

Faculty Retention Processes at UCR

August 2023

1. Preemptive Retention

Figure 1 is a flowchart that shows the UCR preemptive retention process. This revised revision is motivated by questions around the clarity, transparency, and implementation of the preemptive retention process. The primary objective of the revision is to clarify details of the existing documentation so that the preemptive retention process that is used on the campus is done so in a consistent manner. A second objective is to add additional checkpoints into the process that distribute the decision-making authority to multiple stakeholders. What follows is a narrative around the process depicted in Figure 1.

1.1 Initiating Event

A preemptive retention initiates when there is concrete evidence that a faculty member is being pursued by another institution. A threshold too low will lead to preemptive retention cases that are not well founded, while a threshold that is too high will delay and potentially hamper retention efforts. For example, an invitation to apply for a job opening is too low of a threshold since all faculty searches are intent on vigorously encouraging as many applications as possible. On the other hand, requiring a completed job talk is too high since that occurs at a late stage and shortens the window for retention efforts at UCR. The revised process includes a requirement to be shortlisted for an interview, meaning an invitation to give a job talk, and is early enough in the process that UCR can react while at the same time credible enough that retention is an issue.

1.2 Candidate Liaison

The function of the candidate's liaison is to present the candidate's interest to the department and the Dean. The liaison also has the opportunity to present their view of the situation to the Dean, independent of the overall department view. Historically the department chair has served as the liaison given their leadership role. The revised procedures extend the possibility that the liaison could be an alternative person in the college, such as a senior colleague, an associate/divisional dean, or the equity advisor. The alternative choices aim to remove cases

where the candidate is uncomfortable about the department chair handling the role, possibly due to past disagreements and/or conflict.

1.3 Department Vote and Letter

The revised procedure advocates for a department voice in the retention process. Department members coexist, and excluding their voice does not reflect shared governance. A vote from the Senate faculty on whether the retention effort is warranted provides all review bodies a broader understanding of department priorities and desires. A fully up-to-date CV and a thorough analysis of the risk and impact of losing the faculty member should be presented to the voting faculty. Recognizing that the vote might be a sensitive issue, it should be obtained by the liaison in an anonymous way, reported to all review bodies, but not shared with the candidate.

The department letter summarizes the circumstances of the retention case, including a consensus view the department has about the credibility of the potential departure and the impact the departure would have on the department. The department letter will provide the Dean the department's view of the "pull factor" associated with the opportunity the candidate is considering and what the loss would be to the department, college, and campus if the candidate were to leave. The department letter is shared with the candidate. At any stage during the preemptive retention process, and in particular at this stage, the candidate may choose to withdraw the request for a retention review.

1.4 Joint Letter

The purpose of the joint letter (co-authored by the Dean and the Liaison) is to consolidate independent perspectives of the department, the liaison, and the Dean on whether, and why, a retention effort is warranted. Differing perspectives should be presented as such. The joint letter is shared with the candidate, and here again, the candidate has the option to withdraw the request for a retention review.

1.5 Dean's Letter

If the candidate opts to continue with the retention review process and the Dean is supportive of the effort, the Dean enters into the negotiation of the retention terms. The negotiation is guided by the joint letter, possibly involves the Liaison for communication with the candidate about possible and desired terms, and possibly involves the VPAP for salary matters. A standard term that will normally be included in all negotiated retention packages at UCR is that if they are accepted there will be a 5-year moratorium on subsequent retention reviews for the candidate. The candidate may meet directly with the Dean to facilitate efficiency in the negotiation of terms, though this meeting is not required. Ultimately the Dean writes a letter that outlines the terms they are able to offer.

The Dean's letter is added to the joint letter and the candidate's CV to comprise a retention review packet. The retention review packet is reviewed by CAP and the VPAP, who each add a vote on if the retention is warranted. The review packet, along with the CAP and VPAP votes, are sent to the Provost for the final decision on the retention offer.

1.6 Escalated Review

If the candidate opts to continue with the retention review process but the Dean is not supportive, an escalated review outside the college occurs. The escalated review is a new part of the process to bring an additional layer of shared governance into the process. Escalated review begins by sending the joint letter and then candidate's CV to CAP. CAP adds a vote on if retention is warranted and sends the case to the VPAP for an additional vote on if retention is warranted, and finally the case is sent the Provost for a final decision on if retention is warranted.

If the Provost's decision on the escalated review is that retention is warranted, the Dean's decision is overruled and the process returns to the junction where the Dean opens negotiation with the candidate on retention terms.

1.7 Timing

Due to the outside pressure to review and possibly address preemptive retention cases locally at UCR, all parties to the process are requested to work toward completing the entire review and decision process, beginning to end, within two weeks. If the candidate receives an offer letter before the preemptive retention process completes, the steps in the retention review process continue with the offer letter added to the retention review packet, and the need for an expedited review process becomes even more important.

1.8 Declined Retentions

If the candidate declines a retention offer to accept an outside opportunity, there will be no expectation that the UCR position will be held open for a period of time that would allow the candidate to decide if they want to come back to it. Whether or not such an option is available to the candidate is at the discretion of the Dean. In any case, if it is offered to the candidate it will be understood that normally the retention offer that was made is rescinded and the return to UCR will be at the same rank, step, and salary they were at before they left.

2. Non-Preemptive Retention

Figure 2 is a flowchart that documents the UCR non-preemptive retention process. Unlike the preemptive retention process, there was no documentation that explained how non-preemptive retentions work. The effort here does not introduce any change to how the non-

preemptive retention process has been informally working at UCR. Instead, it documents this process to help to ensure it is transparently and consistently used across the campus.

What follows is a narrative around the non-preemptive retention process depicted in Figure 2. While some of the sections below mirror what was described for the preemptive retention process (section 1) there are some differences and it can be seen one of the major differences is that the non-preemptive retention process takes place primarily within the college. The (historical) reason that reviews outside the college do not take place is the relative time sensitivity to these cases.

2.1 Initiating Event

A non-preemptive retention initiates when the candidate has an outside offer letter in-hand.

2.2 Candidate Liaison

This section is identical to section 1.2.

2.3 Department Vote and Letter

This section is identical to section 1.3.

2.4 Dean's Decision

If the Dean is supportive of the retention effort they will enter into the negotiation of terms with the candidate, possibly through the Liaison, and possibly in consultation with the VPAP for salary matters. The negotiation is guided by the department letter and involving the Liaison who would be in communication with the candidate about possible and desired terms. A standard term that will normally be included in all negotiated retention packages at UCR is that if they are accepted there will be a 5-year moratorium on subsequent retention reviews for the candidate. The candidate may meet directly with the Dean to facilitate efficiency in the negotiation of terms, though this meeting is not required. Ultimately the Dean writes a letter that outlines the terms they are able to offer that the Liaison shares with the candidate, which the candidate either accepts or decline.

If the Dean is not supportive of the retention effort the Liaison carries that message back to the candidate and the process ends.

3. Summary

The revisions to the retention processes at UCR are squarely aimed to improve the campus documentation around the processes. The flowcharts described here for each case, along with the detailed narratives of each, will improve the consistency, transparency, and implementation of retention efforts on our campus.

Figure 1. UCR Preemptive Retention Process

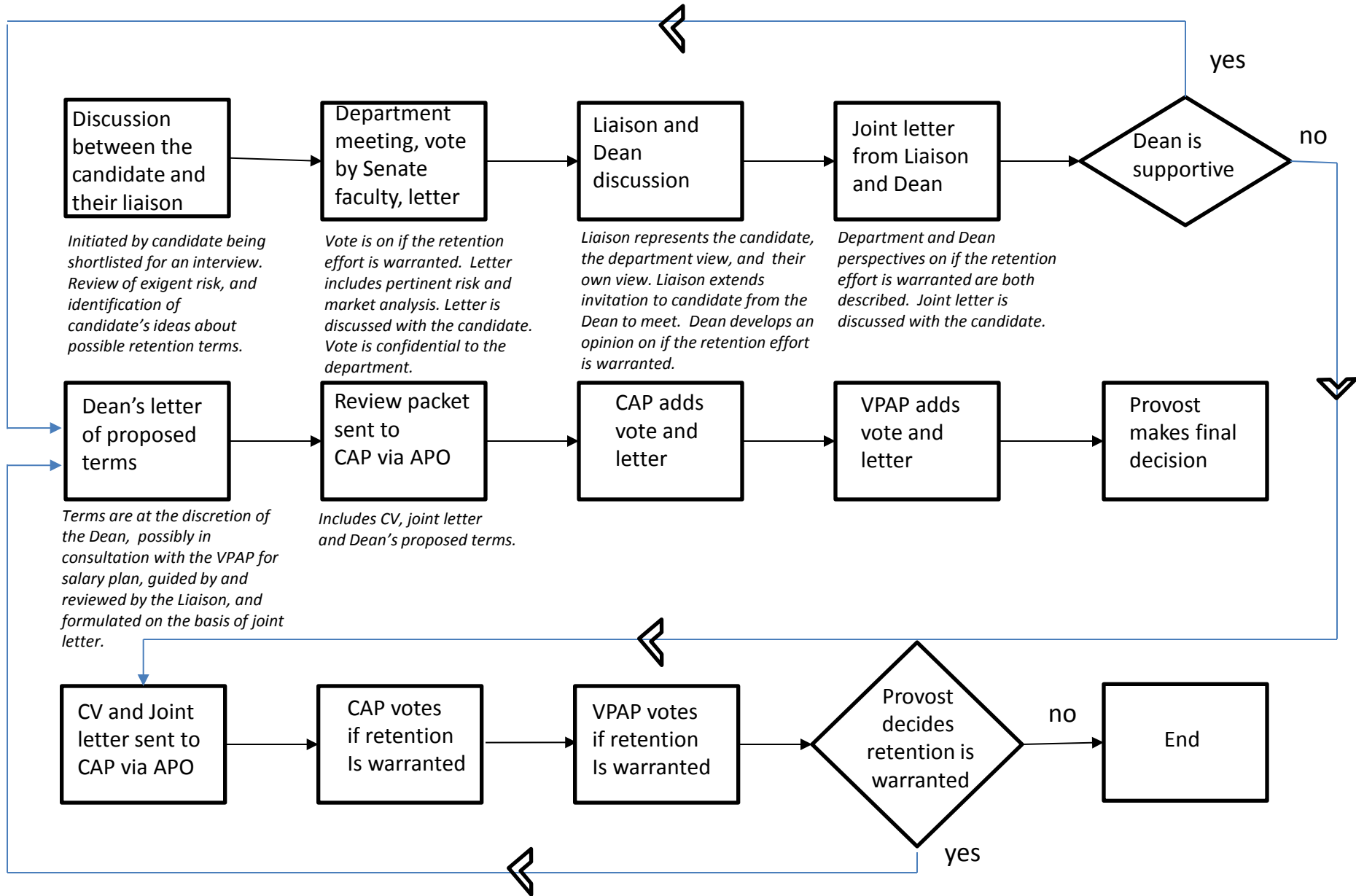


Figure 2. UCR Non-Preemptive Retention Process

