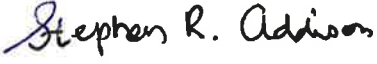




Memorandum

TO: Dr. Taine Duncan and members of the UCA Faculty Senate

FROM: Stephen R. Addison, Dean 
College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

SUBJECT: Approval to Search and Fill Permanent Lecturer Line in Biology

DATE: November 7, 2017

The College of Natural Sciences has grown over the last five years and has an important, ongoing need to increase both tenure-track research-active faculty and non-tenure-track teaching-intensive permanent faculty. In particular, the Biology department serves almost 800 majors, but as detailed below in any given year about two-thirds of the students taught by the department are not departmental majors. This teaching load requires a balance between research-active faculty and teaching-intensive faculty. Research-active faculty tend to teach courses for departmental majors and provide research mentoring. Teaching-intensive faculty tend to teach large introductory courses for non-majors and service classes for students majoring in the Colleges of Education and Health and Behavioral Sciences. The service courses in particular involve lots of interaction with students – in fact, the faculty almost always have students in their offices when they are not actively teaching in the classroom or laboratory. Teaching-intensive faculty are usually lecturers that are well integrated into the department, advance through the lecturer ranks, and provide excellent instruction – two lecturers from Biology have been recipients of UCA's Teaching Excellence Award in recent years. Many of the current lecturers have doctoral degrees and while some of them do modest amounts of research they prefer to be active teachers and they enrich the department while serving in this role. Thus my request is for a teaching-intensive faculty member who will be hired as a lecturer.

The department is currently searching for a tenure-track plant physiologist, and in addition will regain a tenured faculty member when Dr. Runge returns to the classroom in January. However, the department needs all these lines and more. Demand for CNSM classes has grown considerably over the last five years and the department has been using multiple adjuncts and visitors to meet this demand. Students are better served by potentially permanent faculty. To underline the need for additional faculty, I will review how CNSM enrollments have changed as a

fraction of total enrollment. In fall 2012, the university produced 127,069 student semester credit hours (SSCH) at the undergraduate level, with 27,127 (21.4%) in CNSM. By fall 2016 undergraduate SSCH at UCA had declined slightly to 126,050, however, in the same time period the SSCH production in CNSM had increased from 27,127 to 32,801 (CNSM undergraduate enrollments were 26.0% of UCA's undergraduate SSCH). When graduate and high school concurrent enrollments are included the College's share of SSCH production grew from 20.6% in fall 2012 to 24.2% in fall 2016. This growth has been due to an increase in CNSM majors and in College of Health and Behavioral Science (CHBS) majors. We are adding adjuncts every semester to enable us to offer a sufficient number of general education and service sections in all departments except Geography. Between fall 2012 and fall 2016 the number of CNSM undergraduate majors increased from 1,093 to 1,539 while graduate majors increased from 70 to 106. Programs currently in the development and/or approval process are expected to further increase these numbers in particular, curricular changes being planned in the departments of Nursing and Psychology are expected to further increase the already high pressure on biology and other CNSM classes. The enrollments show that CNSM needs to add faculty, and the growth in different areas requires that research-intensive and teaching-intensive faculty need to be part of this mix.

Now, I will examine the situation in Biology. The department requested, and was approved a tenure-track and a non-tenure-track position. Over the last several years, there have been large enrollment pressures in service courses for the UCA lower-division Core, as well as service courses that support the programs of the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences, and the College of Education. Last year, service courses accounted for 91% of the total SSCH (Student Semester Credit Hours) and 66% of all students taught by the department. These needs have been met in part by an ever-changing cast of visiting faculty. This enrollment pressure is not going away, it will continue into the future because the programs causing the pressure have healthy and growing enrollments.

The Biology Department's recently completed external review (the ADHE 10-year review) acknowledged this enrollment pressure. The reviewers recommendation was to add permanent lecturers to continue "to cover the introductory and support courses followed by addition of tenure-track faculty" to support the growing Biology major. The department has a similar vision to add tenure-track faculty to support the major after addressing the enrollment pressure in its support courses which is currently a large problem. The teaching responsibilities of this lecturer position will be in courses for the UCA lower division Core, the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences, and the College of Education. The anticipated student contact for this position is anticipated to be around 160 students/semester. Using tenure-track faculty in this role is not practical or desirable as the required teaching and student support would leave little or no time for scholarly work. Indeed, the course content of the intended courses has been long settled, and, of necessity, requires much memorization. Our lecturers do a good job of making this content interesting and applicable for students, but it is not content that tenure-track faculty who are active

researchers are competing to teach. In fact, graduate students planning research careers are not going into these areas, as there is little or no research funding available. However, the content is still necessary to prepare students who plan careers in allied health fields.

Thus, my support for a non-tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Biology is for the necessary role that the faculty member will play in the department. Faculty teaching introductory classes are not expected to function as disciplinary researchers. The department is in need of a teaching intensive position to complement their tenured and tenure-track teacher/researcher faculty. In the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics lecturers are valued members of our departments and they play a role that is an integral part of our operations. Non-tenure-track faculty are vital to the ongoing quality of our programs. It is important that we fill these positions with potentially permanent faculty rather than using multiple full-time contingent faculty for several years. The quality of these contingent faculty varies, as does the strength of their commitment to their positions. Our students suffer from instructors who teach for a year or a semester, and then go onto to potentially permanent positions elsewhere. Our students will benefit from the stability of potentially permanent faculty. We expect our lecturers to be scholarly, but we expect that scholarship to focus on teaching.

So in summary, the departmental need is for a faculty member who will be wholly focused on providing excellent instruction in introductory courses. Course enrollments in such courses are driven by the needs of other departments, but the demand continues to grow. Thus I request support to add a non-tenure-track position to the Department of Biology. Please let me know if you require any additional information.