

## **ACAS Report to Academic Council May 26, 2021**

The work of the Advisory Committee on Academic Staffing (ACAS) was affected by the pandemic both this academic year and in 2019-20. This report revisits the work of the 2019-20 ACAS committee in order to provide background for the work of the committee this academic year.

In 2019-20, ACAS received and reviewed 15 hiring requests for tenure-track positions. Even though a hiring freeze was announced on April 12, 2020, the committee completed its deliberations and identified four highly-ranked requests which came from the following departments/programs: (1) Political Science; (2) Economics; (3) Cinema and Media Studies (CAMS); and (4) Physics. Last year's report to Academic Council summarized reasons for why these proposals were especially compelling. Nonetheless, as was noted, all 15 proposals described potentially valuable tenure-track positions.

The Political Science Department was authorized to run a search in 2020-21 due to pressing curricular needs, leave patterns, and the availability of faculty to constitute a search committee. The CAMS program also had an urgent need, but their external visiting committee was postponed from Spring 2020 to Fall 2020 due to the pandemic. It seemed unwise to move forward with a hire into a small program without waiting for the report of the external committee. The Economics Department and the Physics Department were not authorized to conduct their searches in 2020-21.

With a hiring freeze in place this year—and with so much disruption from the pandemic—there was not a general call for tenure-track requests in 2020-21. Chairs were notified of this in November 2020 as part of the staffing memo for 2021-22 and were advised that they could submit a search request to their department dean “if a staffing shortage arises due to an unexpected resignation or retirement that will have significantly deleterious effects on the curriculum and that would be best met by a tenure-track hire.” One such request—from Biological Sciences—was received and shared with ACAS.

In Fall 2020, CAMS hosted its visiting committee and after receiving the visiting committee report, ACAS voted to recommend that CAMS be approved to search for a tenure-track hire in Spring 2021. The hiring process is in its final stages.

In January 2021, chairs who had submitted proposals in 2019-20 were invited to write a short update to their request if there were any substantial changes that members of ACAS should be aware of in the event that the hiring freeze were lifted this year. In addition to the proposals from Physics and Economics (ranked in the top tier in 2019-2020) and Biological Sciences, ACAS received updates to four additional proposals. In the spring semester, members of ACAS reviewed these seven proposals. The Computer Science Department removed their proposal from consideration when they felt they could not conduct a tenure-track search next year. After voting, the proposals ACAS members deemed most urgent were: (1) Biological Sciences, (2) Economics, and (3) Physics (listed in alphabetical order).

While we see these three proposals as most urgent, members of ACAS believe that other departments and programs have also made strong cases for tenure-track hires. ACAS plans to provide written comments for all 10 proposals that we did not recommend this year, and to invite chairs to meet with members of ACAS in Fall 2021 in preparation for submitting new proposals.

In summary, over the past two years, we, the faculty members of ACAS, have recommended tenure-track hires in the following departments and programs:

Biological Sciences  
Cinema and Media Studies (CAMS)  
Economics  
Physics  
Political Science

Voting members of ACAS, 2020-21

Hélène Bilis, French and Francophone Studies  
Elena Creef, Women's and Gender Studies, MRHR representative  
Nolan Flynn, Chemistry  
Simon Grote, History  
Koichi Hagimoto, Spanish  
Stella Kakavouli, Computer Science  
Maggie Keane, Psychology  
Patrick McEwan, Economics  
Ann Trenk (chair), Mathematics