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August 22, 2017

Ertugrul Taciroglu
Chair,
Undergraduate Council

Dear Professor Taciroglu

I have read with interest your email today August 22nd 2017 in which you suggest that UCLA do more mentoring of undergraduates. We can all agree that mentoring is a good thing, and the more, the better.

However, you point out that non-ladder faculty are doing "an increasing amount of undergraduate instruction," and that this situation makes it "essential" that undergraduates are ensured "access to ladder faculty." Since your discussion is framed in terms of "promoting excellence and innovation in teaching and education," I can't help feeling, as a lecturer, that somehow the many hours of mentoring that I and my non-senate faculty colleagues do as a matter of course in our teaching are discounted as not on a par with mentoring that might be performed by senate faculty.

Note that we lecturers don't need a "program" sponsored by any administrative entity to encourage us to mentor undergraduates. We do this because, unlike most senate faculty who are hired to do research, we are hired to teach. And in my pedagogy, mentoring and teaching cannot be easily separated. I would like to think that senate faculty will see the benefit and the wisdom, and ultimately the joy, in mentoring young people. However, I and many of my colleagues upon reading your memo, resent your implying that because lecturers are teaching an increasing number of undergraduate courses, that professors need to step in to "ensure faculty-student contact," as though we lecturers are not faculty, and that our contact with students is somehow less worthy.



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I'm honestly not sure whether your slight toward non-senate faculty was intentional or made simply out of not knowing any better. But it is a slight nonetheless, and ought to be corrected.

Sincerely,

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cc: Undergraduate Council