



Academic Senate

April 16, 2021

TO: Thomas Smith, Interim Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor
Daniel Jeske, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

FROM: Jason Stajich, Division Chair 

RE: **Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR**

Dear Tom and Dan:

The Executive Council reviewed the committee responses and discussed the proposal at its April 12th meeting. I write to provide Council's comments as well as those of the consulted committees.

As tasked committee responses ranged from supportive to concerned there was mixed support for this proposed change. The weight of the negative response really centers from the points made by the Committee on Academic Personnel which raised concern about the use of a range of files for calibration of expectations in a given year and the possibility that an Assistant Professor could get all positive reviews and never have their file reviewed by CAP until a 5th year appraisal. Council members were probably most concerned about this and not fully convinced that the reduced workload would be sufficiently worth the risk to have lack of input and evaluation by CAP. Though perhaps additional safeguards could be in place to ensure sufficient numbers of random files would still be selected for review even if they qualified for a Dean's final review or that other means would be possible. As noted, there are times when CAP indicates an additional off-scale or merit that is not recommended by the college or department review, and there were concerns this additional input would be lost.

The other concern raised was how the process of CAP review is a key aspect of shared governance. To remove this faculty review from the process could limit this joint participation in the process. Maintaining this principle weighed against the workload reduction was a key discussion point in Council's consideration of this proposal. There was not a consensus among the members on the proposal, but most members were willing to differ to the position taken by CAP in their memo.



COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

February 26, 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Yinsheng Wang, Chair *Yinsheng Wang*
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR

CAP discussed the VPAP's proposal on dean's final merit delegation. CAP recognizes the intention of the proposal to achieve cost savings and to enable more rapid decisions on faculty members' normal merit advances. CAP also appreciates the more detailed analysis provided by VPAP of the ways how other UC campuses handle similar situations and of the potential number of merit cases that might be affected by the proposed action. It is, however, not clear to CAP to what extent the proposed changes would solve the issues raised and whether the potential benefits would outweigh the pitfalls outlined below. Moreover, CAP would like to learn more about the results from VPAP's formal consultations about this issue with department chairs and deans.

CAP would like to reiterate the value of its review of merit and promotion files. Owing to concerns about confidentiality, privacy and fairness, CAP appears to be a mysterious committee about whose processes the campus knows little; nevertheless, CAP would like to note the importance of its role. In particular, CAP's review of merit and promotion files constitutes a very important component in the career advancement of faculty in the campus community and a key element of shared governance, where faculty peers, not administrators, are central to the assessment of faculty performance.

CAP is responsible for maintaining standards and equity for merit and promotion of faculty across the entire campus. To do so, CAP evaluates files that are grouped by similar action and recommendation for rank/step across all disciplines. This ensures a fair evaluation of evidence in a file based on consistent criteria and helps ensure equity across the campus.

When reviewing individual files, CAP evaluates substantive issues of academic life and research output based on observations of trends and/or recurring features. In that process, CAP tries to understand and takes into consideration different expectations in the three areas of review across various fields and departments. Research and creative activities can appear in various formats and mature at different rates. In some rapidly evolving fields, peer-reviewed journal publications may not carry as much weight as conference presentations, and the average time to publication may be much longer in some fields than others. Moreover, multi-disciplinary and collaborative research has become the norm in many fields, where a single research problem may require different technologies/approaches and involve multiple faculty members. Thus, it can be challenging to gauge an individual faculty member's contribution to research.

Evaluating normal on-time, one-step merit files is helpful to CAP in understanding the level of expectations for a given field and assists the committee in identifying whether a candidate's performance is above the bar. Such evaluations also allow CAP to better understand the expectations of engagement for different levels of the professoriate and to balance recommendations among files. By thus comparing peers from across the campus, CAP can elevate faculty beyond the recommendations of departments and deans.

Given CAP's contribution to the review process for merit and promotion files as explained above, the committee has noted some potential pitfalls of the proposed dean's final merit delegation that may need further consideration:

- 1) CAP reviews files within the boundaries set by the Call. The review of all files by CAP provides a wide purview of the entire campus; this allows for better fairness and consistency in merit/promotion reviews. Faculty in some departments may be more generous in supporting their colleagues than those in others, which may create inequality in merit advancement across different departments.
- 2) The analysis provided by the VPAP showed that ~approximately 8% of merit files with unanimous support at the department and college levels received negative recommendations by CAP. This result indicates that not a small number of cases will be impacted by the new policy.
- 3) There were multiple occasions where, after review, CAP recommended a higher step for merit advancement or additional off-scale for those files that received unanimous support for a normal merit at the department and dean levels. The proposed changes would eliminate the possibility of such recommendations.
- 4) Some CAP members felt that a delegation of final merit decision to the deans would erode the spirit of shared governance.
- 5) The majority of cases for normal, one-step merits involve Assistant Professors. With the new policy, these junior faculty members may not obtain (adequate) feedback from CAP before they submit their appraisal and tenure files.
- 6) Complications in merit and promotion files due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as the change of senior campus leadership (i.e., the appointment of the new provost) raise additional concerns.

While CAP is open to further discussing the changes outlined in VPAP's proposal, the committee would like to offer suggestions for consideration, more specifically about imposing some restrictions:

- 1) Restrict the new policy to those normal merit files that receive unanimously positive vote at the department level and have the dean's support. In addition, the file should have votes from at least 75% of eligible voting members in the department.
- 2) Limit those merit files involving merit advancement at or below the rank of Full Professor, Step V.
- 3) A large majority of CAP members suggest that, for those files meeting the requirements described in 1) and 2), we follow a process implemented at UC Irvine, where deans have final merit delegation for all regular merit advancements, and CAP reviews every other merit at or above the rank of Associate Professor. A small minority of CAP members, however, felt that this is not necessary.

CAP appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposal and looks forward to continued conversations with the administration before a decision has been made or any changes implemented.

April 1, 2021

TO: Jason Stajich, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Philip Brisk, Chair 
BCOE Executive Committee

RE: Proposal for a Dean's final Merit Delegation at UCR

Dear Jason,

The BCOE Executive Committee reviewed the Administration's Proposal for a Final Dean's Merit Delegation, as well as the response from CAP. The primary objective of the proposal was to reduce the workload of both CAP and the VPAP; CAP's response suggested that a reduction in workload was not a major priority. In response, the Executive Committee defers to CAP's judgment.

As it is not yet clear if this proposal will be implemented, the Committee would like to offer one specific opinion, and ask a few clarifying questions:

- The opinion arises from the fact that that many Departments on campus are contentious, and 100% agreement on any voting item will never be achieved; for this reason, the Committee expresses a preference for Alternative 2 (as outlined in the proposal), and suggests that CAP's expectation of a unanimous Departmental vote be relaxed accordingly.
- The first question is how this proposal correlates with the proposed transition of the VPAP role at UCR, which the Committee is reviewing concurrently? Under this proposal, the VPAP will review the disciplinary record of faculty members who are being evaluated for merit and promotion. It is unclear how this review will be carried out for a merit case whose final delegation rests with the Dean. If both proposals move forward, this issue will need to be reconciled.
- The second question is who writes the official letter to the candidate when the merit delegation rests with the Dean? Does the Dean write the letter on behalf of the upper administration? Or does the Dean communicate the decision to the VPAP or Provost, who would then write the letter.

1 April 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Theodore Garland, Jr., Chair, Executive Committee
College of Natural and Agricultural Science

Re: Campus Review: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at
UCR
and
CAPS response to Senate re Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit
Delegation at UCR

Committee members said that overall the CAP's response was thoughtful, but most agreed with the CAP minority statements about implementation of restrictions 1 and 2 on page 2 of the CAP response to the Senate:

“While CAP is open to further discussing the changes outlined in VPAP’s proposal, the committee would like to offer suggestions for consideration, more specifically about imposing some restrictions:

1) Restrict the new policy to those normal merit files that receive unanimously positive vote at the department level and have the dean’s support. In addition, the file should have votes from at least 75% of eligible voting members in the department.

2) Limit those merit files involving merit advancement at or below the rank of Full Professor, Step V.

3) A large majority of CAP members suggest that, for those files meeting the requirements described in

1) and 2), we follow a process implemented at UC Irvine, where deans have final merit delegation for all regular merit advancements, and CAP reviews every other merit at or above the rank of Associate Professor. A small minority of CAP members, however, felt that this is not necessary.”

Cheers,





COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

March 16, 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Xuan Liu, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Re: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reviewed the Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR. The Committee expressed concerns on how the proposed change would disproportionately affect underrepresented and female faculty. The Committee felt strongly that the proposal needs a revision that substantively addresses the impact on DEI.

Some of us also note that the points that were raised in the CAP report are all reasonable but less related to DEI. The fact that they still seem supportive of the change suggests that they perceive the benefit of reduced workload is worth the costs.

One member felt that there is no data one way or another, so this member does not automatically assume it will be a DEI issue. To this member, without data on how this proposal would affect historically underrepresented and female faculty, it is unclear the impact this proposal would have on DEI.



COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

April 5, 2021

To: Jason Stajich
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Patricia Morton, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation
at UCR

The Committee on Faculty Welfare met on March 16, 2020 to consider the proposed Dean's Final Merit Delegation Initiative. The VPAP proposes that The Dean of each College will have the final decision on one-step, within rank, when there is no change in O/S merits and when both the department and the Dean give positive evaluation. Files that do not meet these criteria will automatically be sent through the normal process of evaluation. The goal of this proposal is to reduce the workload of the CAP, APO and Provost by ~25% (~100 files) which represents 50-100hrs (without counting Staff hours) per merit cycle. This approach will also shorten the time of return of the outcome to the faculty seeking regular merits. The Committee strongly support this change because all other UC campuses have a version of the Dean's Final.

We also discussed the content of a letter sent to us by CAP describing their concerns with this new approach to judging merits at UCR. CAP is particularly concerned that the different Colleges interpret The CALL differently. The advantage of having all files go through them is that CAP applies the same interpretation and standards to all files which makes the process fair. CAP is also concerned that sometimes the departments and the Dean do not appreciate that some files should be considered for higher levels. FWC does not disagree with this view but is not concerned because only a few specific merits would qualify for Dean's final (see also below our proposal to mitigate these concerns).

In addition, FWC noticed that CAP seems to like the UCI process where there is a Dean's Final Merit Delegation for all regular merit advancements, except that CAP reviews every other merit at Associate Professor rank and above. Taking this consideration from CAP, FWC proposed the following changes to the Dean's Final Delegation. The Dean will have the final decision on one-step, within rank, when there is no change in O/S merits and when both the department and the Dean give positive evaluation except for:

1. Advancements from Assistant IV-V or Associate IV-V. This would allow CAP to comment on appropriate progress to promotion to tenure or to promotion to professor.
2. Advancement on merit from Professor IV to V. This would allow CAP to comment on the potential trajectory to advancement to Professor VI.
3. Advancement on merit from Professor VIII to IX. This would allow CAP to comment on the potential trajectory to advancement to Above Scale.
4. Audited by CAP of the Dean's final delegation files in the following year and the feedback being used to help maintain consistency.

Finally, the Committee would like to emphasize that any faculty member has the right to request a review through the normal process that includes CAP at any time for any merit.

Sarah Miller

From: Joseph Kahne <jkahne@ucr.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 7:18 PM
To: Sarah Miller
Subject: Re: FW: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR

Hi Sarah,
The GSOE supports this.
Thanks!
joe

On Tue, Jan 26, 2021 at 11:32 AM Sarah Miller <sarah.miller@ucr.edu> wrote:

FYI – for GSOE Executive Committee’s review.

From: Academic Senate <senate@ucr.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 11:31 AM
To: Genie Mulari <genie.mulari@ucr.edu>; Veronica Quesada <veronica.quesada@ucr.edu>; Ana Kafie <ana.kafie@ucr.edu>; Katelyn Robinson <krobinson@engr.ucr.edu>; Michelle Butler <michelle.butler@ucr.edu>; Gabrielle Brewer <gabrielle.brewer@ucr.edu>; Kristen West <Kristen.west@medsch.ucr.edu>; Andrea Morales <Andrea.Morales@medsch.ucr.edu>; Jennifer Kelsheimer <jennifer.kelsheimer@ucr.edu>
Subject: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR



Academic Sen

[Campus Review] Proposal: *Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR*

Distributed for Review: 01/26/21
Committee Due Date: 04/01/21

Please see the attached that I forward for committee review and comment on behalf of Senate Division Chair Jason Stajich regarding a new proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR. Please provide your comments via IMS or email to sarah.miller@ucr.edu by April 1, 2021. Thank you.

Tasked Committees:

- Academic Personnel
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Executive Committee - College of Engineering
- Executive Committee - College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
- Executive Committee - College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
- Executive Committee - Graduate School of Education
- Executive Committee - School of Business
- Executive Committee - School of Medicine
- Executive Committee - School of Public Policy
- Faculty Welfare

--

Joseph Kahne
Dutton Presidential Chair for Education Policy and Politics
Co-Director, Civic Engagement Research Group
University of California, Riverside
www.civicsurvey.org
[@jkahne](https://twitter.com/jkahne)
Pronouns: he, him, his



School of Medicine
Division of Biomedical Sciences
Riverside, CA, 92521

March 25, 2021

To: Jason Stajich, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

From: Declan McCole, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

Subject: SOM FEC Response to: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR

Dear Jason,

During the SOM Executive Committee regularly scheduled meeting, the FEC reviewed the Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR. The SOM FEC approve of this proposal as it will greatly streamline routine 1-step merit advancements and eliminate a large volume of work that slows down the advancement and promotion process on campus. We suggest adding the language used by UC Merced to clarify how disagreements between Departments and Dean should be handled. This will mitigate the potential for disagreements/personality clashes between a Dean and an individual faculty member to compromise objective assessment of that faculty member's advancement file.

With respect to the "Sensitivity Analysis" (Page 7 of the document), FEC urges consideration of the difficulty in large and growing Departments where unanimous approval may be unrealistic. Moreover, if a unanimous vote was required for a 1-step merit advancement, this would also facilitate the potential scenario where one faculty member could exert inappropriate leverage on another (likely junior) faculty member regarding delaying or denying their advancement. This could further exacerbate the stress experienced by women and URM faculty who already experience longer periods of time in achieving career advancement. To mitigate these potential hazards, the FEC recommends adoption of alternative 2 (75% Departmental approval + Dean's approval) as an appropriate threshold for approving a 1-step advancement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Declan McCole".

Declan F. McCole, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
School of Medicine

TO: Jason Stajich, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR

Date: April 1, 2021

The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy reviewed and discussed the document “[Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR” as well as the Committee on Academic Personnel’s (CAP) response (“Proposal for a Dean's Final Merit Delegation at UCR -- CAP's Response”).

Overall, the Committee noted that the proposal report is very thorough. Based on the evidence presented, we are strongly supportive of this revision to the merit review process for normal (non-accelerated, one-step) increases. We see no reason for the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) to micromanage these files. Likewise, this will also help to make the merit/promotion process more efficient and reduce the merit workload for CAP and the Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor.

As for the CAP response to this proposal, our committee members noted that the strongest argument that CAP makes against the proposed policy is that their reviews create some uniformity across campus—that they can iron out if some departments are more generous than others, and also, if it is true, that they take equity into consideration.

That said, it was also raised that, through their response, CAP is essentially trying to resist giving up its power and supervision. Citing the VPAP’s proposal statistics, their response document noted that “approximately 8% of merit files with unanimous support at the department and college levels received negative recommendations by CAP.” However, approximately 1 out of every 12 files is a statistic that CAP should not be terribly proud of. If anything, this raises questions about CAP’s procedures and even its disciplinary/topical area representation for properly evaluating the files its receives.

Sincerely,



Richard M. Carpiano, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Professor of Public Policy and Sociology