January 13, 2022

To: Jason Stajich, Chair of Riverside Division

From: Elizabeth Watkins
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Daniel Jeske
Vice Provost of Academic Personnel
Acting Vice Provost of Administrative Resolution

Via: Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of Riverside Division

RE: Integrating Life Event Outcomes in the Merit and Promotion Review Process

Dear Jason,

Many thanks for the Senate review of the June 7, 2021 document entitled, “Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances).” Please note that we have changed the name of the proposed policy Life Events Accommodations Policy.

Attached to the revised proposal is an aggregated response to questions raised in the committee reviews. We would greatly appreciate Senate feedback on the revised proposal in time so that we could incorporate a suitable version the proposal into the AY22-23 CALL.

Thank you.
Proposal to Integrate Life Event Outcomes into the Merit Review Process

1. Introduction

The University Committees on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) issued a joint report on 12/21/2020 entitled “Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty.” The joint report made recommendations for both immediate and future actions. Throughout AY20-21 and AY21-22, UCR addressed several of the recommendations and discussions are taking place on the campus to potentially address additional recommendations beginning in AY22-23.

The future goals and actions in the joint report highlighted the fact that adjustments we made in the merit and promotion review process for the pandemic create an opportunity for us to review how we evaluate faculty contributions to the scholarship and success of the UC. The joint report also points out that our current approach in the merit and review process follows what was established in previous eras of culture that no longer fit the present day culture. The joint report suggests that experience we have gained responding to the challenges our faculty members are encountering due to the pandemic can prompt rethinking how excellence and empathy can coexist.

The proposal described below is a response to the call from the joint committee to seek ways to evaluate our fellow faculty members as “whole persons.” To that end, the proposal aims to recognize periods of disrupted productivity in scholarly work traceable to life events that are frequently encountered in the human experience.

2. Proposal

The policy proposed here, and referred to as the Life Events Accommodation Policy, modifies the way in which normal time merits and decelerated merits are reviewed. Normal time merits refer to merit files that are put forward after the normal time (APM-220) at the current rank and step. Decelerated merits are those merits put forward with longer than normal time at the current rank and step. Accelerated merits, promotions, advancement to VI, and advancement to above scale are outside the scope of the proposed modification.

More specifically, the Life Events Accommodation Policy modifies the merit and promotion review process to include an accommodation for diminished scholarly productivity when the reduced achievement is attributable to life events. Life events are defined as childbearing parental leave, parental bonding leave, adoption, serious health conditions (personal or family member), disability, death and bereavement, effects of a natural disaster, effects of significant delays in the provision of research space and/or facilities, effects of significant delays in resources committed to the faculty and necessary for the faculty member’s
research activities, or other significant circumstance or event that disrupts an individual faculty member’s ability to pursue University duties.

Each of the life events covered by the Life Events Accommodation Policy appears in a UC system APM policy as qualifying for a type of relief. That was the criterion for selecting which life events will qualify for the Life Events Accommodation Policy. Importantly, the Life Events Accommodation Policy does not require the use of, or even eligibility for, the APM relief policy that addresses the life event. Mention of the APM policies that cover relief options for different types of life events only serve to define the scope of life events that are covered by the Life Events Accommodation Policy.

The Life Event Accommodation Policy is most easily understood by referring to Figures 1-3. Figure 1 shows the traditional process that was used to decide the outcome of merit reviews up through AY19-20. The permanent salary increase of X awarded on 7/1 is the difference between the scale salaries (Table 1 of the UCOP Current Academic Salaries) at the current step and at the step being advanced too.

![Flowchart](image)

**Figure 1. Traditional Review Outcomes for Merit Files (Through AY19-20)**
Figure 2. COVID-IMPACTED Review Outcome for Merit Files (AY20-21 and 21-22)
Figure 3 shows the modification of merit review procedures that is described by the proposed Life Events Accommodation Policy. A request to use the policy is approved and communicated to the review entities as follows:

1. The faculty member makes a request to APO to use the policy, and provides the required supporting documentation.
2. APO reviews the supporting documentation as it ordinarily would if relief from an APM was being sought.
3. The APO review establishes that the event had documented overlap with the period of review for the M/P file.
4. The VPAP provides final approval on the eligibility of the faculty to use the Life Events Accommodation Policy.
5. For approved requests, a letter is sent to the department chair indicating that the merit review is eligible for the Life Events Accommodation Policy, without disclosing any details about the reason for the request. In this way, only APO will be aware of the reason the faculty member requested use of the Life Events Accommodation Policy.

When a merit review is approved for use of the Life Events Accommodation Policy, the department votes on both the half-step salary increase without merit (afforded by the Life Event Outcome) and the merit outcome. The rationale for voting on both outcomes is that it offers the Department, the Dean, CAP, the VPAP, and the Provost the opportunity to correct cases where the faculty member underestimated the depth of their scholarly contributions. The department letter will include a checkbox to direct upstream review entities to consider the Life Event Outcome and to vote on both outcomes.

It can be seen from Figure 3 that the Life Event Outcome is awarded if the review of scholarly activity concludes that the normal bar for achievement has not been met, but at least 50% of the normal bar is met. In that case, although the merit is not awarded, half of the salary increase that would have gone along with a positive merit is awarded as temporary additional off-scale. At the next review that results in a positive merit, the temporary O/S is removed and replaced by the full salary increase that goes along with positive merit. Consecutive uses of the Life Events Accommodation Policy are not allowed, though the policy can be used multiple times in the career of a faculty member. Candidates who receive a COVID-IMPACTED outcome for a review may not use the Life Events Accommodation Policy for their next review.
3. Summary

In one sense, the Life Events Outcome Policy described in Figure 3 is a straightforward extension of the COVID-Impacted Review outlined in Figure 2. The change is simply to extend consideration beyond COVID to a set of life events. In another sense, the proposal is a significant paradigm shift to the merit review process that, for the first time, brings an understanding of the impact of life events on the productivity of faculty members. If implemented at UCR, the Life Events Accommodation Policy will position UCR as a UC system leader in modernizing the UC merit and promotion review process.

It is important to recognize that the Life Events Accommodation Policy is not awarding salary increases for anticipated merit advancements, nor is the policy reducing the standards for merit advancement. Figure 3 retains the practice of only increasing salary in response to achievements that have been realized, and only awarding merit advancements when the full complement of UC standards in teaching, research, and service have been met.
Responses to Questions Raised in the Committee Reviews

1. What is the justification for the proposed policy? (Executive Council)

The joint report from the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) and the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) suggests a new paradigm in Merit and Promotion (M/P) reviews where we view faculty as whole persons. We can leverage our experience from introducing empathy into the M/P process that we are gaining during the COVID pandemic.

2. What is the relationship of the proposed policy to the existing COVID Accommodations policy? (Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Executive Council)

Because of its broad and varying impact, the COVID Accommodations policy will remain as something covered outside the scope of the Life Events Accommodations Policy. Each year, the COVID addendum in the CALL will be modified until such a time arrives that COVID accommodations are not needed anymore. In contrast, the Life Events Accommodation Policy is not time-limited and will be adopted as an ongoing policy. The juxtaposition of policies for Life Events and COVID Accommodations might better be understood by thinking of Life Events Accommodations Policy as something that could have been drafted pre-COVID.

3. What Life Events are potentially qualifying for the accommodation? (CAP, Executive Council)

Childbearing parental leave, parental bonding leave, adoption, serious health conditions (personal or family member), disability, death and bereavement, effects of a natural disaster, effects of significant delays in the provision of research space and/or facilities, effects of significant delays in resources committed to the faculty and necessary for the faculty member’s research activities, or other significant circumstance or event that disrupts an individual faculty member’s ability to pursue University duties. Each of the events listed above appear in a APM policy as being eligible for a type of leave or a type of relief. That is the basis for selecting which Life Events qualify for the accommodation.
4. Do you have to be eligible for, or use, the APM policy that covers the particular Life Event being considered? (CAP)

No. The Life Event Accommodation policy does not require eligibility for, or use of, the APM policy that covers the Life Event. The APM policies are only relevant to the Life Event Accommodation policy to the extent that events covered by the Life Event Accommodation policy are the same events that are addressed in the APMs that address leaves or other types of relief.

5. How does the Life Events Accommodations Policy get approved for use? (CAP, CHASS Executive Committee, CFW, Executive Council)

The faculty member directs a request to use the policy to APO, and provides the required supporting documentation. APO reviews the supporting documentation as it ordinarily would if relief from an APM was being sought. The APO review establishes that the event had documented overlap with the period of review for the M/P file. The VPAP provides final approval on the eligibility of the faculty to use the Life Events Accommodation Policy. For approved requests, a letter is sent to the department chair indicating that the merit review is eligible for the Life Events Accommodation Policy, without disclosing any details about the reason for the request. In this way, only APO will be aware of the reason the faculty member requested use of the Life Events Accommodation Policy.

6. Could having a vote on the Life Events Outcome disadvantage the candidate? (CHASS Executive Committee)

Candidates should discuss with their chairs and/or trusted advisers whether the file appears strong enough for a positive merit. Candidates should not ask for the Life Events accommodation if they are confident about their file reaching the bar for a positive merit. The requirement for votes on both the Life Event Outcome and the Merit provides an opportunity for all review bodies to recognize when a file that includes consideration of the Life Event Outcome is sufficient strong to warrant a positive merit outcome. In addition, the Life Event Outcome can only be voted upon when the candidate requests use of the Life Events Accommodation Policy.
7. Who decides if 50% threshold on research productivity and/or creative activity is met? *(CHASS Executive Committee, CFW, Executive Council)*

The Department, Dean, CAP, VPAP, and Provost will review the file and make those judgements. The Dean, CAP, VPAP and Provost will weigh the file relative to standards that should be laid out in the department letter. Deciding if the 50% threshold for scholarly activity is met is not particularly any more challenging than deciding on if thresholds for a positive merit are met. Appendix B of APM-220 that discussed evaluation of part-time faculty members is an applicable read, “Guidelines for Part-Time Appointment and Reduction in Percentage of Time of an Appointment to Accommodate Family Needs.”

8. Could candidates feel reluctant to use the Life Events Accommodations policy because it requires sharing personal details? *(Executive Council)*

Only APO will be aware of what type of underlying situation prompted the request for using the Life Events accommodations policy. This level of confidentiality will help to lessen the reluctance of faculty member to consider using the policy.

9. Could candidates feel stigmatized if they use the Life Events Accommodation policy? *(Executive Council)*

Currently some faculty stigmatized when deferring their file, or when requesting reappointment only reviews. Using the Life Events Accommodation policy is an alternative to deferring their file, or in the case of Assistant Professors, requesting reappointment only. The policy creates a more positive review option as the candidate is being recognized for achievements.

10. Could the Life Events Outcome be awarded in consecutive reviews? *(CFW, Executive Council)*

   No. Back-to-back uses of the Life Event Outcomes are not allowed. If the Life Event Outcome was awarded in the previous review, then the current review would be looking to see if the merit advance that was not awarded previously could now be awarded based upon subsequent achievements, or alternatively, if the file was strong enough for even better M/P actions.
11. Is there a limit to the number of times the Life Event Outcome could be awarded to a candidate? (CFW, Executive Council)

Other than the disallowance of consecutive Life Event Outcomes, there is not a limit to the number of times it could be approved for a faculty member. There is no advantage to a candidate frequently using the Life Event Outcome compared to getting positive merits, since a Life Events Outcome delays progression.

12. When is it more appropriate to take leaves than to use the Life Event policy? (CFW)

A leave (or deferral) should be considered when there is a need to focus primarily on resolving a situation that will interrupt the candidate’s academic work to the point that less than 50% of scholarly activity is likely. Use of the Life Events Accommodation policy and taking a leave are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A leave during the period of review could be the reason that the Life Event Outcome is being considered.
To: Jason Stajich, Chair of Riverside Division

From: Elizabeth Watkins
   Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
   Daniel Jeske
   Vice Provost of Academic Personnel
   Acting Vice Provost of Administrative Resolution

Via: Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of Riverside Division

RE: Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process

Dear Jason,

For AY20-21 we have integrated a COVID-IMPACTED outcome into normal time merit reviews. The COVID-IMPACTED outcome is used when a normal time merit file is judged as having been on-track for a positive outcome but was stalled by the impact of the pandemic during the March 2020 thru September 2020 time period. In those cases, half of the salary increase that would have accompanied a positive merit outcome is awarded to the faculty, with the rest of the increase being granted when the positive merit is achieved. This, and other COVID accommodations are described in the addendum to the AY20-21 CALL.

In December of 2020 the University Committee on Faculty Welfare and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity issued a joint report that encouraged the UC campuses to continue to consider ways to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on faculty members. One of the ideas suggested was around the notion of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO).

Our use of the COVID-IMPACTED outcome in AY20-21 demonstrates that empathy and excellence can coexist. We desire to go further by reflecting ARO more generally in our review process. We would greatly appreciate some Senate feedback on the following proposal so that we could incorporate it into an AY21-22 implementation.

Thank you.
Integrating Achievement Relative to Opportunity into the Merit Review Process

1. Introduction

The University Committees on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) issued a joint report on 12/21/2020 entitled “Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty.” In Part I of the joint report, 15 recommendations for immediate actions were offered that address the impacts of the pandemic. For AY20-21, UCR had already addressed several of those recommendations, and discussions are taking place on the campus to address additional recommendations from during AY21-22.

Part II of the joint report made 6 recommendations for future goals and actions. The joint report highlighted the fact that adjustments we made for the pandemic create an opportunity for us to review how we evaluate faculty contributions to the scholarship and success of the UC. The joint report points out that our current approach follows what was established in previous eras of culture that do not fit the present day culture. That approach was based on thinking that did not anticipate, for example, the increases we have seen in the number of women in faculty position, the number of two career couples, and the number of single-parent households. The joint report suggests that experience we have gained responding to the difficulties our faculty members are encountering due to the pandemic can prompt rethinking how excellence and empathy can coexist.

The proposal described below is a response to the call from the joint committee to seek ways to evaluate our fellow faculty members as “whole persons.” To that end, the proposal aims to recognize periods of disrupted productivity in scholarly work are traceable to life events that are frequently encountered in the human experience.

2. Proposal

The proposal is to modify the way in which normal time merits are reviewed. Normal time merits refer to merit files that are put forward after the normal time (APM-220) at the current step. Accelerated merits, decelerated merits, promotions, advancement to VI, and advancement to above scale are outside the scope of this proposal.

More specifically, the proposal modifies the merit and promotion review process to include a proportional accommodation for diminished scholarly productivity when the reduced achievement is attributable to extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are defined as those events that are applicable to APM-760-25 (childbearing leave), APM-760-27 (parental leave), or APM-133-17-h(2) (stopping the clock). The proposal does not require a faculty member to be on childbearing leave, or be on parental leave, or to have submitted a stop-the-clock request (which only Assistant Professors could do). Instead, the proposal draws
from the cited APMs to define what qualifies as an extenuating circumstance. It follows, for example, that extenuating circumstances include bearing a child, adopting a child, managing a serious illness, incurring disability, and going through a bereavement period. The pandemic is a present day example of an extenuating circumstance.

The proposal is most easily understood by referring to Figures 1-3. Figure 1 shows the traditional process that was used to decide the outcome of merits up through AY19-20. The permanent salary increase of X awarded on 7/1 is the difference between the scale salaries (Table 1 of the UCOP Current Academic Salaries) at the current step and at the step being advanced too.

Figure 1. Traditional Review Outcomes for Merit Files (Pre AY19-20)

Figure 2 shows how the review procedures were modified for AY20-21 to make an accommodation for COVID. Candidates have the opportunity to provide a statement on how the pandemic has impacted their productivity. If it is necessary, that statement is considered during the review process in order to allow for a new outcome. Namely, the COVID-IMPACTED outcome which can be used when the file is judged to be short of meeting the normal requirements for a positive merit, but that the deficiencies in the file are traceable to the impact of the pandemic. In COVID-IMPACTED outcomes, the merit is not awarded, but half of
the base salary increase that would have gone along with a positive merit is awarded as temporary additional off-scale. At the next positive merit and promotion action, which might only be completion of the merit advance but could also be a higher placement, the temporary additional off-scale is replaced by the permanent salary increase of $X$.

Figure 2. COVID-IMPACTED Review Outcome for Merit Files (AY19-20)
Figure 3 depicts a proposal for how merit and review procedures for normal time merits would proceed starting with AY21-22. The red borders indicate where text has changed relative to Figure 2. The submitted statement now describes extenuating circumstances.

If the normal research bar is not met for what is required for a positive merit but at least 50% of normal research productivity is in the file along with a valid request for consideration of extenuating circumstances, then the file is judged to have *achieved relative to opportunity*. In that case, the merit is not awarded, but half of the base salary increase that would have gone along with a positive merit is awarded as temporary additional off-scale.

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**Figure 3. Achievement Relative to Opportunity Outcome for Merit Files (AY21-22 and beyond)**
3. Summary

In one sense the proposal to modify the normal time merit reviews per Figure 3 is a small evolution of what is transpiring in Figure 2 for the current year. The change is simply to extend consideration beyond COVID to a larger set of extenuating circumstances. In another sense, the proposal is a paradigm shift that for the first time brings tangible compassion and understanding into the merit and review process.

It is important to see that the proposal is not advancing salary increases for anticipated merit advancements. Nor is the proposal reducing the standards for merit advancement. Figure 3 retains the practice of only increasing salary in response to achievements that have been realized, and only awarding merit advancements when the full complement of UC standards in teaching, research, and service have been realized. Implementation of Figure 3 at UCR starting in AY21-22 is a major response to the joint report from UCFW and UCAADE, and will position UCR as a leader in modernizing the UC merit and promotion review process.
To:              Daniel Jeske  
Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

From:            Jason Stajich  
Chair, Riverside Division

RE:             Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances)

Dear Dan,

I write to provide feedback regarding the Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances) as discussed by the Executive Council. Due to the short timeframe on this review, Executive Council did not have the benefit of standing committee comments and we were unable to debate this with reference to all requested committee feedback in hand. Council strongly encourages the Administration to consider the timing of proposals for proper consideration and response from standing and faculty executive committees.

Executive Council’s discussion indicated that the justification for change in standard was not clear. While the proposal is centered on the UCFW recommendations, there was confusion regarding how it interacts with the COVID-19 evaluation modifications. While the intention of this proposal is to operate in addition to the COVID-19 modification there was concern that how it is written was signaling a sunsetting of the COVID-19 policy. Further, Council discussions emphasized that the impact of COVID-19 will remain for many years. Even if campus returns to in-person and “normal” operations, the impact on both faculty and staff who provide important support to faculty in research and scholarship will continue to reverberate on careers and productivity. A member felt that everyone should have an opportunity for their file to be considered through both a COVID impact and extenuating circumstances lens with at least a three-year adjustment period. Some members felt it was difficult to determine what qualifies under the proposed policy and that there is risk for enormous variability. Should this proposal be adopted on campus, uniformity would guarantee fairness in the implementation.

As raised by many members, it would be helpful to clarify how someone indicates that a file should be considered under either or both the extenuating circumstances and COVID-19 modified process. It was not clear how to articulate how to elect to be reviewed in consideration of extenuating circumstances. Who gets to decide the legitimacy of a claim? This needs to be decided at step zero. It would also be important to clarify which entity (Academic Personnel Office, Dean’s offices, Human Resources, Equity Advisors, Committee on Academic Personnel?) would assess and approve when a file is to be considered under these policies. Who is the deciding body to determine if a modification is needed? This confusion feeds into a concern that CAP would be put into a terrible position to be asked to make the decision arbitrarily, which is not the committee’s role. A similar deep concern was raised about Department faculty and chairs who may also be put in a position to decide who qualifies and who does not. Some members asserted that qualification should be decided before a file gets to Departments and Dean’s offices so CAP can evaluate the file through the proper lens. It should also be clarified how this proposal might also interface with ASMD. Relatedly, an additional question that emerged is, how would CAP or VPAP define 50%?
Concerns were discussed about faculty’s request for accommodation being viewed as negative to the reviewers of their file. It is critical that we accommodate vulnerable faculty. How do we know if departments will treat people equitably? There is also concern that the proposal puts onus on faculty to share details they may not want to. There were also questions about if this process could be used to unintentionally penalize candidates. Could CAP not recommend or the VPAP/Provost effectively not give someone consideration of a full step and claim that while they were productive it wasn’t enough for a full step? Are there safeguards to prevent this? Also, what happens if a candidate receives an extenuating circumstance and/or COVID accommodation/decision and then the following year are they required to achieve all they did not before? Can a candidate do back-to-back, year by year (e.g., COVID modification followed by other accommodations)?

Some additional observations were that the figure on page 76 was perceived to be too narrow in scope and was described by some members as “Very HR type of reasons.” Other members objected to the term “extenuating circumstances” because events such as illness or COVID should not be conflated with life events (e.g., birth or adoption of a child) that should not be viewed as negative. Language choices could be more carefully chosen.

Overall, there was support from Council members in the proposal attempting to find ways to accommodate for the extenuating circumstances. The direction of the proposal was considered a positive move as long as the implementation is thought through. Most of the criticism was on implementation and specifically on how to decide what circumstances qualify. The Committee on Faculty Welfare spoke in support and endorses the direction the proposal is taking. Due to the timing of the request, Council was not able to hear a summary from CAP on their perspective of the report before our discussion, but CAP’s perspective will be shared with the Council at a future meeting. Finally, Council was clear they are concerned about untenured faculty and making sure they found the needed support to emerge from circumstances as supported as possible. I encourage careful reading and consideration of this memo and the attached from the committees who have responded thus far.

As you can see there are primarily expressions of support for the spirit of the proposal but getting the details right does seem to be somewhat delicate. At the core is who is getting to decide if a circumstance rises to the level of being sufficient to warrant the extra consideration, and some of the possible unintended consequences, as well as some of the simple logistics of how many times these can be taken, at what frequency, and in succession?

I look forward to further discussion about this important proposal.

Sincerely,

/s/Jason
At its meeting on June 21, 2021, CAP discussed Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances).

The committee is in general supportive of the proposed modification. However, the committee has some concerns that the “achievement relative to opportunity” discussed in the draft proposal implies a different definition of extenuating circumstances than scenarios such as parental leave, medical leave, or the stop-the-clock situations outlined by the APMs that the proposal references.

APM-133, which has the broadest definition defines the conditions this way and explicitly limits it to the probationary period:

"A faculty member may request to stop the clock during the probationary period for personal reasons (see below), including childbearing, childrearing, serious health condition, disability, bereavement, or significant circumstance or event that disrupts a faculty member’s ability to pursue University duties. Extensions are normally granted for a period of up to one (1) year for each event, automatically for some reasons, and upon request and approval for other reasons. For those extensions needing approval, such approval will be at the discretion of the Chancellor."

Later APM133 defines "Significant Circumstance or Event” as:

"A faculty member may request to stop the clock during the probationary period, for reasons due to a significant circumstance or event beyond the faculty member’s control that disrupts the faculty member’s ability to pursue University duties. Examples of significant circumstances or events beyond the faculty member’s control for which the faculty member may request to stop the clock include the effects of a natural disaster or the effects of significant delays in the provision of research space, facilities, or resources committed to the faculty member and necessary for the faculty member’s research activities. The faculty member must provide appropriate supporting documentation, as determined by established campus procedures."

If the intent is to make the "Significant Circumstance or Event” language apply to all faculty, all of the time, this language should be in the draft so that it can be discussed by all, rather than referencing policy that is meant for the probationary period.

It was also not clear to the committee which reviewing bodies will be deciding what may constitute extenuating circumstances. Moreover, the committee was concerned about privacy issues, because the same information that might be seen as extenuating -- medical issues, family crises, financial difficulties, etc. -- are exactly what most people would prefer to keep private.
June 30, 2021

TO: Jason Stajich, Chair  
Riverside Division of the Faculty Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process

The CHASS Executive Committee has not had the opportunity to discuss this memo other than through email communications, which are reflected in the comments below.

1. Members of the EC appreciate the overall proposed idea of making adjustments to the evaluation of merit files as described in APM-220—an idea inspired by the adjustments made for the Covid-19 pandemic conditions.

2. To the Executive Committee, it is entirely reasonable “to include a proportional accommodation for diminished scholarly productivity when reduced achievement is attributable to extenuating circumstances” (such as those described in Point 2, p. 2 of the memo from the Provost’s office. The question is how these extenuating circumstances should be precisely determined as qualifying for “proportional accommodation” and who should decide whether a faculty member’s request for such accommodation qualify for consideration. Should it be the faculty member’s home department or program? the appropriate Dean’s Office? the Human Resources office? the Senate Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP)?

3. Similar questions should be asked and answered in full detail for the various steps shown in Figure 3 of the memo (p. 5): what criteria and who determines that the “Teaching[,] Research[,] and Service Bars [are] Met”? and what is 50% of these bars? One EC member had concerns about pandemic situations that would apply to the more general circumstances in the proposal.

My one concern is that COVID measures will be used to stop people rather than to help people. For example, I go up for a merit thinking I have met all the expectations (I have published, done service, good teaching, the works...), but now CAP can determine whether I have "met the expectations" or have "insufficient productivity judged due to..."
the effect of the pandemic." And now, rather than get a merit, I would get only half. I submitted a file that met the requirements of my department and discipline, but now CAP has a way to penalize files they do not like. Is there a way for the person going up for merit if they want to elect if they want these COVID-IMPACTED measures applied to them? Otherwise, CAP gets to decide who and how much the pandemic has affected.

4. If the suggestions described in the memo are fully fleshed out, how would the regulations be approved? The EC suggests that they be included in the Senate Bylaws and that the Senate committees (CAP, Privilege and Tenure, Faculty Welfare, etc.) all clearly abide by the regulations.
The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reviewed the proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances). We are generally in favor of the proposal.

However, given the impact of the pandemic is far from over and some faculty members will likely feel it more this year than in AY20-21, we are concerned on the proposed additional modification (Figure 3) to the AY20-21 COVID impacted procedure (Figure 2). In fact, many faculty members have not had an opportunity to have their files considered under the AY20-21 COVID impacted policy yet. We believe that the same COVID impacted policy should be used to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on every faculty member upon request.

We also note that there is a very good academic article that shows that gender-neutral parental leave policies actually do more to hurt females in academia than help them. The reason is that when males take parental leave, they tend to continue working on research. When females take parental leave, they spend most of their time on household production. (https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20160613) We hope that this factor can be considered as we modify merit and promotion procedure to mitigate the effect of the pandemic.
COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

July 2, 2021

To: Jason Stajich
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Patricia Morton, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances)

At its remote meeting on June 15, 2021, the Committee on Faculty Welfare discussed the Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances).

The Committee strongly supports the modifications to the existing merit and review process, which builds on temporary modifications established during the COVID-19 pandemic and incorporates an Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) approach to the process. We have questions, however, about the way this policy would be implemented and believe it needs further clarification.

The proposal does not outline how a modified outcome might affect subsequent years of a faculty member’s career. The policy needs to clarify what happens if a faculty member receives a modified outcome and when that person should be eligible for the next merit or promotion. In other words, what is the expected timeline for merits and promotions after an ARO outcome? Can a faculty member receive back-to-back COVID-impacted and ARO outcomes?

Who determines the validity of a request for an ARO outcome? Who determines whether or not a faculty member has achieved at least 50% of normal research productivity? Who approves the ARO request, which would be based on reasoning provided by the candidate? The department, the Dean, APO or VPAP? CFW is concerned that this determination be made in the fairest and most transparent manner, preferably by faculty rather than administrators.

The Committee would like the policy to clarify whether this is a one-time opportunity and whether there is a time limit for a second consideration. Notably the flow chart does not have a feedback loop after "Achievement Relative to Opportunity Outcome” other than “at the next positive merit action.” CFW believes the policy should make clear that back-to-back ARO actions are not allowed. The next time a faculty member met the 50% threshold, they would be eligible for the next step and would receive rest of the salary increase. If they do not meet the 50% threshold, then they would not be eligible for relief.

Are there limitations on the number of times a faculty member can request an ARO outcome due to extenuating circumstances? Once a career? Once in X number of years? When is disability or family leave more appropriate than a request for an ARO outcome?
The Committee finds this proposal takes substantial steps to both mitigate the effect of the pandemic on faculty members and address long-term structural inequities within the merit and promotion process. With clarification of the questions outlined above, CFW would endorse the proposal.
June 29, 2021

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

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

Subject: SOM FEC Response to the Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances)

The SOM Executive Committee reviewed the *Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances)* at the regular meeting on June 24, 2021. SOM FEC does not have any concerns with this proposed modification. SOM FEC strongly supports this modification to the Merit and Review process and has no additional comments.

Yours sincerely,

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) Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process
(Extenuating Circumstances)

Date: June 29, 2021

The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy reviewed the document “[Campus Review] (Proposal) Proposed Modification to the Merit and Review Process (Extenuating Circumstances).”

We appreciate the attention paid to the professional and personal challenges that faculty have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and this effort to help address the productivity impacts from such challenges. We are in support of the proposal and have no comments to add.

Sincerely,

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