



Date: September 2, 2020

To: Talia Bettcher, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Heidi Riggio, Chair
Faculty Policy Committee

Copies: J. Lazo-Uy, R. Roquemore, V. Salcido, K. Franklin

Subject: **Optional Peer Observations of Instruction for the 2020-2021 AY**

At its meeting of August 31, 2020, the Faculty Policy Committee (FPC) considered the issue of Peer Observations of Instruction of faculty at Cal State LA for the 2020-2021 academic year. Peer observations are not required for Evaluation in the Contract (CBA, Article 15). With the COVID-19 pandemic and the Cal State LA campus closed, nearly all instruction during Fall 2020 (and possibly for Spring 2021) is occurring either virtually (classes meeting by Zoom or other method), asynchronously (in fully online courses with no class meetings), or some combination thereof. With no clear University policy on evaluation of asynchronous courses, no requirements for any kind of training for teaching using Zoom, lack of faculty familiarity with virtual teaching (including technology), the fact that most faculty are teaching from home (with concomitant family concerns and interruptions), and the anxieties and concerns everyone is experiencing because of the pandemic, FPC voted on August 31, 2020 to recommend that Peer Observations of Instruction be made optional for the 2020-2021 academic year. Peer observation evaluations would thus not be required for RTP processes during 2020-2021, but faculty members may request an observation and decide on the inclusion of any evaluation report in the Personnel Action File (PAF). If peer observations of virtual teaching are conducted, they should follow the existing policy on Peer Observations of Instruction. If asynchronous teaching is evaluated, Departments may develop their own criteria for such evaluation. All peer observations must consider the disruptive, ongoing negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty working conditions in any resulting evaluation reports. The absence of a Peer Observation evaluation report from a review period ending in or involving AY 2020-21 shall not be relevant to evaluation of any faculty member in any RTP process.