

Comments from members of the Committee on Charges and the Grievance Consultation Panel

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I am not aware of the Riverside campus having the kinds of problems with discrimination cases as described here and referred to on other UC campuses. On the basis of the results of the Committee’s survey and interviews, it looks like there is a perceived issue on this campus. I’m guessing that the Office of the President will prevail in their efforts to bring about changes in the system including Riverside.

The introduction of an advocacy role would be a major change in the role of the Grievance Consultation Panel. The ability to remain neutral is central to retaining the trust of the administration and the grievant. Certainly there is a sense of advocacy in the way the Panel performs its role even now. When I meet with a grievant, I have a desire to assist them when they have a case. But that is a much different role than what I see of an assigned advocate. An advocate would seek a solution favorable to the grievant and that is not been neutral.

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I was somewhat taken aback at re-defining the role of the members of the Grievance panel as being one of advocacy as it undermines our impartiality. Also I wonder about the wisdom of each member of the Panel needing "particular interests and expertise" relating to equity and "substantive training through annual workshops". It seems to me that this would mean establishing a Senate committee with a composition quite different from the one we have now, made up of people with grievance experience on P&T. Not all grievance issues are equity issues.

I have been contacted by only one faculty member (and this was in the past month) since becoming in September a member of the Grievance Panel. We met a few days later, talked for a couple of hours and she indicated later that our meeting had been quite helpful in her moving forward. I'm not sure I could have been any more helpful to her had I been better trained in equity issues or if these were my specialty within the grievance arena.

I agree wholeheartedly with the final sentence of the paragraph devoted to the Grievance Panel in Recommendation #6.

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I believe the Grievance Panel cannot align itself with only the grievant, as this negates the objectivity of the process. In my meetings with a potential grievant we discuss only the peripheral points of his/her case and concentrate mainly on the process ---what to expect, what to provide to P&T or Charges, and basically how to compile a grievance. I’ve also spent considerable time with a potential grievant on the different point of contact – and I always use the senate website and applicable bylaws for point of reference. I would be loath to see the charge of the grievance panel changed in any way, especially removal of the statement “Panel members do not serve as representatives of any grievant”

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The survey results and this report don't seem widely known. I'm concerned about yet more administrative power--the main real change here is yet another nonacademic position to fill--with a lack of safeguards or normal due process with presumption of innocence. There is enough irresponsible rumor-mongering at UCR (as elsewhere) to make this an important matter.

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The thing I think is very weird about the "advocate" recommendation is that aren't we supposed to be unbiased and just look at the facts at hand as they relate to the faculty code of conduct? We can't be advocates and be potentially recommending disciplinary hearings (where warranted) at the same time. And nor can P&T - they can't be an advocate and conduct an impartial unbiased disciplinary hearing at the same time. These committees are set up to assure faculty receive due process, not to align itself with a grievant. What is to happen when a grievance is one faculty member against another? Or when a faculty uses his/her grievant submittal as a bullying mechanism? Current processes do not assume victimization of a grievant nor guilt of the accused and I think that is what we should strive to maintain.

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I am uncomfortable with the fact that a response of n=112 (out of a large campus population) is being used to push such a broad and sweeping change. The document does not offer any protections for those accused, and there is some presumption that an accused person is guilty from the start. Then the Senate is lining itself up with this document which would basically, remove safeguards for those that are alleged to have done something.

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I agree with the points about advocacy and presumption of guilt. I think we should also talk about timelines. Those of us who serve on these committees do so voluntarily and add committee functions to our teaching, research and other service activities. Those who process these on the administrative side do so as a primary or expected function of their position. To hold the senate committees to the same hard deadlines then is not realistic. The last few cases I've been a part of were received just before the Christmas break involving full campus closure, or before the summer break. As a nine month faculty member I use the summer for personal vacations as well as research opportunities. I also know from experience that these committees take very seriously its charge and strive to be as timely as possible. Subjecting us to hard and fast deadlines is not realistic and posting the time it takes a committee to reconcile a case devoid of reasons for delays (if they existed) is undue. I also worry about senate staff resources available for committee support. The current workload requires an investment in senate personnel – the changes proposed demands it.