider. The later UCLA report acknowledges the UCB recommendations but determines that such actions fall within the collective bargaining process and could not be addressed by LAUC. The UCLA recommendations instead address means of clarifying the language (e.g., "distinguished librarian" rather than "distinguished step") but leave the barrier step between Librarian V and VI in place.

**Recommendation 4:** That the LAUC-SC Executive Committee review the UCB and UCLA reports in order to determine whether any further study or discussion at UCSC would be profitable and then determine how to proceed.

**Planning for Future Vacancies and Recruitment:** CAPA was asked to raise the question about whether the Library administration has a plan for filling positions in the coming years. Since this item goes beyond CAPA's area of activities and may relate to other professional matters, CAPA refers the question to the LAUC-SC Executive Committee for consideration about how to best approach this issue.