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UCLA statement regarding lawsuit by environmental health sciences researcher

By Media Relations & Public Outreach June 14, 2012

While UCLA officials have not yet seen the complaint, the university strongly disputes the allegations made in a statement issued by attorneys for James Enstrom and intends to vigorously contest the lawsuit in court.

UCLA zealously protects the intellectual independence of members of our academic community and has long maintained that Enstrom's political and scientific views and outside activities were not considered during his reappointment process.

In response to his grievance, Enstrom — a researcher with the environmental health sciences department at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health — had a full and fair hearing consistent with [applicable procedures](#), including a hearing before a retired judge serving as an independent hearing officer. The grievance process concluded in August 2011, resulting in Enstrom's appointment ending on June 30, 2012.

To protect the rights of academic personnel, the University of California system and the UCLA campus have in place detailed and rigorous procedures to consider the grievances of those who believe they have been treated unfairly in their employment. These procedures afford appropriate due process while ensuring a careful factual assessment upon which to make a final determination. (Because Enstrom is not a professor, the rules and regulations governing his employment differ from those of a tenured faculty member. Nevertheless, the grievance process afforded to researchers includes several separate stages of review and includes the right to a full evidentiary hearing.)

For non-tenured academic appointees such as Enstrom, the grievance procedures include a written statement by the grievant, an independent review of and response to the grievance, a full hearing including testifying witnesses, the submission of documentary evidence and legal arguments, and findings and recommendations by an independent hearing officer. To protect the grievant and the witnesses, the findings and recommendations of the independent hearing officer are confidential. Enstrom and his representatives had previously made public his grievance.

UCLA hopes that the current spotlight on the university's robust procedures will assure the community of UCLA's continued commitment to the preservation of academic freedom and the promotion of the free exchange of ideas.