

TO: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

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

RE: **[Comments] Proposed Changes to Charge of the Committee on Faculty Research Lecturer**

Date: February 16, 2026

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The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy has reviewed both the **Proposed Changes to Charge of the Committee on Faculty Research Lecturer (FRL)**, and the Committee of Faculty Research (CFR) responses. Two prominent requests within the proposal seem to be (i) increased opportunities to recognize more distinguished research that is happening at UCR, and (ii) allowance for more input that may better appreciate, identify, and select the FRL among the diversity of distinguished research and creative activities that are occurring across UCR's many colleges, schools, and programs.

We understand that this is a UC-wide program—i.e., each campus has a committee and identifies FRLs annually. As pointed out in the justification for the proposed changes and in the response by CFR, different campuses have different approaches. Currently UCR awards one FRL annually. The SPP FEC feels that expanding the award to perhaps two per year—similar to what we see at UCLA, UCB, and UCSD as examples—would provide a multitude of benefits. First, it would give the CFR the opportunity to better recognize the abundance of faculty with a distinguished research and creative scholarship than limiting the award to a single faculty member annually. Second, it would reduce potential conflicts, slightly in some cases, of having to choose between two equally deserving candidates (of course, there could be more than two and thus this problem would still exist). It would also better recognize the diversity of distinguished research and creative activities across campus. We can imagine that even the awards ceremony and the people attending (which would likely increase) would benefit from more than one award (e.g., through raising awareness), especially if the award was allocated to disciplines across the campus (which we see occurring elsewhere throughout the UC system). We feel there are opportunities here to expand without losing the respect and distinction associated with the award.

The proposal makes the suggestion of distinguished research lecturer awards for faculty at different ranks. The CFM suggests that there are other awards for faculty at different ranks throughout UCR. While a bit more specificity would be helpful in making that case uniformly across colleges, schools, and programs, the SPP FEC understands – or at least interprets – that the FRL is about a distinguished research record, not necessarily a distinguished research year or few years. Yet in looking at the past award winners, over

the past twenty years (we only go back to 2005), we can identify only a single faculty member to win the FRL award who wasn't a Distinguished Professor at the time of being awarded the FRL (Professor Norman Ellstand in 2011). So while the award is listed as being open to faculty from all ranks, and again understanding that the CFM is charged with identifying a distinguished record (and of course being listed as a Distinguished Professor does send a signal, especially having gone through the process of advancing to the Distinguished Professor designation, of distinguished research), the designation of Distinguished Professor is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition to be a FRL. Perhaps, at the very least, more messaging needs to accompany the call for nominations and emphasize that it is open to all ranks and that the only requirement is a distinguished record of research.

On the topic of committee membership, we appreciate that the CFR will consider expanding membership. Yet we feel that to ensure representation across the campus in a manner that allows the committee to fully appreciate and choose among the vast diversity of distinguished research and creative activity across UCR's colleges, departments, and programs, we see value in having member criteria from across UCR's colleges and schools. For example, and not that we have to mimic other UC campuses, but UCLA's committee membership is based on the following:

“A committee will be formed consisting of at least five Academic Senate members from a variety of disciplines across campus. The committee will also include representation from previous Faculty Research Lecturers. After reading all nominations, the committee will convene to discuss the merits of all candidates and select the two awardees for the upcoming academic year.”

The proposal is requesting Academic Senate member across schools and colleges, while UCLA's only requires “across disciplines.” Of course, the current committee has diversity on it from different disciplines, but only has faculty from CNAS (3) and CHASS (2). This is likely largely influenced by limiting membership to past award winners. We see value in following a model where (i) different colleges and schools are represented, and (ii) some representation from past award winners is present (but not necessarily the majority of the committee).