



Academic Senate

Professor Kenneth Barish
Division Chair

September 17, 2025

To: Daniel Jeske, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

From: Ken Barish, Academic Senate Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth Barish".

RE: Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)

Dear Dan,

On July 14, 2025, the Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the subject revisions, along with comments received from the committees. The proposal sparked considerable discussion. I include below an initial response to what was submitted by you for review on May 15, 2025. While there was an appreciation for the challenges associated with a tryout period, the proposal received largely negative feedback from the committees and the Executive Council discussion. Below is a brief summary of the concerns and comments.

- **Strong Opposition to Elimination:** The overwhelming sentiment from the academic senate committees is an opposition to eliminating the tryout period and a strong desire to retain it as a discretionary tool.
- **Contradictory Views on Effectiveness:** While the proposal cites CHASS data from 2017 showing low return rates, there was a questioning of this data's generalizability and relevance in the current climate.
- **Call for Data and Exceptions:** There was a clear request for more comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the tryout period across all colleges and schools, as well as for clarity on and regular reporting of any exceptions to the revised policy, should it be implemented.
- **Importance of Discretion:** The executive committee emphasized that the existing policy allows for Deans' discretion regarding tryout periods, and removing this flexibility limits valuable tools for retention. If the concern is that Deans are abusing their discretion, that should be addressed in a different manner.
- **Faculty Treatment & Climate:** The CHASS Climate Survey highlights faculty feeling "demoralized and disrespected" in past retention negotiations, suggesting that improving these interactions may be more impactful than policy changes.
- **Impact on Faculty of Color:** CODEI specifically identifies the proposed revisions as potentially detrimental to faculty of color, contradicting broader university DEI objectives.
- **Concerns beyond Administrative Burden:** The overall consensus from the Executive Council is that the benefits of the tryout period extend beyond simply retaining faculty,

encompassing faculty morale, UCR's competitive standing, DEI goals, and graduate student progression.

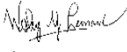
Cc: Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Watkins
Assistant Vice Provost Napper
Senate Director Cortez

Attachment



June 30, 2025

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair 
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: (Consultation): Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)

The CHASS Executive Committee reviewed the (Consultation): Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025). We understand the administrative challenge of accommodating unpaid leaves, but oppose the proposed change to eliminate the “tryout” period.

The rationale for the proposal is driven by two points, both of which warrant critical scrutiny.

The first regards the administrative challenges that can arise when a faculty slot and the associated infrastructure are temporarily held for a colleague who has gone to a different institution. We understand why this scenario may create problems but feel that it can and should be addressed within the current policy, which does not require that a retention offer includes the possibility of temporary leave; rather, the policy explicitly specifies that this is merely a possibility at deans’ discretion. If the possibility is removed altogether, even a faculty member who is truly ambivalent about leaving UCR or who has exceptional merit will lack the possibility of return to UCR that many peer institutions, including the majority of UCs, allow.

The second is the claim that the current policy is “clearly ineffective as a retention tool” with data from recent CHASS retention offers provided as support for this claim. Although we do not dispute that the majority of these colleagues have not returned, we call attention to three issues, which collectively advance our position that the current retention policy should not be changed at this time.


- The CHASS 2022-23 Annual Staff and Faculty Climate Survey revealed several concerns about how faculty were treated in their consultations with the Dean during retention negotiations. The Survey showed that faculty felt demoralized and disrespected. It is not a surprise that they would choose not to return unless there was evidence of change.

- The period in which the current policy has allegedly been “clearly ineffective” occurred before recent major changes among several peer institutions with regard to DEI policies, tenure protections, research funding, academic freedom, and shared governance, among other areas that are crucially important to faculty. Though many concerns about such issues have been raised at UCR, we feel that UCR may nevertheless have a new competitive advantage in that state and campus policies have been less disrupted than at many other institutions. For the reason, we expect that more colleagues who try out other positions will opt to return to UCR than before.
- There is a benefit to allowing unpaid leaves with the possibility of return that is not referenced in the rationale provided for the retention policy revision. This is that faculty morale is significantly driven by perceptions of how colleagues are treated, and we believe the current policy is better for realizing the pro-faculty climate that we strive to facilitate. We request that Administration deeply consider the optics of a scenario in which an award-winning and widely respected faculty colleague is recruited by another institution, and that colleague seeks a brief (e.g., one year) unpaid leave from UCR with the possibility of return, but that possibility cannot even be considered.

COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

June 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Gareth Funning, Chair 
Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Re: Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) has reviewed the above Proposed Revision of Retention processes at UCR and is concerned with this policy's impact on University goals, and faculty and student retention.

While the Committee recognizes the potential operational strains presented by maintaining the current policy for Retention Processes, the committee finds the rigidity of the proposed revisions to be misaligned with the current climate and campus objectives for the near future. UCR faculty are increasingly being recruited by other UC campuses and international institutions. Growing federal pressures, and constraints on federal funding have further intensified the draw to explore faculty appointments outside of UCR. Coupled with systemwide hiring freezes and enrollment increase initiatives, removing the current retention process policy has the strong potential to siphon talent from UCR and to stifle both the potential and incentive for faculty to return at a critical juncture for improving faculty retention.

The lack of nuance in the proposed revisions also pose a significant threat to faculty retention rates and time-to-degree for graduate students whose PIs decide to explore other appointments in their final years of study. Introducing this kind of uncertainty is both unnecessary and unacceptable. Retaining the current policy allows students to complete their research and maintain timely progress toward degree completion.

Specifically regarding the charge of CODEI, though the committee notes the proposed revisions present a potential opportunity for junior faculty to advance in their departments, the committee finds the current processes do not impose a sufficient operational cost to justify the long-term separations these revisions would institutionalize. Furthermore, the effects of these revisions stand to be a more significant detriment to faculty of color, as well as contradictory to the UCAADE reallocation of funds from Advancing Faculty Diversity to focus on faculty retention. Overall, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is not in support of these changes.



COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

June 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Salman Asif, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salman", with a date "7/1" written next to it.

Re: [Campus Review] (Consultation): *Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)*

At our meeting on June 4, 2025, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the *Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)*. CFW has the following comments and questions:

Tryout Period

As it may be in the best interest for a faculty member to reserve the right to a “tryout period”—to explore new job opportunities elsewhere with the understanding that there is reasonable cause to believe that they may return to UCR under the same terms they had when they left—some CFW members believe the policy should be maintained as is. This is important to consider in special circumstances related to family or personal constraints.

With respect to the previous comment, conversely some CFW members support the proposed revision and believe tryout periods should be eliminated, due to the adverse impact that tryout periods may have on departmental stability; and in consequence the increased stress that may be placed on faculty members in the Department.

Some CFW members question how severe of an issue “tryout periods” are, considering Provost Watkins and VPAP Jeske’s letter to Senate Chair Barish indicate that “Recent data from CHASS indicates that the large majority of Senate faculty....who have utilized the tryout period since 2017 ultimately do not return.” Is this only a CHASS issue? What does the data from the other Colleges and Schools—besides CHASS—suggest (are tryout periods ineffective in retaining faculty members)? Is there truly a pattern of “abuse” of tryout periods?

In short, some CFW members believe that it can be a win-win for the faculty member and Department/UCR to maintain the tryout period, particularly because it preserves the chance for the faculty member to return to UCR. Other CFW members do not believe the odds of

a faculty member's return during this tryout period outweigh the detriment and operational strain such uncertainty causes for Departments/UCR.

Faculty Awareness

Some CFW members ask: how familiar are UCR faculty with this current policy? Is there a sense that most faculty members on campus know about this policy? Or rather, are only a minority of faculty members aware of it?

CFW recommends broad dissemination of this policy for the benefit of all the faculty and Departments.

Faculty Vote

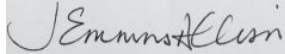
CFW members strongly agree that the "department voice" in the retention process is very important; and that the vote from the Department's Senate faculty should be taken to formally account for whether these faculty members believe the retention effort in question is warranted—i.e., the departmental vote will provide a glimpse into whether these faculty believe that the retention of the faculty member in question aligns with Department priorities and desires.

PLANNING AND BUDGET

June 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Juliann Allison, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juliann Allison", is placed over the printed name in the "From:" line.

Re: [Campus Review] (Consultation): *Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)*

At our meeting on June 10, 2025, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the *Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)*. CPB recommends against eliminating the option for a "tryout" period for faculty members who decline retention offers. If a Dean feels it is appropriate for a given case, that Dean should be permitted to afford a faculty member a tryout period to explore new job opportunities, with the understanding that there is reasonable cause to believe that the faculty member might return to UCR under the same terms they had when they left, strengthened in their commitment to UCR's mission. This proposed revision would remove a tool that might be extremely helpful for Departments/Schools or Colleges/UCR as a whole. Preserving the option of offering a tryout period to a faculty member acknowledges it may be in the best interest of the Department/School or College/UCR to retain the faculty member; and preserving the Dean's ability to offer this tryout period ensures that the Dean has more tools available when attempting to convince the highly valued faculty member to return to UCR.

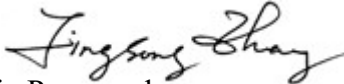


Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

June 24, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jingsong Zhang, Chair 
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: **[Campus Review] (Consultation): Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)**

In its June 18, 2025 meeting, CAP discussed the proposed revision for the Faculty Retention Processes at UCR (2025). CAP in general supports the elimination of the option for a "tryout" period for faculty members who decline retention offers. Furthermore, CAP seeks to ascertain whether previous data from faculty retention tryouts in other colleges besides CHASS also substantiate the case for this elimination. Additionally, CAP wishes to point out the need for clarification regarding the potential for exceptions to be made within this policy. Moving forward it will be helpful for VPAP to report regularly on the number of exceptions made and the rationale for them.

June 23, 2025

TO: Ken Barish, PhD, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

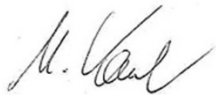
FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

SUBJECT: Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)

Dear Ken,

The Committee reviewed the Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025) and had some discussion on the issue of giving faculty a time frame in which they can return to their previous position. While this seems to put a strain on the unit which the faculty member is planning to leave and as such seems of questionable value. However, the committee can envisage situations when it may be difficult to replace a faculty member with specific qualifications, experiences and areas of scholarship and teaching and a continuing effort of retention might benefit from the possibility to grant a leave without pay and keep the option for return open. The committee felt that it may be useful adding some additional language clarifying this scenario,

Yours sincerely,



Marcus Kaul, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine



School of Business
Anderson Hall
900 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92521

June 4, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

From: Elodie Goodman
Chair, School of Business Executive Committee

Re: (Consultation): *Revision of Retention Processes at UCR (2025)*

Please let this memo serve as an official notification that the School of Business Executive Committee supports the proposal and has no comments or concerns.