

# Academic Assembly Council President's Report: June 2020

## University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Surendra Dara  
*Rules & Election Committee Chair*

Steven Worker  
*Personnel Committee Chair*

Georgios Vidalakis  
*Program Council Liaison*

June 1, 2020

Dear UC ANR Academic Assembly:

The last few months have seen great changes in our communities and the ways we work. For many, the pandemic has been overwhelming and exhausting. We are witnessing (and, in some cases, participating in) nationwide protests against institutional & systemic discrimination, racism, and the killing of Black people. There is much work to do to support our communities, individuals, and families across the state. The UC ANR Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Alliance is building institutional support for all ANR personnel to learn and contribute to these efforts. I hope you will join as well.

This is my last report as Academic Assembly Council President. It has been a honor to represent you in this capacity. So many of you have reached out with your thoughts for innovation and improvements, trusted me with your concerns and challenges, and shared your celebrations and successes. Learning more about our academic programs, goals, and impacts has increased my understanding. Your passion and dedication to your communities and clientele is truly an inspiration. I carry this all with me to my new role as Assistant Vice Provost of Cooperative Extension beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. I will continue to be available to hear you and to work closely with AAC.

Thank you to all who have served on AAC committees and the council over the last two years. I leave AAC in the capable and thoughtful care of [Van Butsic](#), President and [Jim Downer](#), Past President.

Sincerely,



Katherine E. Soule  
President  
Academic Assembly Council

P.S. It is Pride Month. Consider joining our virtual film festival. More information on the final report page.

For more information about the UC ANR Academic Assembly Council, including travel awards, committees, and publications, visit our website at:

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/>

### **Contributing to The Conversation**

Does your research and extension work tie well into current events? If so, consider pitching an article to [The Conversation](#), a non-profit media outlet that publishes analyses, research news, and ideas written by academics and scientists from leading universities and research institutions. As a network of publicly engaged scientists and outreach professionals across UC ANR, we are ideally positioned to share with a broader audience our work in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, and youth development.

Check out a few recent articles by colleagues:

- [Why we need to treat wildfire as a public health issue in California](#)
- [Young California ranchers are finding new ways to raise livestock and improve the land](#)
- [Scientist at work: Trapping urban coyotes to see if they can be 'hazed' away from human neighborhoods](#)

Learn more about how to become an author [here](#). You can also reach out to those of us ([here's a few more](#)) who have previously written articles for The Conversation for questions and advice!

~ Leslie Roche

### **COVID-19 Impact on International Scholars**

The Coronavirus Pandemic has effected the mobility of people across the globe since its initial spread, beginning with travel restrictions to and from Asia. Aside from subsequent delayed travel plans, the main issues international scholars are facing relate to visa processing delays.

For example, the U.S. Department of State has limited visa interview appointments at U.S. Consulates and Embassies abroad. Likewise, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services limited in-person appointments and halted Premium Processing, a service used to expedite H-1B processing to 15 days.

UC ANR Academic HR is working closely with our colleagues at Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS) at UC Davis to ensure our academics gain and maintain work authorization as quickly as possible and to keep abreast on how COVID-19 continues to impact the international community.

During this time, we continue to hold values of acceptance and cultural diversity in the highest regard and value the contributions that our international scholars deliver to UC ANR, the state of California, and the world. For additional information, visit [SISS Coronavirus Information and Resources](#).

**If you have any questions related to your immigration status**, please contact Becky Sisman at [bsisman@ucanr.edu](mailto:bsisman@ucanr.edu) or Tina Jordan at [tljordan@ucanr.edu](mailto:tljordan@ucanr.edu) in Academic HR.

~ Tina Jordan

### **Building Team Capacity with Staff Assembly Council**

AAC is connecting with Staff Assembly Council to increase supervisorial commitment to and understanding of Staff Assemblies functions, so we may collectively support and advocate for our fellow staff members!

Check some of their current initiatives:

- **Educational Reimbursement** – Any staff member may apply for up to \$499 dollar educational reimbursement. Reimbursements are awarded twice per year for college courses, CE, workshops, seminars, and/or online courses.
- **Wellness** – This committee represents ANR in UC systemwide wellness activities through participation in the Wellness Managers and Healthy Campus Network groups. Annually, this committee organizes UC Walks, Healthy over the Holidays, National Snack Day, and created the Healthy Meeting Guidelines in 2019. The committee also works on wellness needs assessments for staff to better support and advocate for staff.
- **Staff Assembly Ambassadors**: A staff representative in each UCCE/ANR/REC office location communicates with staff on a personal level to engage and lead Staff Assembly activities locally.
- **ANR Grows** – A program created to address needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Approved applicants are awarded up to \$50 reimbursement to purchase vegetable plants, compost, seed, and other various gardening resources.

~ Nikolai Schweitzer, Staff Assembly Chair

### **Personnel Committee Report**

The AAC Personnel Committee is completing two large projects in preparation for the joint personnel committee & peer review committee summer meeting.

1. Revising the expectation examples found in the eBook (Section 4). The revised tables will be reviewed by the full personnel committee in May. Personnel Committee will send the final recommendations to Wendy for approval over the summer. Note: These modifications do not alter the advancement criteria from the UCOP Academic Personnel Manual. Edits are only to the example activities, with additional clarification on "balance" and "trajectory."
2. Recommending minor modifications to the advancement process, including when ad hoc review committees are convened, instructions for the program summary narrative, and additional clarifications on the acceleration process. Personnel Committee will send the final recommendations to Wendy for approval over the summer.

~ Steven Worker

### **Serve on Academic Assembly Council**

As some of the members of the Program, Personnel, and Rules & Elections Committees are completing their terms, new members are being recruited and will start their service from July 2020.

A complete list of Academic Assembly Council Committees and their functions is available on the AAC website:

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/UCAAC/>

If you are interested in serving on Academic Assembly Council, please contact Surendra Dara.

~ Surendra Dara

# Virtual Pride Film Festival

Celebrate inclusion. Join UC ANR colleagues to view films about LGBTQ+ communities and participate in discussion. BYOB. Wednesdays at 6pm in June.

June 3: *State of Pride* (2019)

June 10: *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (2017)

June 17: *Kiki* (2017)

June 24: *Three of Hearts* (2005)

**REGISTER FOR  
ZOOM LINK**

<http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=30195>