

**AAC Meeting Minutes**  
**Academic Assembly Council Meeting – August 7, 2025**

**Present (via Zoom):** Chris Greer, Mark Bolda, Mohammad Yaghmour, Hope Zabronsky, Krista Marshall, Daniela Bruno, Julie Finzel, Steven Worker, Joy Hollingsworth, Whitney Brim-DeForest, Annemiek Schilder, Kristen Shive, and Rubia Branco-Lopes,

**- Committee Reports**

**Kristen: will coordinate to meet with new UC Davis specialists**

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE (Daniela Bruno):**

The AAC travel awards increased by \$100 (total \$750), but the final budget has not yet been approved. Last year, there were 92 applications and 31 reimbursements, with the number of applicants increasing over the years. The October–December 2025 call is now open. The committee will revise the survey to clarify that academics are eligible for one meeting approval per fiscal year. It was also discussed that any academic title paid by UC ANR should be eligible for this travel award. In addition, any remaining unallocated funds, prior to expiration, could be made available to all applicants.

**MULTIPLE ACADEMIC TITLES REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE (Annemiek Schilder):**

Two new members have joined, with one vacancy remaining. Daniel Obrist met with specialists and project scientists, who expressed interest in having greater representation. They also raised concern about disparities in career advancement opportunities between on-campus and off-campus specialists.

**RULES & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Julie Finzel):**

In June, the Committee distributed a survey to facilitate voting for new AAC representatives. Whitney Brim-DeForest was elected as the next AAC President-Elect. All committees are filled.

**WELFARE & BENEFITS COMMITTEE (Steven Worker and Joy Hollingsworth):**

Two new members have joined the committee. Two webinars were held: (1) how to conduct consulting and related policy changes in April, and (2) sabbatical in July. Recordings have been made but are not yet available. The committee also conducted a survey to identify topics for future webinars. Recently, there have been no responses to the exit survey; results from previous years will be shared with leadership soon.

**ACADEMIC COORDINATOR REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE (Hope Zabronsky and Krista Marshall):**

New co-chairs have been appointed. The AC survey is ready, uploaded into Qualtrics, and will be distributed soon. Survey key areas include: i) AC needs for onboarding/orientation, ii) access to and use of professional development funds, iii) impacts on professional development and career choices from soft-funded positions, and iv) details of their position description. During the recent Academic Coordinators meeting, feedback was received on merit and promotions.

Proposed changes to the E-book are concerning. The committee is also considering developing an orientation curriculum for ACs.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (Mark Bolda):**

Updates to the E-book include significant changes for Academic Coordinators, guidance for academics to consider including a statement of special circumstances (e.g., grant suspension), and statement of honesty. AI may not be used for writing dossiers. New training is coming. The E-book serves three purposes: (1) describe the review process, (2) guide dossier writing, and (3) outline performance expectations.

**ADVISOR REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE (Mohammad Yaghmour):**

New chair and one new member. The current survey, which collects advisor issues, concerns, and suggested solutions for presentation to the AAC, is open until 08/14/25. The committee is considering changing the survey frequency from quarterly to biannual. They are working on solutions for issues and writing responses to questions that already have answers. Discussion of previous survey results (IT, geographic salary, health insurance, hiring staff, training new advisors).

- **Communications and Engagement**

- Academic List: Chris Greer requested a list of academics from Daniel Obrist, expected by next month.
- New Specialists: New specialists are seeking more connection with other academics; ANR CE specialist presentations.
- Website: Chris Greer and Rubia Branco Lopes have edit access. Requests for updates should go to Rubia. She will create a Box repository for ACC meeting minutes, videos, and other files to be uploaded to the ACC website. She requested feedback on the AAC website.
- Blog: ACC committees will use the blog to share announcements.
- Early Career ANR Academic Committee: New committee to address the needs of new academics. Chris Greer will draft member responsibilities for ACC review. The committee will have multiple academics, selected by nomination.

- **Committees**

- Chair Term Length and Continuity: Discussion on extending chair terms from 3 to 6 years to improve stability. Comments: No, long-term may be difficult for those in soft-funded positions, too long. Suggested solutions: use co-chairs or have the past chair remain for one year as a member.
- Non-Participating Members: Appointed and elected councilors can vote to remove members who are not contributing, but a warning will be sent first outlining participation expectations.

- **Next meeting:**

- The proposed by-law modifications will be shared for feedback and voted on at the next meeting.

## **Brent Hales - Associate Vice President - Research and Cooperative Extension**

- **Program Areas**

UC ANR now has six thematic **Program Areas (PAs)**, each led by a Chair who serves on the Program Council. PA Chairs are appointed for a three-year term by the Associate Vice President for Research and Extension to provide leadership to Program Team (PT) leaders, represent their area on the Council, and guide program priorities.

- **Program Teams**

Each **Program Team** is co-chaired by one field-based and one campus-based academic. Brent Hales reinforced the importance of: coordinating workgroups, prioritizing academic position proposals, holding PT annual meetings. PT Leaders should also stay current with their responsibilities, such as organizing regular and annual meetings, completing the annual PT report, and fulfilling other duties.

- **E-book “Statement of Honesty”:**

Brent clarified that this is a UC system-wide policy, also he mentioned that it happened that individuals taking credit for undocumented work and plagiarism.

- MOU with UC Berkley signed

- **SNAP-Ed Funding:**

Federal funding for SNAP-Ed will be eliminated after the current federal fiscal year, ending Sept. 30, 2025. UC ANR leaders have committed to retaining impacted employees on payroll with benefits through Nov. 30, 2025. Potential USDA approval for use of carryforward funds beyond Oct. 1

- **Science-to-Practice (S2P) Grant Program:** a new request for proposals will be announced soon.