

## **STAFF SENATE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

### **June 9, 2020 Meeting Report**

The Staff Grievance Committee received one grievance since the last full Senate meeting regarding a written warning. SGC Vice Chair, Barbara Bishop, chaired the grievance hearings and has sent the committee's recommendation to HR and the Final Grievant Authority. The final outcome of this grievance is pending.

The timing of this grievance, resulting from disciplinary action, was concerning to SGC members. SGC feels that disciplinary actions during the COVID-19 pandemic are concerning, and drafted a statement that was sent to Dr. Bendapudi, Michael Wade Smith, Dr. Boehm, Mary Elizabeth Miles (HR), Donna Ernst (HR), and Laura Schroeder (HR). Our statement is as follows:

In light of the difficult and stressful times surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Staff Grievance Committee was disheartened to learn of a recent grievance regarding a written warning placed in an employee's file. UL Staff members are facing unprecedented times: learning how to perform job duties to the best of their abilities while working from home, facing mandatory pay cuts and furloughs, losing retirement contributions for 3 months, and the general feeling of uncertainty on whether their jobs will still be there for them when the crisis is over. Overall, the flexibility, dedication, and responsibility shown by UL Staff is to be commended.

The Staff Grievance Committee requests that all supervisors and HR personnel take these circumstances into account when considering any disciplinary actions during this time. A thoughtful, well-crafted Performance Improvement Plan will undoubtedly be better received than a written warning that has the potential to follow the employee throughout their time at UL. A little compassion goes a long way right now. As Neeli says, "We will get through this together." We can think of no better way to show togetherness than propping one another up and showing empathy for our fellow Staff.

Respectfully,

The Staff Senate Grievance Committee

SGC received an email response from Mary Elizabeth Miles clarifying that while HR does not have the ability or authority to issue discipline, she appreciates our concerns. She also indicated that HR is doing their best to care for Staff during these difficult times. In addition, we have asked Senate Chair John Smith to discuss this matter further in an upcoming meeting with Neeli.

SGC held its third and final mandatory meeting of the 2019-2020 fiscal year on June 8<sup>th</sup>. We discussed the grievances we have heard during this Senate year, as well as the historical grievance data we have obtained from HR going back to 2015. This data raised some concerns about how frequently SGC recommendations are followed. We will be communicating these concerns with Mary Elizabeth Miles and possibly the Policy & Economic Development Committee for assistance in reviewing the current policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Beare

Chair, Staff Grievance Committee