

Step Plus Proposal for Personnel Actions

Robert Feenstra
Dept. of Economics
UC Davis

Introduction: There are two systems for granting accelerated merit advancement of ladder-rank faculty across the UC campuses:

1. “Accelerations in time” – Used by many but not all campuses
2. All merits are considered on a fixed two/three year schedule, but at *every review* the individual can be considered for *more than one step, i.e. 1.5 steps, 2 steps, etc.*
 - a) Used by UC Berkeley for over 10 years, where half steps are built into the payroll system and will be part of UC Path
 - b) A partial half-step system is also used at UC Santa Cruz, but the half steps refer to off-scale increments

The **Step Plus** system planned for UC Davis will switch our personnel system for ladder-rank faculty from the “accelerations in time” to the “half-step” system, similar to that used at UC Berkeley.

Crucial points:

1. Accelerations still occur in the Step Plus system, as when a person obtains a 1.5 merit step rather than 1 step, but they are not “accelerations in time.” They might be called “accelerations in performance.” To avoid confusion, the word “acceleration” is not used in this talk or in the document. Instead, we refer to merit actions of *more than one step (1.5 step, 2 steps, etc.)*
2. The Step Plus proposal is expected to be discussed in the Representative Assembly of the Academic Senate of UC Davis at the April 2014 meeting, and is expected to be brought to a vote of the Representative Assembly at its June 2014 meeting. If the proposal is accepted by the Academic Senate, it will become *effective July 1, 2014.*

Goals of this meeting:

- To explain the background and rationale of the Step Plus proposal
- To answer questions that you have
- To offer you an opportunity to make suggestions as the campus considers implementation details

Where did the Step Plus Proposal come from?

On June 3, 2011, the UC Davis Representative Assembly passed the following resolution:

“The Representative Assembly wishes to form a task force to determine the feasibility of potential simplifications of the academic personnel process that will result in reducing the amount of staff and faculty time invested in that process.”

Academic Senate Task Force on Simplifying the Academic Personnel Process (STAPP), April 23, 2012

Report was presented to the Executive Committee of the UC Davis Academic Senate and to the Representative Assembly in spring, 2012

Jeannie L. Darby, College of Engineering (COE), Civil & Environmental Engineering (chair)

Other members:

Ahmet Palazoglu, COE, Chemical Engineering & Material Science

Colin Cameron, Division of Social Science (DSS), Economics

Robert Feenstra, DSS, Economics

Phillip Shaver, DSS, Psychology

Walter Stone, DSS, Political Science

Susan Kauzlarich, Division of Math & Physical Sciences, Chemistry

Bryce Falk, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
(CAES), Plant Pathology

Rachael Goodhue, CAES, Agricultural & Resource Economics

Kyaw Tha Paw U, CAES, Land, Air, and Water Resources

Hung Ho, School of Medicine (SOM), Surgery

David Rocke, SOM, Public Health Sciences and COE, Biomedical
Engineering

Phil Kass, School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM), Population Health &
Reproduction

Lisa Tell, SVM, Medicine & Epidemiology

Two major recommendations in the STAPP report:

Part A. Proposed Changes in the Review Process

Plan 1 (Step Plus)

“We support the Step Plus plan for four reasons:”

“1) Step Plus will result in a significant decrease in the number of actions reviewed each year, a clear workload reduction on the part of faculty, staff and administrators.”

“2) Step Plus provides a greater likelihood that deserving faculty who do not currently put forward their packets for accelerated reviews (because either they are less aggressive or are just too busy) will actually begin to gain the rewards of acceleration...”

“ 3) Step Plus allows all contributions during a review period to be fully accounted for - whether happening uniformly across the review period or occurring all at once at the end of a period...”

“4) Step Plus provides a greater likelihood of uniformly equitable decisions, because all packets will cover either a two-year (Assistant and Associate) or three-year (Full) record rather than the current range of years.”

Plan 2 (Streamlining Normal Actions)

“Under Plan 2, we recommend that, for the most part, all normal actions (in which no acceleration is being requested) would go directly to the dean, without FPC review. Davis is the only campus that utilizes FPCs. If a dean thinks that he/she needs more input, he/she has the option of requesting FPC review. Under Plan 2, we are not suggesting that FPC be abolished, just used more judiciously...”

The STAPP report was discussed and accepted by the Representative Assembly in June 2012. Senate feedback in January 2013 indicated very strong support for Plan 1 (the Step Plus proposal), but much more divided opinion on the recommendations for Plan 2.

On May 3, 2013, Vice Provost Maureen Stanton charged the Academic Personnel Streamlining Implementation Workgroup (APSIW) with developing protocols and procedures for implementing recommendations in the Academic Senate STAPP report

UC Davis Academic Personnel Streamlining Implementation Workgroup (APSIW), Revised, 9 January 2014

Robert Feenstra (DSS: Department of Economics; Co-Chair)
Bruce Winterhalder (DSS: Anthropology & Division of Social Sciences; Co-Chair)

Other members:

Richard Tucker (SOM: Cell Biology and Human Anatomy)

Walter Stone (DSS: Department of Political Science)

Lisa Tell (SVM: Medicine and Epidemiology)

Peter Wainwright (CBS: Department of Evolution and Ecology)

Assistant Dean Julie Ann Fritz-Rubert (CAES)

Analyst Bobbie Lasky (Academic Affairs, Office of the Chancellor
and Provost)

Director Sarah Mangum (Budget and Institutional Analysis)

Analyst Donna Udahl (Budget and Institutional Analysis)

Vice Provost Maureen Stanton (CBS: *ex officio*)

Major Topics:

“We discuss both of these [STAPP] recommendations below, focusing on the operational details, the “nuts and bolts,” of what a new system would look like”

“The two components of this report – Part A, Plan 1 of the STAPP report (the Step-Plus system) and Part A, Plan 2 of the STAPP report (the reduced role for FPCs) – need be not considered jointly or on the same time schedule. *We recommend that the Step-Plus system be implemented immediately, for AY 2014-2015.*”

“We further propose that the Academic Senate in consultation with the Vice Provost-Academic Affairs define a limited set of potential FPC roles giving the Colleges and Divisions a year to discuss and reach a decision which they prefer by faculty vote to adopt. *The revised FPC roles would be implemented in AY 2015-2016.*”

**Table 1: Example of Proposed Step Plus Salary Scale
For Faculty, Ladder Ranks, Professor Series (Academic Year)**

Rank	Step	Normative Years at Step	Annual Salary
Assistant Professor	1	2	\$55,900
	1.5	2	57,600
	2	2	59,300
	2.5	2	60,900
	3	2	62,500
	3.5	2	64,300
	4	2	66,100
	4.5	2	67,750
	5	2	69,400
Associate Professor	5.5	2	71,050
	6	2	72,700
	1	2	69,500
	1.5	2	71,150
	2	2	72,800
	2.5	2	74,850
	3	2	76,900

	3.5	2	79,250
	4	3	81,600
	4.5	3	84,750
	5	3	87,900
Professor	1	3	81,700
	1.5	3	84,850
	2	3	88,000
	2.5	3	91,250
	3	3	94,500
	3.5	3	97,900
	4	3	101,300
	4.5	3	104,900
	5	3	108,500
	5.5	3	113,000
	6	3	117,500
	6.5	3	122,300
	7	3	127,100
	7.5	3	132,350
	8	3	137,600
	8.5	3	143,400
	9	4	149,200
	9.5	4	155,000

Major features of Step Plus system:

1. Merit actions only occur on their normative schedule

Exceptions:

- a) Promotions to Associate or Professor can occur off of normative schedule
- b) After a deferral, the individual can come up the next year
- c) After a denial, the individual can come up the next year

2. All actions can be considered for a merit exceeding one step

Criteria used at UC Berkeley for a 1.5 or 2 step increase are included in the Appendix of the APSIW report:

“A larger-than-normal, 1.5-step advancement requires a strong and balanced record with *outstanding achievement in at least one area of review*, normally that of research.”

“A two-step acceleration requires an *exceptionally strong and balanced record in all three areas* of review, with *outstanding achievement in research and at least one additional area of review.*”

APSIW recommends adopting language similar to that used by UC Berkeley.

- 3. Actions can also be considered for a 0.5 step merit increase, *but only if the faculty requests that option be included and approved by department vote.***
- 4. Any faculty member receiving a **advancement greater than one step** would also receive a *temporary supplement equal to one-quarter of the salary increment* difference between their newly achieved and former full merit steps, for normative years at step
This increment would likely be recorded as *temporary offscale.***

Compare an Assistant Professor who receives an acceleration under the current system at Davis and with the Step Plus system

Year	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Current system at UC Davis with acceleration in time							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3				
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500				
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100				

Compare an Assistant Professor who receives an acceleration under the current system at Davis and with the Step Plus system

Year	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Current system at UC Davis with acceleration in time							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3	Assist 4		Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$66,100	\$66,100	\$69,500	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$247,200	\$313,300	\$382,800	\$452,300

Compare an Assistant Professor who receives an acceleration under the current system at Davis and with the Step Plus system

Year	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Current system at UC Davis with acceleration in time							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3	Assist 4		Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$66,100	\$66,100	\$69,500	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$247,200	\$313,300	\$382,800	\$452,300
Proposed Step Plus system at UC Davis							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3				
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$62,500			
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$243,600			

Compare an Assistant Professor who receives an acceleration under the current system at Davis and with the Step Plus system

Year	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Current system at UC Davis with acceleration in time							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3	Assist 4		Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$66,100	\$66,100	\$69,500	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$247,200	\$313,300	\$382,800	\$452,300
Proposed Step Plus system at UC Davis							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3	Assis 4.5		Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$62,500	\$67,750	\$69,500	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$243,600	\$311,350	\$380,850	\$450,350

With temporary offscale supplement (one-quarter step) for two years

Year	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Current system at UC Davis with acceleration in time							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3	Assist 4		Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$66,100	\$66,100	\$69,500	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$247,200	\$313,300	\$382,800	\$452,300
Proposed Step Plus system at UC Davis							
Rank/Step	Assist 2		Assist 3		Assis 4.5	Assoc 1	
Annual Base Salary	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$62,500	\$67,750	\$69,500	\$69,500
Supplement					\$900	\$900	
Total above	\$59,300	\$59,300	\$62,500	\$62,500	\$68,650	\$70,400	\$69,500
Cumulative Salary	\$59,300	\$118,600	\$181,100	\$243,600	\$312,250	\$382,650	\$452,150

Conclusions:

1. About 20 – 30% of personnel actions are now “accelerations in time.” By instead reviewing these actions on a normative schedule (every 2 or 3 years), there will be a significant savings in time for faculty, staff and administrators.
2. The use of the *temporary offscale* for merit advancement of more than one step means that these cases are not penalized financially from waiting.
3. By allowing *every* action to be considered for more than one merit step, the Step Plus proposal achieves greater equity for individuals who may not be as aggressive under the current system in bringing forward their cases early.

4. The *rate of advancement* for faculty under the Step Plus proposal should be at least as rapid as in our current system, provided that *1.5 step merit* is viewed by faculty as requiring substantially the same record as a *well-justified one-year acceleration* under our current system.

Next Steps:

Joint Senate-Administration Step-Plus Policies and Practices workgroup

Writing of UCD document on campus-wide expectations for actions greater than one step

Other committees