Recruiting and launching new faculty members

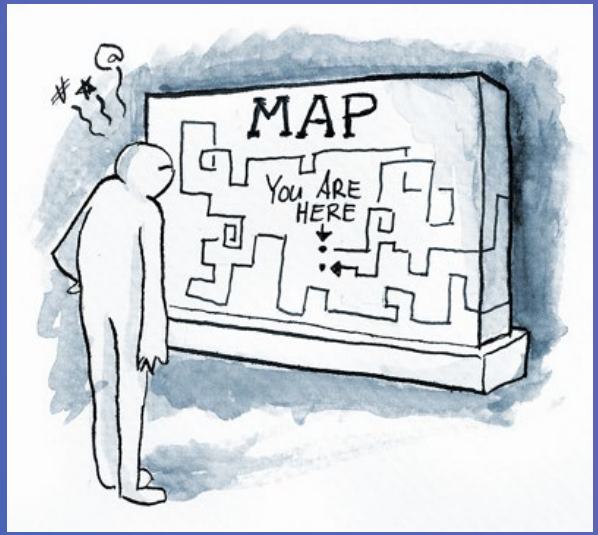
Philip Kass
Vice Provost - Academic Affairs

September 14-15, 2026

UCDAVIS

Roadmap

- **The UC imperative for the very best faculty hires**
- **Challenges to diversifying our faculty**
  - Structural barriers
  - Implicit biases
- **The search plan and Recruitment Committee**
- **The interview - preparation and execution**
- **Negotiation**
- **Welcoming and integration**
- **Sustaining the launch**



How can faculty help UC Davis?

- Attract students, researchers and staff from a larger, more competitive population base
- Build a more vibrant campus culture
- Make the campus more relevant to, and engaged with, under-served communities
- Increase competitiveness for extramural funding
- “Cognitive heterogeneity” can increase innovation and problem-solving capacity

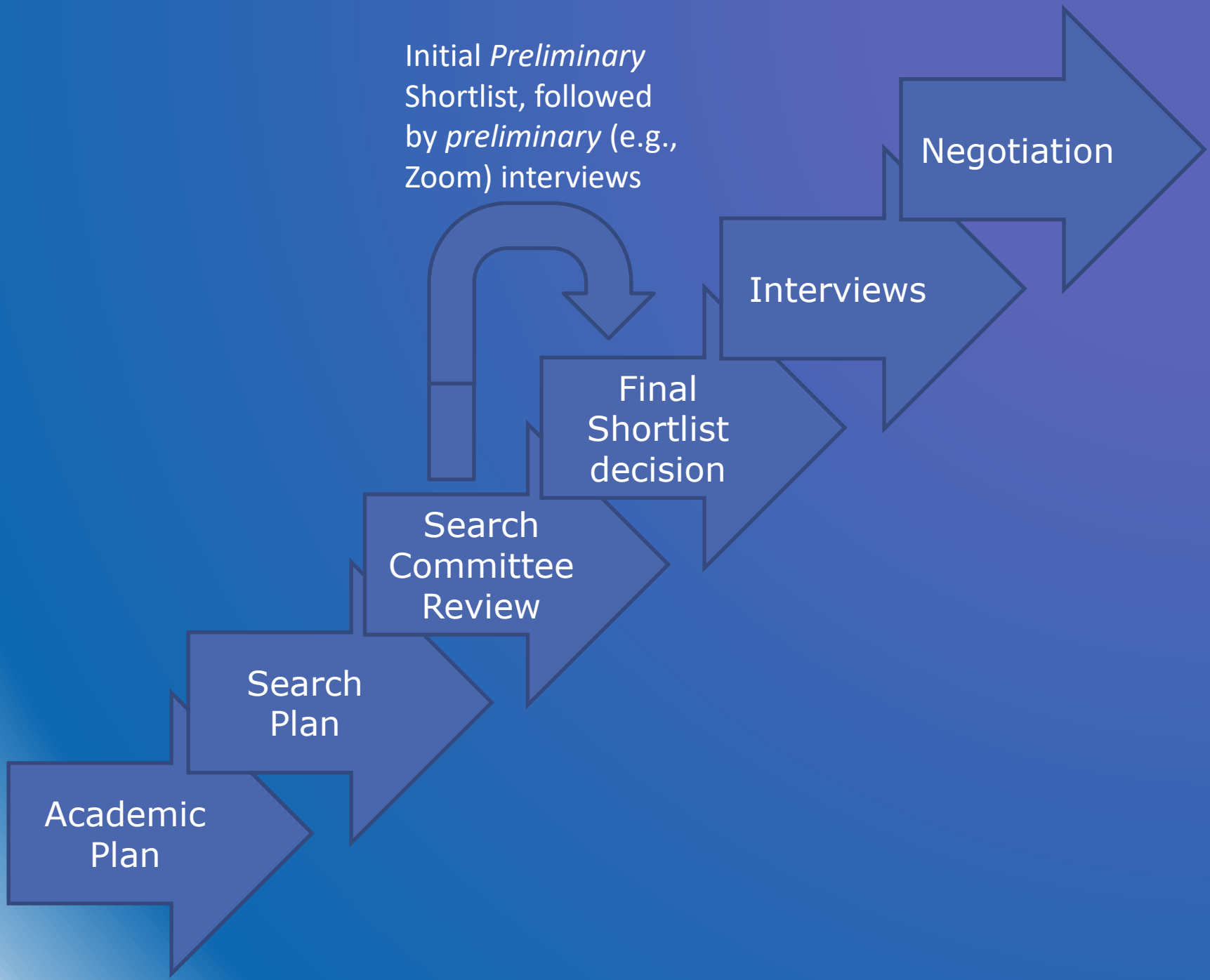
Structural influences that lead to "leaky pipelines" in our applicant pools

- Geographic and family constraints
  - Dual-career couple conflicts
  - Regional constraints for people wanting to be closer to family
  - Time schedule of tenure track coincides with childbearing years
- Reliance on traditional "pool-building" strategies
  - Traditional advertisement text, traditional advertisement outlets
  - Personal networks are insufficient and tend to reinforce homogeneity
- "Image problem" of academia, especially in STEM disciplines
  - Seen as incompatible with family commitments (e.g., Sears 2003)
  - Department climate seen as chilly, competitive and non-collaborative (Ong et al. 2011)
- Attractiveness of non-academic sector that is hiring PhDs
  - Career track flexibility, competitive $$$ pay, team-oriented collaborative work, consistency of resources and support

Structural geographic and family constraints

- **Implications for applicant pool and applicant attributes**
  - Academic applicants sometimes have academic partners
    - They may limit their employment search to specific regions
    - They are more likely to have a series of post-doctoral or non-traditional positions (to accommodate two careers)

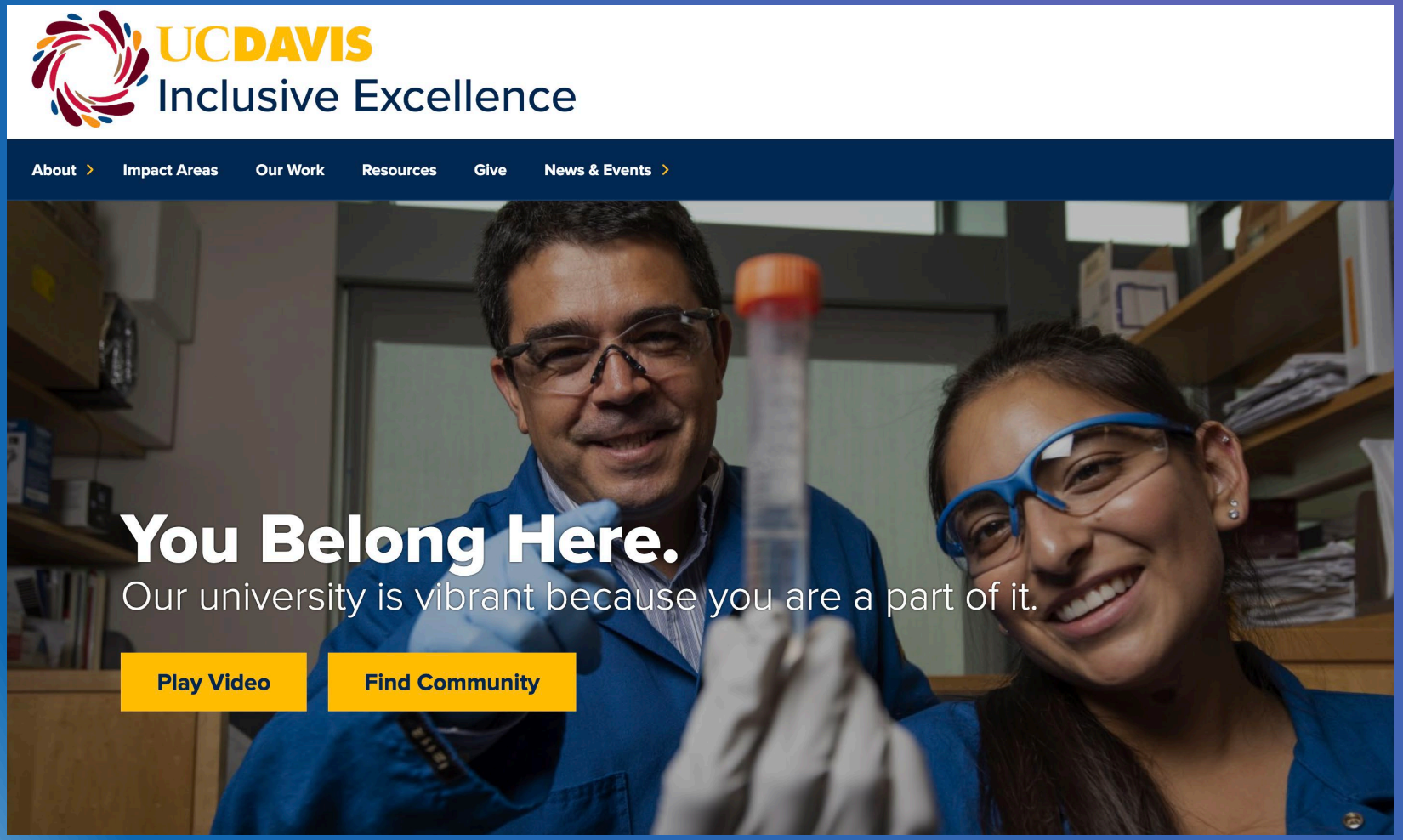
- **Implications for hiring**
  - Hiring new faculty often entails dual-career hires; negotiations may be more complicated, require more resources, and represent a larger investment – but it's worth the effort
  - Reliance on established networks is not sufficient
  - Valuation of recommendation based on the "reputation" of the referee or his/her institution may perpetuate inequities


Initial *Preliminary* Shortlist, followed by *preliminary* (e.g., Zoom) interviews
Academic Plan
Search Plan
Search Committee Review
Final Shortlist decision
Interviews
Negotiation

Hiring incentives can stretch your resources

- **Former and current UC President's / Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellows**
  - Are chosen from a large nationwide pool by a UC-wide faculty committee
  - Recruitment can be waived via an approved search waiver as a Target of Excellence
  - Hiring incentive: $85,000 / yr for 5 years (+ $15,000 / yr for 5 yrs)

- **UC Davis ADVANCE CAMPOS and CAMPSSAH Programs**
  - Nominated from among very top candidates recruited
  - Selected as Faculty Scholars based on commitment to student success and engagement with under-served communities
  - Hiring incentive: $100,000 / year for 5 yrs

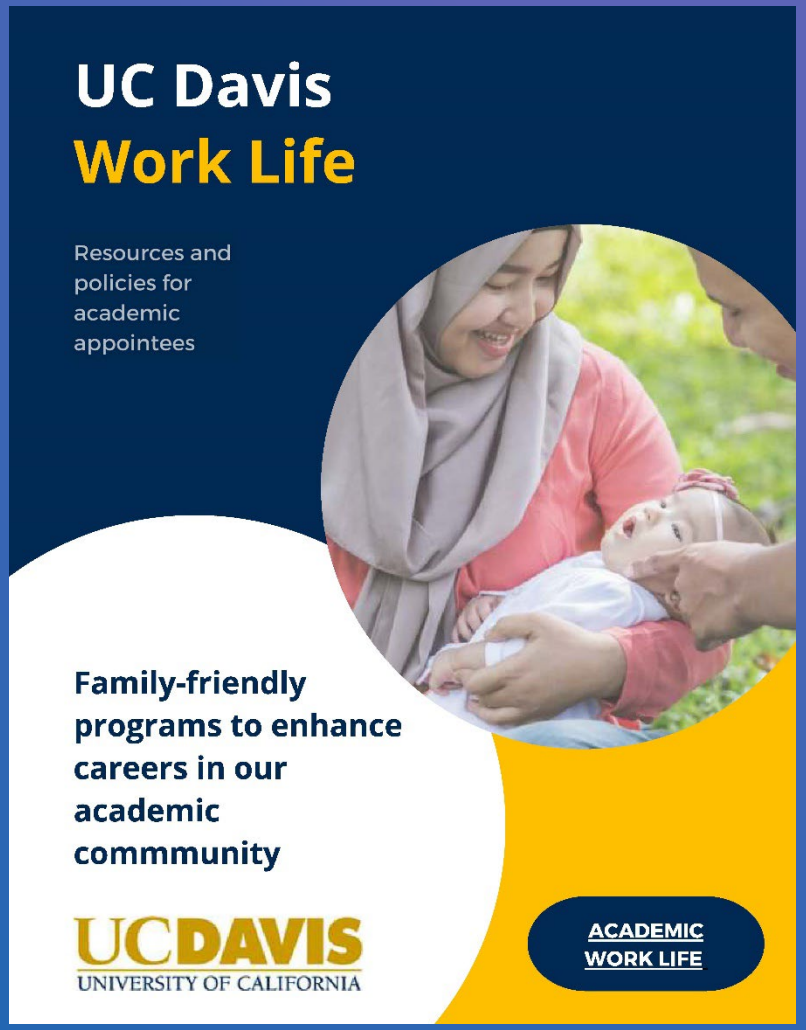


https://excellence.ucdavis.edu/

How position announcements can indicate a commitment to faculty success

Make sure that the announcement stresses UC Davis' work-life flexibility and family-friendly policies

https://aadocs.ucdavis.edu/programs/work-life-resources/work-life-for-academics-090622.pdf

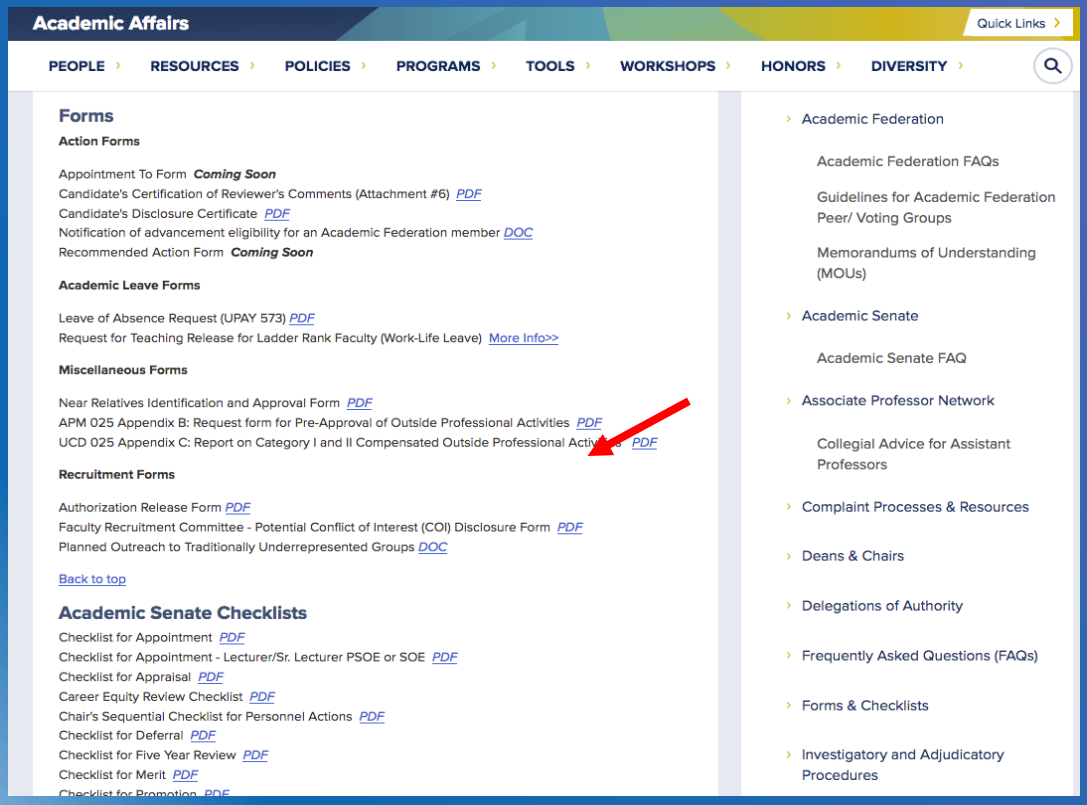


The Search Committee *makes a difference*

- All search committee members are now required to have ADVANCE STEAD (i.e., Strength Through Equity and Diversity) certification, to be recertified once every 4 years
- HOWEVER – STEAD training will not be offered in 2026-27 – see the Annual Call for updated eligibility for faculty
- To change ingrained patterns, consider members from outside the department
- Including graduate students on committees has been shown to enhance the committee, but the role of graduate students must be defined carefully
- Information about STEAD Workshops: https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/stead

Forms and Checklists

- Conflict of Interest Report– search committee must communicate about conflicts of interest with applicants
- Submitted with Shortlist Report in UC Recruit
- Academic Affairs weblinks: https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/forms-and-checklists and https://recruit.ucdavis.edu/analyst



Evaluating candidates – best practices

- **Encourage the use of *specific criteria* by which every candidate should be reviewed**
  - Overall, initial impressions are the most likely to be influenced by unconscious biases
  - Minimize the reliance on "prestige screening" based on past marquis institutions and reputation of mentors
  - Evaluate the content of letters, not just the letter-writers

- **If the pool is not deep enough, consider additional outreach**

- **In department meetings, discuss issues associated with structural and unconscious bias**
  - E.g., faculty should not be dismissive of career gaps or extended time as a graduate student or post-doc, as this biases evaluation against parents in their childbearing years and candidates with medical conditions or disabilities

California Proposition 209

Enacted by popular ballot in 1996, it effectively abolished affirmative action at California public educational institutions, et al.:

- **Section 31 is added to Article I of the California Constitution as follows:**

- **SEC. 31. (a) The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.**

How can this be done in practice?

- Do not make assumptions about individuals as a collective. What may be true of some individuals may not be true of all individuals sharing common protected characteristics.
- Do not consider racial or gender identity as a means of advancing the benefits of diversity at an educational institution.
- Do not consider racial or gender identity as a means of redressing long-standing inequities that people with protected characteristics have collectively experienced.

How can this be done in practice?

- Do not ask for someone's ethnic or gender identity (or any other protected characteristics) for use in hiring or admission, and if it is provided, do not treat them preferentially.
- People, regardless of identity, have awareness, knowledge, commitment, and aspirations to contribute to educational excellence.
- But if someone's life experiences have contributed to the excellence cited above, then these experiences can be given consideration and value.

How can this be done in practice?

Instead, it is essential to focus on an individual faculty candidate's *own experiences* and understand how those have affected their *own* life through ways, such as:

- **Taking on leadership roles**
- **Surmounting adversarial challenges and institutional barriers with courage**
- **Being affected by environmental challenges**
- **Developing independence and coping skills at a younger than expected age or career stage**
- **Demonstrating personal qualities and commitments that will contribute to the institute's mission (e.g., in UC's case, as a public land-grant university)**

How can this be done in practice?

Action/Aspirations/Awareness/Experience/Expertise

- **What do they *understand* about the issues of people from disadvantaged backgrounds?**
- **What *actions* have they undertaken to elevate the importance of these issues to others?**
- **What have they *done* to disseminate their knowledge, discovery, and research to a broader audience?**
- **What have their *own* personal experiences been that have made them who *they* are today?**
- **What do they *aspire to do* to make their own impact on society?**

How can this be done in practice?

- To be sure – asking about these qualities *absolutely does not imply* that there is some kind of political "litmus test" being surreptitiously administered, or that there are correct or incorrect boxes to check off.
- Admissions and faculty hiring is apolitical and neutral, meaning that these qualities and commitments at a university or college *transcend* one's (unknown) political beliefs, which are irrelevant.
- Focus instead on what can be done with your allies, while always being mindful of what legally cannot.

How can this be done in practice for faculty?

- Do you recognize and reward faculty for making outstanding contributions to inclusive excellence, opening up opportunities for students traditionally excluded etc.? You should: it's in APM 210.1.d.
- If you do – then there is no reason why you should not try to hire new faculty who want to do the same.

Department decision: Interview list

Before the faculty meeting

- Circulate search committee recommendations
- Decide, as a department, what the role of search committee members will be; will they vote?
- Walk the halls beforehand, making a special effort to listen to junior faculty members

At the faculty meeting

- Be ready to speak on behalf of quiet faculty members
- Make sure all votes (even “straw” votes) are confidential
- Be an agent for positive change

A Shortlist Report must be approved in UC Recruit by deans before candidates may be invited for interview

Department preparation for the interviews

- **Get faculty buy-in on space(s) and teaching for the new faculty member**
  - Adopt space formulae or written standards
  - Use your departmental space committee
- **Identify candidate's top teaching interests, and talk with faculty about ways to provide that opportunity**
- **Select a truly committed faculty host**
- **If the interviewee has an especially strong commitment to inclusive excellence, consider connecting with CAMPOS or CAMPSSAH to participate in interview**
- **Have UC Davis Work-Life, Capital Resource Network, and Partner Opportunity Program fliers on hand!**

Communicating with the candidate pre-interview

- Well in advance of the interview visit, give each candidate a clear description of seminar format, expectations, and the nature of the audience.
- Ask if there are any members of the UC Davis community with whom they'd like to meet.
- Ask whether there are special needs such as physical access or dietary restrictions. Utilize campus resources for accommodation needs.
- Plan ahead to enable connections with other members of that community at UC Davis (e.g. CAMPOS / CAMPSSAH)
  - Refer *all* candidates to the online UC Davis Work-Life brochures: https://aadocs.ucdavis.edu/programs/work-life-resources/work-life-for-academics-090622.pdf and https://aadocs.ucdavis.edu/programs/work-life-resource-card.pdf

The interview:
Family-friendly recruitment practice

- **For candidates who are single parents, or breast-feeding parents, to children < 2 years of age:**
  - Travel costs are provided for both the child and an additional person who can provide childcare assistance while the candidate is interviewing at UC Davis
  - Allows increase in accommodations costs, e.g., extra bed or crib added to the existing hotel reservation, up to $200.
  - Please note that these are taxable benefits (Form 1099)

- ***Candidates should not be asked if they qualify for this*! Instead, they should be told the practice exists and directed to your recruitment website, where you can have this language and provide the flyer as part of the recruitment materials.**

The interview: Legal dos and don’ts

During the visit and in interviews/talks, *it is unlawful* to ask candidates questions that may relate to protected categories such as:

- family status
- race
- religion
- national origin/citizenship
- age
- disability, etc.

In addition, it is unlawful to ask candidates what their salary is!

Interview and negotiation—
Selling UC Davis

- Davis is a friendly community in a region with access to a wide range of lifestyles, from urban to rural
- California is a socially and environmentally progressive state
- UC Davis has a culture that values collegiality and cross-disciplinary collaboration
- UC benefits are (still) among the best in the nation
- The UC merit/promotion peer review creates opportunity, transparency, and fairness
- UC Davis is proactive in addressing salary equity
- Strong Work Life Program for academics
- UC Davis is very proactive in hiring professional couples

➔ Give every candidate the Work-Life, POP, and CRN brochures and fliers!

Post-interview negotiation

- If any top candidate is from another UC campus, you **must** consult with your dean's office before negotiating salary because there are policy considerations that apply (See APM 500 and APM 510).
- A search report needs to be approved before any offer can be made.
- Typically, UC Davis may match a competing salary offer from a comparable institution – but match by using off-scale salary, not by increasing step.
  - Dean can authorize up to $4,000 above college/school average off-scale; VPAA approves if higher.
- Please work with your Dean's office on TOLs; start-up costs exceeding $1 million must be approved by the Provost.

Post-interview negotiation

- Communicate with Dean right away if start-up estimate looks to be insufficient
  - Be creative– consider shared resources, department share, spreading investment over time
  - If a reference check needs to be done, it may occur concurrently with the negotiation of the terms in the Tentative Offer Letter (TOL), or after the TOL has been issued, but definitely before the appointment process takes place
- In the Tentative Offer Letter (TOL), never “promise” appointment or a particular rank or step
  - Rank and step cannot be negotiated
  - We have a formal approval process that takes time because it goes to CAP and VPAA
  - The TOL should make it very clear that the offer is not yet final

What if there is a partner???

- Obtain partner's resume or CV, and find out career preferences
- Treat the partner with great respect
- Inform your dean immediately, and strategize with dean about options if the partner is an academic (75% of partner hires)
- There is help for you!
  - The Partner Opportunities Program (POP) assists with placing partners into UC Davis positions. See: https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/partner-opportunities-program-pop
  - The Capital Resource Network (CRN) can assist during recruitment, community integration and high-level informational interviews for the partner around the Sacramento Region. See: https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/capital-resource-network

POP

- The UC Davis Partner Opportunities Program (POP) is a service designed to support departments and deans offices in the recruitment and retention of outstanding eligible faculty, senior administrators and leadership positions by assisting their partners and spouses in seeking employment at UC Davis.
- POP is a nationally recognized dual career support program. Ranked #4 (out of 187 R1 Universities) in the 2024 "Partner Hire Scorecard Report".

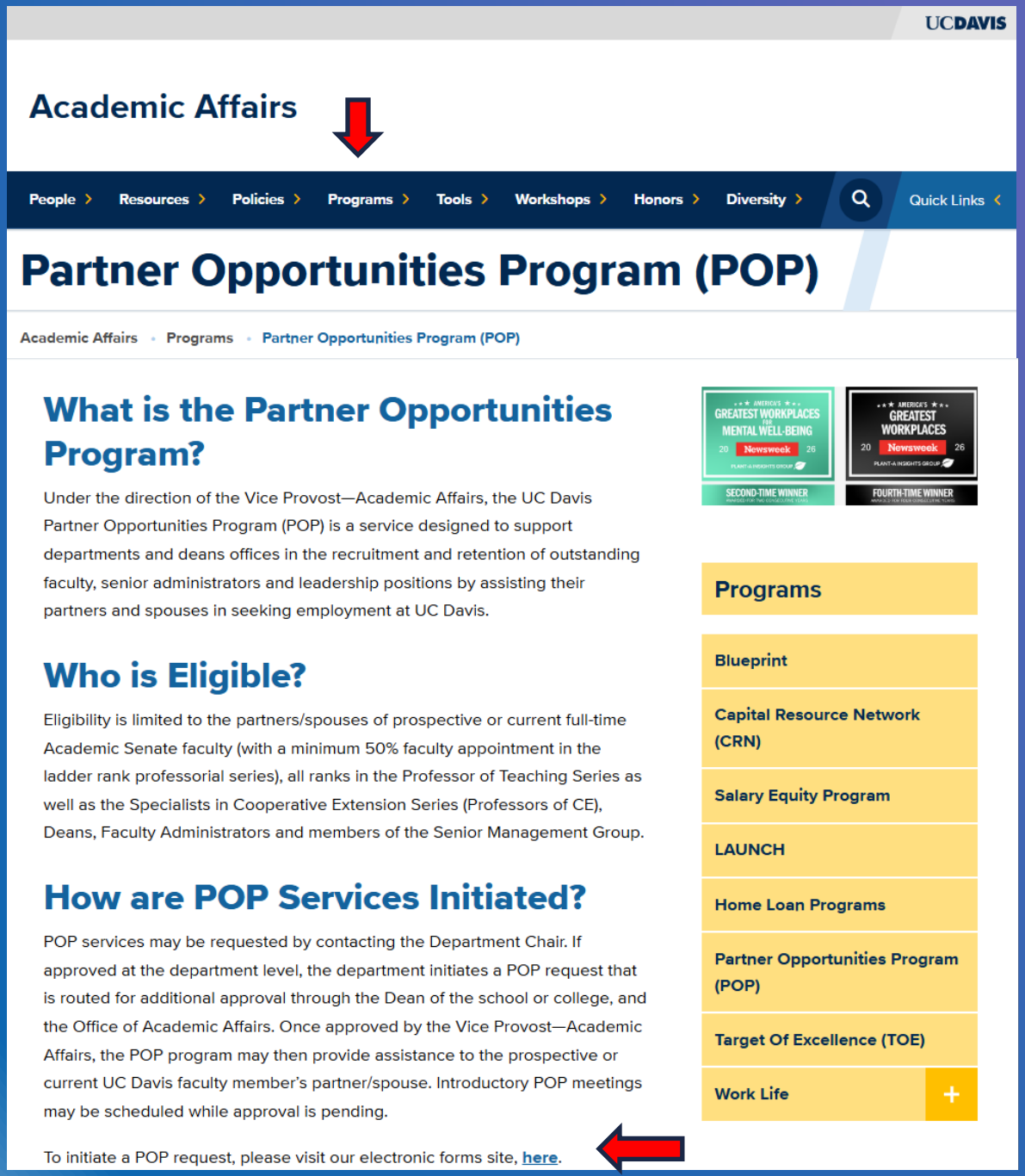
Program Benefits:

- Positive POP client engagement increases likelihood of the recruitment candidate's acceptance or retention of a valued faculty member.
- Shared salary support of an incredibly skilled and capable individual for a fraction of the cost. Funding parties typically include:
  - POP originating unit (dept./deans office of recruitment/retention effort).
  - POP placement unit (dept/deans office/administrative unit)
  - Provost
- Opportunity to gain a Waiver of Recruitment (WOR) as Partner Hires are one of the acceptable reasons for a waiver, based on Academic Senate review.

Reminders:

- Faculty placements will require a Dean-to-Dean conversation regarding FTE availability.
- POP is very successful, with an 85% avg placement rate – but cannot guarantee employment. Please be thoughtful not to make promises.

More information (such as eligibility criteria ext.) can be found on the POP webpage located on the AA website under “Programs”



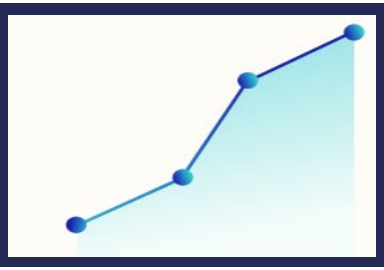
POP requests can be made here, which takes you to our AA Electronic Form Submission Tool

The Capital Resource Network Effect

est. 2014 @UC DAVIS

- CAREER
- COMMUNITY
- CONNECTIONS

Tipping the balance of your recruitments in favor of UC Davis, especially in competitive recruitments where candidates might be entertaining multiple offers!



1,400	30%	96%
New Employees Served	Program Growth in Past 3 Years	Of Candidates Said CRN Support was 'Priceless' or 'Very Valuable' and influenced their decision to accept an offer.

Linda Assadian, Director of CRN, llassadian@ucdavis.edu

“At CRN, BIG change starts with the power of small human actions.”

With Early Referral, On-The-Ground Knowledge, Increasing Employee Productivity, and Reducing Employee Turnover

Linda Assadian, Director of CRN, llassadian@ucdavis.edu

Getting a new Assistant Professor started

- Be very present during the settling-in
  - Visit the new office and/or lab space prior to the move – make sure it's ready for the move; if it isn't, establish alternate setting
  - Check on status of home hunt, settling in; maybe a dinner invitation with peers at your home
- Facilitate mentoring and networking interactions
  - Department member advocate / outside contacts
- Explain expected standards, and the schedule of reviews, appraisal, tenure (including the clock extension option)… develop a Plan for Progress together
- For the first teaching experience, consider pairing with a more seasoned instructor
- Check in frequently, encourage outside-of-department networking

Getting a new tenured professor started

- Visit the new office and/or lab space
- Check on status of house hunt, etc.
- Mentoring is still important for Associate Professors
  - Talk about schedule of merit reviews, *and expectations for the next promotion*
  - Associate Professors, especially, can struggle with service load, lack of mentoring, and expectations for promotion to Full Professor
    - NFCDD – consider sponsoring Faculty Success Program enrollment
    - Associate Professor bag lunches
- Full Professors-- consider mentoring for leadership positions
  - Use their experience to identify better practices from prior institutions
  - Explain high-level merit expectations (P6, Above Scale)!

Department of Population Health and Reproduction

Mentoring Plan

UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine

Faculty member being mentored:

Current rank and step:

Attendees:

Meeting called by:

Date of Meeting:

Research

Focus:	
Peer-reviews publications since last meeting:	Grants since last meeting:
Strengths and successes:	
Weaknesses and/or areas for improvement:	
Opportunities for growth:	
Action items:	Deadline:

Teaching

Major responsibilities:	
Quality of teaching evaluations:	Annual instructional contact hours:
Graduate student mentoring:	
Weaknesses and/or areas for improvement:	
Action items:	Deadline:

Professional competence and service

Focus:	
Notable presentations at meetings:	Reviewing activities:
Recognitions:	
Weaknesses and/or areas for improvement:	
Opportunities for growth:	
Action items:	Deadline:

University and public service

Major School responsibilities:	
Major University responsibilities	
Weaknesses and/or areas for improvement:	
Action items:	Deadline:

Boosting the trajectory towards excellence

- Monitor the faculty member's progress– grants, publications or other creative works, teaching issues, service
  - Encourage faculty to curate an online academic profile– e.g. *Google Scholar Citations, Research Gate*
  - Funding issues– consider a pre-review set of faculty advisors
  - Make sure that service load is not limiting other activities
    - Volunteer to be the "bad guy" for junior faculty
    - Be cognizant of and document the greater service and mentoring pressures experienced by people from disadvantaged backgrounds
  - Teaching issues– Center for Educational Excellence has superb programming!
- Be proactive in nominating deserving faculty for awards and honors
- Gather data that will make the case for Step Plus advancements 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 steps

Enabling work-life balance

- Assistant Professors – often building families and relationships, while also building career towards tenure
- Associate Professors – many have children at home, while also coping with eldercare issues
- Full Professor – eldercare and health issues predominate
- Share information about the Faculty Parent Support Group, https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/faculty-support-group-new-parents
- For faculty in all of these stages, career and scheduling flexibility is extremely important!

Enabling work-life balance

- Please avoid scheduling faculty meetings and events before 9am or after 4 pm
- Know and encourage the use of UC Davis Work-Life policies
  - Extending the tenure clock: childbirth, adoption, family illness, lab issues
  - Work-Life postponements of merit/promotion actions
- Be on the look-out for family-status bias
- Faculty with rich family lives are critical role models for students

Retaining our valuable faculty members

- Be a leader in building a supportive and inclusive department climate
- Do not allow senior faculty to overwhelm or intimidate junior faculty
- Be proactive in merits and promotions, award nominations
- Be cognizant of salary compression/inversion, which can be very demoralizing and motivate faculty to seek outside offers -- and work with dean to identify candidates for equity off-scales and other preemptive incentives to avoid losing them or having to provide expensive retention packages
- Set the tone for your department as one that values and maximizes opportunity for *all*

Discussion