

Division Chair Priorities
Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Agenda 2024-25 AY

The 2021 Faculty Leadership Academy (FLA) Report, [*Impact through Inclusion: A Future for Self-Governance*](#), aimed to answer the following question: “How can the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate evolve in form and function to best serve UC Berkeley and its faculty today and in the future?” They conducted a survey spring 2021 and received 453 responses: “gender (37% of survey respondents were women vs. 34% of Berkeley faculty), race/ethnicity (race = white: 65% of respondents vs. 70% of Berkeley faculty), and professor rank (Full Professor Rank: 65% of respondents vs. 61% on campus; Associate Professor: 24% vs. 22%, respectively). Assistant Professors were slightly underrepresented (11% vs. 17%, respectively).”¹ The overall survey response rate was 28% (Senate respondents = 447; total non-Emeriti Senate count = 1583); online survey response rates generally average between 25-44%.^{2,3}

According to the FLA report, “Survey questions explored faculty’s knowledge about and participation in the Academic Senate, their sense of belonging and commitment to the Academic Senate as an institution, potential barriers and solutions for increasing faculty involvement in Academic Senate service, and the nature and quality of faculty’s past and/or current experiences serving on Academic Senate committees.”¹ Four key challenge areas emerged: 1) making the Academic Senate more visible and transparent to all, 2) the need to improve strategic planning and effective processing (avoid being a debate club), 3) need for more incentives for Senate service, and 4) need to improve diversity, especially on powerful committees⁴ in terms of institutional impact.

The 2022-23 academic year marked 60 years of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. In those 60 years (and of 46 [Division Chairs](#)), there have been 2 people of color (4%) serving in the role of Vice Chair/Chair. The first person of color served from 2006-2008; the 2nd person of color served from 2017-2018. Women, overall, have done much better. During the first 20 years of the Senate, women represented 17% of Senate Chairs and in the last 20 years, they were up to 47% (50% in the last 10 years). Faculty

¹ Impact through Inclusion: A Future for Self-Governance FLA 2021 Academic Senate Study and Recommendations Final Report

² Wa’ed Shiyab, Caleb Ferguson, Kaye Rolls, Elizabeth Halcomb, Solutions to address low response rates in online surveys, *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, Volume 22, Issue 4, May 2023, Pages 441–444, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvad030>

³ Menon V, Muraleedharan A. Internet-based surveys: relevance, methodological considerations and troubleshooting strategies. *Gen Psychiatr*. 2020 Aug 1;33(5):e100264. doi: 10.1136/gpsych-2020-100264.

⁴ All Senate committees are important and critical to the functioning of the University. Some committees have delegated authority in certain areas (e.g., [AEPE, COCI](#)) and others, although advisory, have critical infrastructure issues as part of their purview (e.g., [CAPRA](#)) or are central to academic policy setting (e.g., [UGC, GC](#)).

of color represented 0% of Academic Senate Chairs for the first 40 years. In the last 20 years, faculty of color represented 10% of Senate Chairs (1 in each decade), which is lower than where women started over 40 years ago. Although faculty of color are extremely talented leaders and have served in many leadership positions on campus (associate deans, department chairs, ORU directors, program heads, and more), there is a paucity of faculty of color serving on Senate committees. Service in the Senate is one important criterion for being selected to serve as Vice Chair and subsequently Chair.

Surely, we will face challenges in the year ahead: how to come together as a community in the face of the many global conflicts that leave none of us untouched; financial pressures that force difficult and, at times, unpopular trade-offs; the uncertainty about best practices related to generative AI in the classroom; continued pressures associated with shifts in the graduate education landscape; the squeeze of a higher than average faculty:student ratio and what that means for the quality of education at the #1 public institution in the world; supporting our students by meeting the increasing demand for accommodations in the classroom; research infrastructure including our libraries; salary equity; diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus, more broadly; faculty morale; and more. Whew! We have our work cut out for us. But another year also brings new opportunities and possibilities for us to listen, learn, and grow together as we work toward our collective goal of making more Berkeley magic:

“What happens at UC Berkeley isn’t magic, it just feels that way, because there is no telling what will occur when people, unsatisfied with the way things are, have the courage to imagine a better way and the freedom to turn what could be into what will. That takes bold thinking, disruptive ideas and an amazing array of perspectives, people, and intellectual pursuits... That’s Berkeley.”⁵

The Academic Senate will be working as hard as we can to address the many challenges facing our campus. In addition to reacting to these challenges, the FLA report, the demographic history of Academic Senate Chairs on the Berkeley campus, and current demographics of Senate committees helped inform a proactive agenda for the Berkeley Division for the 2024-25 AY. In addition, after reading the FLA report, I spent much of last year talking with faculty on campus and trying to encourage campus-level Senate service, including among faculty of color. Those discussions aligned with the findings of the FLA report and elevated the importance of each of the agenda items outlined below. Change will not happen overnight. **We are starting a journey that I hope will lead to lasting change in the 4 areas identified below. I am excited about the strategies we have developed so far for each of the areas**

⁵ <https://www.berkeley.edu/about/experience-berkeley/>

below, and [welcome your ideas](#). This journey will not start and end with the 2024-25 AY. However, I hope that we are able to make some measurable progress in each area, laying a foundation for change in the years to come. Specific Senate committee objectives (including, but not limited to, the areas identified below) will be posted to the Senate website early November.

1. Increase awareness of the Academic Senate and its role in shared governance (*i.e.*, “the concept that faculty should share in the responsibility for guiding the operation and management of the university”⁶)
2. Improve the actual and perceived effectiveness of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
3. Improve the diversity of the pipeline into Academic Senate leadership
4. Be responsive to the interests of Senate faculty on the Berkeley campus

⁶ John Aubrey Douglass. Creating a Great Public University: The history and influence of shared governance at the University of California. Research and Occasional Paper Series: CSHE.4.2023. October 2023.