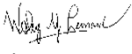




June 30, 2025

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.