May 29, 2024

We write to submit our opinion on Proposed Revisions to General Univ Policy Regarding Academic Appointees: APM 016—Univ Policy on Faculty Conduct and the Administration of Discipline.

- FEC member 1: I would be concerned that an allegation would pause a junior faculty’s tenure clock and if they were found innocent of the allegation, the irreparable harm to their career if it interferes with them getting tenure. Is there a provision that could be put in place to protect pre-tenured faculty?

- FEC Member 2: I also question how this may affect faculty hiring who must go through academic personnel review as well. If a question is brought up prior to hiring and in this academic personnel review, what recourse would the candidate have in this process - would they even be able to participate at all in the review? This all seems a little too broad based at this point. There needs to be some specific reason to trigger a pause in that process; it says now it is up to the discretion of the Chancellor or their designee. That’s too ambiguous.

- FEC member 3:
  - This past year has yielded a lot of interpersonal conflict among faculty. For example, I heard at least six people in my department say they were planning to file a DEI complaint against other colleagues. Although I don’t know if these complaints happened, I worry that in the current climate, some faculty may be making unsubstantiated claims of faculty misconduct against each other. It is important for the policy to clarify what criteria the Chancellor will use to determine “that any of the alleged misconduct is relevant to the assessment criteria for academic personnel review actions.” It’s important for this policy not to be weaponized by other faculty to harm someone’s career trajectory.

- Another concern is how long the investigation process may take. Such investigations are generally very slow moving. It would be important to know, for context, the average length of time an investigation into faculty misconduct takes at UCLA, in order to assess whether such a measure is warranted. In other words, is the punishment unduly harsh given the alleged misconduct? This also goes back to the Chancellor’s decision-making criteria regarding which cases rise to the level of warranting a pause.

Sincerely,

Dr. Veronica Herrera
FEC Chair, 2023-2024

An Equal Opportunity Employer