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From: Nicholas Weston-Dawkes
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 2:33 PM
Subject: Academic Researchers Unit - COVID-19 Update

Importance: High

Dear Academic Researchers Unit,

In previous weeks, communication has gone out to the academic population regarding addressing employment concerns during this time of COVID-19 and remote work. To help clarify matters for those represented by the UAW under the Academic Researchers Unit, the Academic Personnel Office seeks to address concerns specific to academic researcher employment matters.

Research Productivity and Merit Reviews

The University will continue to follow the merit and promotions process, as outlined in the RA Contract (<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/ra/contract.html>). As part of this, Academic Researchers may still request a one-year deferral, which must be approved.

It is understandable that academic researchers may be concerned about the possible negative effects of the COVID-19 situation on scholarly activity. Certainly, for some appointees, the disruptions of shelter-in-place ordinances, both direct (e.g., an inability to access laboratories, go on research-related travel, etc.) and indirect (e.g., childcare issues, a need to devote time to adjust to remote work), will have a short-term effect on research productivity. It also remains possible that disruptions to research will extend some ways into the future. Rest assured, that this context will be taken into account in future reviews.

To this end, we recommend that, in future cases, academic researchers explain how their research was negatively affected during this period in their self-statements. As is always true in self-statements, appointees need not reveal personal or private information (e.g., one does not need to detail underlying medical conditions that made them at risk; one can simply state, “due to the COVID-19 outbreak, I was unable to access facilities for *N* weeks”). When updating their CVs, appointees are encouraged to make note of conferences, talks at other universities, and the like to which they were invited, but unable to attend due to COVID-19. As in all merit and promotion cases, units (departments, schools, centers, and institutes) should provide the context for any periods of reduced activity. In the case of COVID-19-related ramp-down in research, reduction in professional activities, or any similar delays, units should indicate that the anomalies in the record were due to the COVID-19 measures implemented by the University and others. Appointees can be confident that Deans, Directors, and administrators will take all of these factors into consideration when reviewing cases that cover this time period.

Possible Extension of the Eight-Year Limit for Assistant Researchers

An Assistant Researcher may request an extension of the eight-year limit clock when circumstances beyond the control of the researcher in question significantly interfere with that individual’s research. For instance, interference due to serious and prolonged illness (theirs or that of someone in their care) or frustration of research efforts (e.g., cannot access the lab to run crucial experiments; data collection is impossible due to travel restrictions; and so forth). Extensions may be granted for one year for COVID-19-related interference in research. Any such request must be made within two years of the onset of the relevant circumstances and cannot be made in the year in which the promotion review is required to occur.

A request for an extension to the eight-year limit must be submitted electronically, routed through one’s unit head (PI) and Chair, with final approval by the Dean. The request must specify the year being identified to not count towards the

eight-year limit. Approval of requests will be evaluated individually. Your Dean's Office Academic Personnel teams can provide further guidance in preparing any requests.

COVID-19 Related Leaves

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Academic Researchers have access to their regular leave options afforded under their contract:

- Sick Leave: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/ra/docs/ra_2019-2024_25_sick-leave.pdf
- Leaves of Absences: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/ra/docs/ra_2019-2024_12_leaves-of-absence.pdf
- Vacation: https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/ra/docs/ra_2019-2024_32_vacation.pdf

In addition, President Napolitano has issued an executive order providing up to 16 days or 128 hours of administrative leave for all employees for the following purposes:

1. When an employee is unable to work due to the employee's own COVID-19-related illness or that of a family member;
2. When an employee is unable to work because the employee has been directed not to come to the worksite for COVID-19-related reasons and/or the work site has implemented a COVID-19-related remote-work program or is under a shelter in place order and it is not operationally feasible for the employee to work remotely;
3. When an employee is unable to work because a COVID-19 related school or daycare closure requires the employee to be home with a child or dependent, and it is not operationally feasible for the employee to work remotely or in conjunction with the childcare commitment.

The 16 days or 128 hours is inclusive of the 14 days of administrative leave previously announced. Further detailed guidance regarding application for and use of administrative leave has already been sent to Deans and Chairs. If employees or departments have immediate questions about the executive order or have an employee who wishes to apply for leave, please contact your Dean's Office Academic Personnel team.

Lastly, FFCRA Leave options may also available to those that qualify:

1. FFCRA Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) – A new option from the Federal CARES legislation: Up to 80 hours (two-week equivalent for part-time employees)
2. FFCRA Expanded Family and Medical Leave (EFML) – Up to 12 workweeks (first two weeks unpaid unless other available paid leaves are used) - A new option from the Federal CARES legislation.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://insideucr.ucr.edu/announcements/2020/04/16/job-protection-covid-19-related-paid-leaves>
<https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/covid19-updates>

Regards,

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