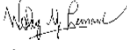




June 26, 2025

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair 
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal: Proposed Revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) 230,
Visiting Appointments

The CHASS Executive Committee (EC) reviewed the Proposal: Proposed Revisions to Academic Personnel Manual (APM) 230, Visiting Appointments. While the CHASS EC does not have comments about the two technical revisions, we are strongly opposed to the core revision to eliminate a subtype of “visiting assistant professor”. The proposed change will eliminate the possibility of hiring into a professorial (i.e., not lecturer, not postdoctoral scholar) rank a person who is not already in a tenure-track position.

CHASS EC members shared their own experiences as visiting assistant professors, as well as the value of having temporary, non-tenure-track professorial colleagues in their departments or programs. Our observations were fully positive, and we noted how valuable it is both for the candidate as well as their departments to have these visiting assistant professor positions. For the candidate, often a person who has recently completed their terminal degree, these positions provide an opportunity to gain experience in a role that includes research, teaching, and service. They are thus much more positioned – and expected – to participate in the culture(s) of the unit(s) in which they are appointed. And for the department or program, these positions provide another professorial colleague. There are situations, such as a sabbatical replacement, where a new tenure-track position wouldn’t be warranted, and the visiting assistant professor series as currently defined addresses this need. Other temporary positions, such as adjunct lecturers hired to teach specific classes, also fill crucial roles but are different from those of visiting assistant professors.

We have just one caveat to our strong support of “visiting assistant professor” remaining as an option for faculty candidates who are not already appointed in tenure-track positions. We are aware that some institutions leverage “temporary” faculty positions for many years – i.e., when

they are not actually temporary in relation to program needs – as a means to minimize the more expensive tenure-track positions that should be created. We have not seen this occur in CHASS, however, and note that APM-230 already specifies that “a visiting assistant professor position shall not exceed 2 years unless approved by the Chancellor”. We believe this two-year limitation is fine as is.

Finally, we call attention to how the rationale for the core revision is not provided, thus raising questions about unstated motivations “to clarify Visiting appointments at the assistant rank are only appropriate if the visitor is on leave from an academic or research position at another education institution.” While we understand that the lay usage of “visiting” implies *from somewhere else*, we also recognize that “visiting” in the context of faculty titles is widely used across the United States, and currently used in the University of California, to refer to temporary, non-tenure-track appointments where the appointee does not have a position elsewhere. As such, we assert that the proposed revision is not a clarification at all because the current policy is not ambiguous; rather, the revision is a substantive and negative change that eliminates an important type of faculty line.