Faculty Position Justifications
March 7, 2012

Allocation of positions at BYU is one of the most serious and long-term decisions that are made for the future well-being of the institution. While all positions are the stewardship of the academic vice president, chairs and deans are invited to justify the retention of positions in their areas when vacancies occur.

Colleges are encouraged to develop strategic, flexible, long-term hiring plans for replenishing empty or visiting faculty positions. These plans will be reviewed by the central administration in annual strategic resource planning. They should be based on factors such as the number of open FTEs, anticipated retirements, available hiring pools of exceptional candidates, specialized curriculum needs, seasonal hiring timelines, student enrollments and initiatives, faculty work-loads, scholarship emphases, department and college goals, and potential position reallocation needs within the college. Prime consideration should be given to assuring that filled positions will help colleges meet long-term improvement goals and initiatives. It is recommended that colleges revisit and adjust their planning documents regularly according to changing circumstances.

Under the direction of the college, departments should carefully consider projected, prioritized needs in their own strategic planning and work with the college in annual resource planning as they prepare to submit formal position vacancy requests for the upcoming academic year. Deans will discuss these projected hiring plans with the AVP Council in annual resource planning. In accordance with this annual strategic resource planning process, the AVP Council will consider position vacancy requests as they become available over the course of the year.

Guidelines for Writing Faculty Position Vacancy Justification Memos

As deemed applicable, here are some suggested items for your consideration that can be helpful in constructing department position vacancy justification memos that accompany Faculty Position Vacancy Forms.

1. Document the number of FTEs assigned to the unit using AMR data and provide information on current and projected vacancies for the upcoming academic year (including reasons why).

2. Provide data (quantitative and/or qualitative) on teaching loads and how this position has been used in the past to distribute teaching loads across the department in desirable ways.

3. Describe the projected teaching load for a new hire in this position.

4. Discuss specialized curriculum needs in the department and how this position will be used to meet those needs.

5. Document the number of majors and non-majors and the student demand for major and service courses for the past 10 years (e.g., enrollment trends).

6. Forecast projected enrollment trends for the foreseeable future. Discuss how hiring someone in this position will affect class sizes in lower and upper division courses, and meet graduate program needs where applicable.

7. Provide data (quantitative and/or qualitative) on research and creative work in the department and how retaining this position will help meet graduate curriculum needs, enhance research expertise in
ways that add to or complement department scholarship initiatives, and facilitate increased productivity of higher quality scholarship in the case of professorial faculty position requests.

8. If relevant, describe clinical or teaching needs that will be met in the case of professional faculty position requests.

9. Describe the potential hiring pool and the best time to pursue advertising and seasonal recruiting for this position. Consider whether the hiring pool is adequate to pursue the highest quality candidates now, or wait until the pipeline comes to better fruition.

10. Explain how this position will help shape the department and the college for the future in light of long-term hiring plans and improvement goals. Indicate whether this position will maintain department curriculum and scholarship/creative work objectives as currently constituted, enhance current initiatives, or move the department and college forward in new directions.