

## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### Minutes of Meeting

Thursday, September 28, 2023

#### I. Approval of the Agenda

**Action Taken:** *The agenda was approved 9-0-0.*

#### II. Welcome and Chair's Report/Orientation

*Chair Farrell Ackerman*

A. Introductions -

B. Charge and Recent Issues of Interest to UCAF

1. Discussion of foundational issues concerning Academic Freedom
2. List of Academic Freedom Resources
3. UCESC Letter on Harassment to Ethnic Studies Scholars
4. DEI Statements in Faculty Promotion and Job Applicant Files
5. Administration intercession in campus hiring procedures and decisions.

The Chair gave members an orientation to the ideas and interpretations of academic freedom. He expressed his concern that issues of academic freedom are not taken adequately into account in the development of divisional and systemwide policies. As a consequence, many proposed policies have detrimental consequences to education and research. Chair Ackerman said that University policies are typically developed in response to political pressures. He told members that it is up to UCAF to figure out how insert issues of academic freedom and shared governance into policy development. The Chair said that campus CAFs and UCAF have tended to be reactive in the past, rather than being included in important policy development discussions.

Chair Ackerman informed the committee that he would be working this year to get UCAF onto Academic Council. Attacks on academic freedom are forcing UCAF to take a more central role in paying attention to the University's actions as a whole. As an example, he cited UC's commitment to undergraduate growth, which largely was made without consultation with the Senate; this has had enormous consequences for teaching and research. He also mentioned the system's adoption of a new online finance systems without consultation with the faculty which has resulted in severe impacts on faculty research.

Vice Chair Gailmard remarked that [APM 10](#) is a key "touchstone" of the committee and that academic freedom is a collective right of the faculty for authority over scholarship and teaching standards. He said that the role of CAFs has become increasingly important over the past few years. He discussed examples of how academic freedom, shared governance, and faculty authority have been disregarded or marginalized in recent decisions by the administration. He emphasized that the committee should frame its objectives and agenda through its charge in relation to the collective authority of the faculty over scholarship and standards.

The committee had questions and there was discussion.

### III. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership

*James Steintrager, Academic Senate Chair*

Academic Senate Chair Steintrager remarked that the Vice Chair Cheung was traveling and would not be joining the meeting.

Chair Steintrager discussed California Public Records Act requests which may come to UCAF. Last year, a request came to BOARS and the Senate leadership met with UC Legal, which advised that the Senate turn over a redacted version of the BOARS meeting transcript. Chair Steintrager observed that UC is a public institution and that it should be transparent, however it is also important that committees have frank discussions. If the University starts getting routine requests, the Senate will be unable to do its work. Ultimately, the Senate leadership convinced Provost Newman and UC Legal that it should not surrender the transcript, and the Provost and UC Legal said they would support the Senate if the issue ends up in court.

The Regents' Special Committee on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which has recently sunsetted, was deeply interested in a better patent tracking system and better proof of concept funding. Chair Steintrager shared a link to the President's Entrepreneurship Network Council: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/new-uc-presidents-panel-advance-uc-systems-capacity-innovation-and-entrepreneurship>. The Senate is concerned that there is not a strong faculty voice on this council, and intends to press for more representation. The Regents had their annual retreat three weeks ago where they discussed priorities with the chancellors and OP senior management. There was a presentation on admissions that was well-received. The retreat also featured a panel on online education, particularly undergraduate online education. The Provost believes that the University should be doing more in this area. Chair Steintrager noted that UCI and UCSC had submitted proposals last year for online degrees. The Irvine proposal was blocked by the Senate's passage of a modified residency requirement. The Santa Cruz proposal was approved with the condition that students complete two semesters/three quarters on-campus. The Regents believe that online education will lead to revenue generation but have not given careful consideration to the need to maintain UC quality in the process. Chair Steintrager referred members to his remarks to the Regents at their meeting last week: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/resources/regents-remarks.html>. In his remarks, he mentioned that academic freedom is one of the core principles on which the Senate will not bend, although it is willing to collaborate and even compromise at times.

Chair Steintrager went on to discuss Academic Council, which had met the previous day. The meeting featured a privileged discussion with APP and UC Legal related to the strike and grievances, and the delineation between academic work and employment. The President joined the meeting for a time and about online undergraduate education. The Chair then told the committee about AB 1291 and AB 1749. AB 1749 was introduced by Assemblymember McCarty and would have forced the University to use Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs), which were developed for CSU. This bill eventually died, but has been replaced by AB 1291, which is currently on the governor's desk, and likely will be signed. SGR worked with

Sacramento to get the bill into a form that is acceptable to UC, though it is still far from being ideal. AB 1291 will force UCLA to use ADTs in a pilot way for the next several years with an evaluation of efficacy at the end of the trial period. Chair Steintrager told the committee that it should pay close attention to ACA 6, which is temporarily dead. The Senate submitted an opposition letter to this amendment with very short notice; the letter mentions the importance of academic freedom to the University.

Finally, the APC has two working groups that the Chair thought would be of interest to the committee. One is the on the Future of UC Doctoral Programs; it will have a report at the Provost's congress on October 9. A second working group on faculty work and recovery post-pandemic has just launched. It will be looking at how UC should rebalance its three missions of instruction, research, and service in the wake of Covid 19.

Committee members had questions for the Senate Chair and there was discussion.

#### **IV. Items Under Systemwide Review**

- A. Proposed Revisions to the Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Health Care Organizations  
*Comments due by October 18*

Chair Ackerman remarked that this proposed policy has been rewritten many times. It is response to the University's affiliation with institutions with ERDs.

The committee discussed the proposed policy and what should be incorporated in its response to UCOP. The Chair made note of the discussion and said he would circulate a draft for committee review before submitting it to UCOP.

- B. Proposed Revisions to Academic Senate Bylaw 55 (Departmental Voting Rights)  
*Comments due by December 6*

The Chair told the committee that this proposed revision was intended to standardize the rights and obligations of teaching professors on campuses. Committee members largely expressed grave concerns regarding the revisions and engaged in extensive discussion of the issue.

The Chair will circulate a draft of the committee response before submitting it to UCOP.

- C. Proposed Revisions to the Presidential Policy on Vaccination Programs  
*Comments due by December 6*

The committee chose not to opine on these proposed revisions.

- D. Proposed Academic Personnel Manual (APM) Section 672, Negotiated Salary Program  
*Comments due by December 6*

The committee chose not to opine on this item.

## V. Topics for 2023-24

- A. Should UCAF be a Council Committee – What are the procedures for inclusion on Academic Council?

Chair Ackerman remarked that that divisional CAF committees are typically not on Council and the same holds true for the systemwide committee. He suggested that the committee consult with former Senate Chair Jim Chalfant regarding how to strategize an appeal for UCAF to join Council. He stated that such strategizing likely would necessitate UCAF meeting more frequently than it currently does.

Vice Chair Gailmard added that UCAF is the body of the Senate that focuses most squarely on the rights of faculty to judge scholarship and teaching. He said that the argument should be that it would be good for Council to have that academic freedom concerns reflected in its regular business and in its deliberations with the administration.

## VI. Frequency/Duration of UCAF Meetings

Should UCAF meet more frequently than three times a year?

**Action Taken: The committee voted 11-0-0 to hold more meetings.**

The Chair and Vice Chair will develop a proposed schedule of additional meetings and will share them with the group.

## VII. Campus Reports

Members reported on campus-specific issues concerning academic freedom.

The committee adjourned at 12:50 p.m.