



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
RIVERSIDE DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING, RM 225

Kenneth Barish
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December 9, 2025

Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: Proposed Revisions to APM – 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

Dear Ahmet,

On December 8, 2025, the Riverside Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the *Proposed Revisions to APM – 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment*. In addition to transmitting the comments of local committees, the Executive Council is interested in clearer information and guidance regarding student academic employees in relation to this policy.

While a some committees expressed support and the necessity of the proposed revisions (“[t]he language now clarifies that faculty letters are personal instead of official letters, which removes concerns over academic freedom”); others had questions or critiques:

School of Medicine faculty executive committee:

The FEC reviewed the distinction between official and private letters of recommendation at UC.

- Official letters required for UC employees seeking advancement within the system and must be verified by HR and must not include exaggerations or inaccuracies.
- Private letters, which may be written on UC letterhead for positions outside UC, are less formal and may include subjective assessments.

The FEC also reviewed a policy update covering letters of recommendation and lactation accommodation. The update specifies that only institutionally authorized individuals may write official letters of recommendation, while personal references can still be provided using UC letterhead or email. The FEC approved the proposed policy changes.

School of Education faculty executive committee:

The document states: “This law mandates that University supervisors and administrators take certain steps to ensure the requesting employee is not a respondent in a sexual harassment complaint before providing an official letter of recommendation.” Faculty expressed concern that the proposed policy places the responsibility on individual letter-writers to initiate verification before issuing an official letter of recommendation. Writing letters is already a substantial service obligation, particularly for faculty who mentor many students, trainees, and staff. Adding an extra administrative step, one that

must be independently initiated each time, creates additional workload and may unintentionally discourage faculty from writing letters or cause delays for employees who need timely recommendations. Faculty urge the University to consider alternative mechanisms that fulfill the legal requirement while reducing the burden on individual faculty members.

Additionally, the Faculty also sought clarity regarding which letters are subject to the verification requirement. According to pages 3–4 of the draft policy, the following are not classified as “Official Letters of Recommendation” and therefore do not require prior verification:

- Letters written for academic review files
- Letters for current or former students regarding academic performance
- Letters for graduate school applications
- Letters written for grants, fellowships, awards, and similar purposes

By contrast, letters written for employment purposes—such as K–12 teaching positions, faculty appointments, or other job applications—are considered “Official Letters of Recommendation” subject to the verification process.

Faculty emphasized that this distinction is not intuitive and may lead to confusion or inconsistent implementation. Clearer guidance from the University is needed to ensure compliance and prevent unnecessary workload for faculty who write both academic and employment-related letters.

Committee on Privilege and Tenure:

The intent of this policy regarding Official Letters of Recommendation is admirable. We have concerns about its implementation and the potential burdens that it might impose on faculty letter writers who are in leadership positions (e.g. Department Chairs, PIs on grants), as they work to support their students, lecturers and colleagues.

The proposed revisions include a commitment from the Office of the President to provide a toolkit for recommenders, which will include a consultation flowchart and FAQ. This resource should be easy-to-follow, widely available. These documents should make the following clear, per policy: while an ‘Official Letter’ must include language to the effect the letter represents the viewpoint of the University as an employer, there is no required language for ‘personal’ letters, and private letters may be written on University letterhead.

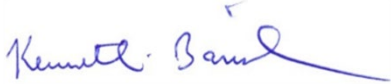
Each campus will need its own guide for letter-writers who need to confirm their recommendee’s record, explaining how they should go about doing so. Honoring this obligation is impossible without the identification of the appropriate process and office for processing these queries. These resources are particularly important in fields (e.g. Medicine) in which official letters are often a standard. A streamlined process will help such campus leaders honor this practice

Committee on Faculty Welfare:

- The revisions include clarification that letters of reference or recommendation not meeting the requirements noted for Official Letters of Recommendation in APM - 036-6c. should be considered personal letters of reference or recommendation, even when written by an administrator or supervisor on University of California letterhead or issued via a University issued email address.
- Parts of the document still refer to faculty members as supervisors and graduate students as employees. As a result, the revision should explicitly state that faculty members are able to write personal letters of recommendation for graduate students that evaluate both their academic performance and their performance as employees.
- It is important that faculty members have input into the toolkit guidance documents, particularly as they relate to graduate students, before the documents are finalized.

- The sexual harassment guidelines seem to have been designed for regular employees and haven't been tailored for students. A prime example is condition #2 in the policy which says "Before a final administrative decision is made, and while an investigation is pending, the employee resigns from their current position." Another likely scenario for students is that if a student completes their requirements and graduates, or the quarter and the appointment ends (e.g. for a TA). Given the wording of the policy, one would think that in these situations a University official would still be able to write an official letter of recommendation for the accused student. It is not clear if this would be the intended outcome as outlined in the guidelines. The guidelines may need to be modified for student employees.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth Barish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kenneth Barish

Professor of Physics and Astronomy and Chair of the Riverside Division

Encl.

CC: Monica Lin, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

October 21, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Quinn McFrederick, Chair
Committee on Academic Freedom

**Re: Proposed Revisions to APM-036, General University Policy Regarding
Academic Appointees/Employment**

The Committee on Academic Freedom reviewed the proposed changes to APM-036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment at their October 13, 2025 meeting and voted to support the proposed revisions. The language now clarifies that faculty letters are personal instead of official letters, which removes concerns over academic freedom.



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

November 17, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Shaun Bowler, Chair
Committee on Academic Personnel

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Bowler'.

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: *Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment*

At our meeting on October 29, 2025, the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) discussed the *Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment*. CAP members felt that the issues raised in the proposal do not fall within the remit of CAP.



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON CHARGES

November 21, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

Fr: Darrel Jenerette
Chair, Committee on Charges

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

The Committee on Charges supports the proposed changes. The clarifications and updated definitions seem appropriate and needed.



College of Humanities, Arts, and
Social Sciences
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 31, 2025

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

FROM: Iván Aguirre, Interim Chair
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General
University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

The CHASS Executive Committee reviewed the [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment). The committee supports the proposed revisions to APM - 036.



November 21st, 2025

TO: Kenneth N. Barish, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Harry Tom, Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

SUBJECT: [Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

Prof. Barish,

The CNAS Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the proposal for the proposed revisions to APM - 036 at their November 18th meeting and has no objections to the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Tom".

Harry Tom, Ph.D

Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

November 20, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Salman Asif, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Salman Asif".

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: *Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment*

The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the *Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment*. CFW has the following comments:

- The revisions include clarification that letters of reference or recommendation not meeting the requirements noted for Official Letters of Recommendation in APM - 036-6c. should be considered personal letters of reference or recommendation, even when written by an administrator or supervisor on University of California letterhead or issued via a University issued email address.
- Parts of the document still refer to faculty members as supervisors and graduate students as employees. As a result, the revision should explicitly state that faculty members are able to write personal letters of recommendation for graduate students that evaluate both their academic performance and their performance as employees.
- It is important that faculty members have input into the toolkit guidance documents, particularly as they relate to graduate students, before the documents are finalized.
- The sexual harassment guidelines seem to have been designed for regular employees and haven't been tailored for students. A prime example is condition #2 in the policy which says "Before a final administrative decision is made, and while an investigation is pending, the employee resigns from their current position." Another likely scenario for students is that if a student completes their requirements and graduates, or the quarter and the appointment ends (e.g. for a TA). Given the wording of the policy, one would think that in these situations a University official would still be able to write an official letter of recommendation for the accused student. It is not clear if this would be the intended outcome as outlined in the guidelines. The guidelines may need to be modified for student employees.



Academic Senate

GRADUATE COUNCIL

November 20, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Viji Santhakumar, Chair
Graduate Council

RE: [Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

Graduate Council reviewed the proposed revisions to APM 036 – General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment at their November 20, 2025 meeting. The Council had no comments.



Academic Senate

COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGE & TENURE

November 25, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

Fr: Jennifer Doyle
Chair, Committee on Privilege & Tenure

Re: [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

The Committee on Privilege and Tenure discussed the proposed changes to APM-036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment at their November 4, 2025 Meeting.

The intent of this policy regarding Official Letters of Recommendation is admirable. We have concerns about its implementation and the potential burdens that it might impose on faculty letter writers who are in leadership positions (e.g. Department Chairs, PIs on grants), as they work to support their students, lecturers and colleagues.

The proposed revisions include a commitment from the Office of the President to provide a toolkit for recommenders, which will include a consultation flowchart and FAQ. This resource should be easy-to-follow, widely available. These documents should make the following clear, per policy: while an 'Official Letter' must include language to the effect the letter represents the viewpoint of the University as an employer, there is no required language for 'personal' letters, and private letters may be written on University letterhead.

Each campus will need its own guide for letter-writers who need to confirm their recommendee's record, explaining how they should go about doing so. Honoring this obligation is impossible without the identification of the appropriate process and office for processing these queries. These resources are particularly important in fields (e.g. Medicine) in which official letters are often a standard. A streamlined process will help such campus leaders honor this practice.

11/21/2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

From: Kinnari Atit, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee

Subject: School of Education's Feedback on Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the "Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment". Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

The document states: "This law mandates that University supervisors and administrators take certain steps to ensure the requesting employee is not a respondent in a sexual harassment complaint before providing an official letter of recommendation." Faculty expressed concern that the proposed policy places the responsibility on individual letter-writers to initiate verification before issuing an official letter of recommendation. Writing letters is already a substantial service obligation, particularly for faculty who mentor many students, trainees, and staff. Adding an extra administrative step, one that must be independently initiated each time, creates additional workload and may unintentionally discourage faculty from writing letters or cause delays for employees who need timely recommendations. Faculty urge the University to consider alternative mechanisms that fulfill the legal requirement while reducing the burden on individual faculty members.

Additionally, the Faculty also sought clarity regarding which letters are subject to the verification requirement. According to pages 3–4 of the draft policy, the following are *not* classified as "Official Letters of Recommendation" and therefore do **not** require prior verification:

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By contrast, letters written for employment purposes—such as K–12 teaching positions, faculty appointments, or other job applications—are considered "Official Letters of Recommendation" subject to the verification process.

Faculty emphasized that this distinction is not intuitive and may lead to confusion or inconsistent implementation. Clearer guidance from the University is needed to ensure compliance and prevent unnecessary workload for faculty who write both academic and employment-related letters.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kinnari Atit", followed by a stylized flourish or checkmark.

Kinnari Atit
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
School of Education
University of California, Riverside
Email: kinnari.atit@ucr.edu



November 12, 2025

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

FROM: Adam Godzik, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

SUBJECT: **[Systemwide Review] (Proposal) Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment**

Dear Ken,

The SOM Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

The FEC reviewed the distinction between official and private letters of recommendation at UC.

- Official letters required for UC employees seeking advancement within the system and must be verified by HR and must not include exaggerations or inaccuracies.
- Private letters, which may be written on UC letterhead for positions outside UC, are less formal and may include subjective assessments.

The FEC also reviewed a policy update covering letters of recommendation and lactation accommodation. The update specifies that only institutionally authorized individuals may write official letters of recommendation, while personal references can still be provided using UC letterhead or email.

The FEC approved the proposed policy changes.

Yours sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Adam Godzik, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Kurt Schwabe, Chair 
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: **[Comments] *Proposed Revisions to APM - 036, General University Policy
Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment***

Date: November 21, 2025

The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy has reviewed the ***Systemwide Review of Proposed Revisions to the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) Section 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment***. The revisions seem reasonable to us and we have no additional comments.