

The Academic Federation was formed in 1969, early in the tenure of James Meyer as Chancellor of UC Davis (this version comes from Chancellor Vanderhoef as told to him by Chancellor Meyer). Shortly after becoming Chancellor, Dr. Meyer took an idea to the President of the University of California, Charles J. Hitch (1968-75), to establish constituent organizations for non-Senate academic personnel. Probably due to his exposure to non-Senate faculty in the college of A&ES, Meyer felt strongly that there should be a third category, one that separated off those staff who were more directly involved in the day-to-day primary academic activities of the university, especially non-tenured faculty who were very much involved in research and teachers who served as lecturers deserved a kind of special recognition. Hitch thought it was a very sensible and rationale idea and he gave Jim Meyer the go-ahead to try out the organization on the Davis campus. If it worked and was accepted it would then be proposed as a system-wide program. Shortly after the establishment of the Academic Staff Organization (name changed to Academic Federation in 1991) at UC Davis, a wave of fiscal difficulties affected the UC and President Hitch was replaced, and plans for implementing ASOs on all campuses were laid aside.

Over the years, Federation members have often wondered why the Regents did not provide for formal recognition of non-Senate faculty in the official structure of the university. It may very well be likely that in 1920 when the Standing Orders of the Regents formalized shared governance, or during their latest revisions in 1939 and 1969, when less than 2% of instruction was delivered by non-Senate personnel, the Regents did not foresee that by 2010 more than half of all instruction (and research funded in the hundreds of millions of dollars) would be conducted by highly educated people in titles that had not been invented yet.

Some assume that the Regents are limited in their ability to extend shared governance to the titles that existed at the time of the founding of the university. However, there is scant evidence that the Regents would have tied their own hands in the management of the University by limiting their consultation strictly to named titles in the Academic Senate and the Administration, or that they intended to strictly limit participation in the University's mission to only those entities that existed at a given point in history. The people who originally authorized the University, in the Constitution of the State of California (Article IX section 9), provided the Regents with broad discretion in executing their responsibilities, stating that "the Regents of the University of California. . . shall have all the powers necessary or convenient for the effective administration of its trust, including the power to . . . delegate to its committees or to the faculty of the University, or to others, such authority or functions as it may deem wise."

It is also not clear why some titles that are Senate members at many other universities, such as Librarians, Cooperative Extension faculty and Research Professors (called Professional Research series in the UC system) are not members here. However, it is clear that the Senate can determine their membership and have utilized that power to expel a title series. Growth in the Agriculture faculty and

Extension Service from 1914-1919 shifted the balance of power in the college at Berkeley. In 1919, when Farm Advisors were on the Berkeley campus for an Extension Service conference, their exercise of voting privileges affected the outcome of a campus vote. In 1920, Berkeley faculty voted to restrict Senate membership to faculty with formal teaching positions, eliminating Farm Advisors and AES scientists from Senate membership. It was in June 1920 that the Regents formalized the role of the Academic Senate in shared governance in the Standing Orders.

In 1928, the Regents granted AES scientists (now known as Agronomists) "equivalent rank status," making them eligible for tenure, sabbaticals, and automatic emeritus status. Only one other Federation title holds equivalent rank status, Supervisors of Physical Education, however, this status has also been requested recently for Specialists in Cooperative Extension.