

University Committee on Faculty Welfare

Minutes of Meeting

March 11, 2022

I. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Robert Horwitz, Academic Council Chair

Susan Cochran, Academic Council Vice Chair

- Regents: 1) At the Health Services Committee (HSC), A) Executive Vice President Byington reported that 50% masking was quite safe. B) UCOP's phased re-opening has finally begun. C) New contracts with affiliated providers are being signed or negotiated in compliance with new Regents policy. Negotiations with the Veteran's Administration could be challenging. HSC Chair Perez is monitoring the contracts closely, but the Senate is asking for additional oversight, too. The Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Audit Services (ECAS) continues to work on a whistle blower hotline for trainees and providers assigned to these affiliates. 2) At the Innovation, Transfer, and Entrepreneurship Committee, it was decided to send patent tracking duties to the campuses, including the local choice of patent tracking software. UCOP will maintain best practices and provide back-up, but interoperability is already a concern. 3) Chair Estolano termed out on March 1, and Regent Leib is interim chair.
- International Education: Legacy federal bans against the People's Republic of China from the previous presidential administration are leading to bad climates on the campuses. President Drake will contact Federal Government Relations for options.
- State Budget: The University is asking for additional one-time funds for seismic retrofitting and some new construction.
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): Halting the Berkeley enrollment growth plan would have significant consequences to the other campuses. In the long-term, UC will ask the legislature to sever enrollment growth from CEQA. In the short-term, UCB will have to roll back its enrollment to 2020 levels, bringing consternation to students and financial hits to the campus. Members noted that more online courses were being pushed as the first alternative by some administrators. Members also noted that more online courses at Berkeley could impact enrollment at other campuses.
- Online Degree Programs: The Senate still has not reached consensus as to whether fully online undergraduate degree programs can deliver a UC education. The University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) continues to develop principles that must be met for such degrees. Few competitors have tried this, and those that have are not selective or diverse. Enrollees have low graduation rates, high debt, and high student-faculty ratios.
- Online Academic Integrity: The Regents will hear more about this next week.

- Cybersecurity: Expect an announcement soon that the Experian identity theft coverage has been extended for another year. The Senate continues to press for the coverage to be made permanent.
- Retirement: 1) A budget for the Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC) that includes funding for hybrid retirement counseling has been submitted. 2) Problems with the Navitus/Rx transition continue, and are receiving executive attention. 3) Human Resources continues to investigate the benefits billing for recalled retirees.
- Teaching Modalities: A student sit-in at UCLA called for mandatory recording of classes and permanent hybrid delivery. The University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAAF) has issued a memo indicating that accommodations should be individualized, not blanket. There are privacy and intellectual property/copyright concerns to weigh, too.
- Mitigating the Impact of COVID on Faculty: The draft final report will be going to the provost imminently, and the final report will be presented to the Regents. Full promulgation on the campuses remains an issue. Members noted more rewards and resources are needed given the significant COVID-related difficulties faculty faced and overcame.
- New Masters Programs: A joint Senate-administration task force to determine where new masters program approval should lie held its first meeting. The Senate is particularly concerned with approval of new self-supporting graduate and professional degree programs (SSGPDP).

II. Consultation with the Office of the President – Academic Personnel and Programs

Susan Carlson, Vice Provost

1. ARO Beyond COVID

If crisis circumstances are recognized, rewards should still be given if achievements relative to opportunity are also recognized. If someone was only able to work 50% time, a 50% step or merit would seem appropriate. Some suggested limiting partial advancement to assistant or associate professors as they are most in need. More data could help with targeting groups- salary and advancement by discipline, for example. Quality standards should not change, but perhaps prolific productivity should not be expected. Some worry about exposing one's life circumstances; mental health issues can be shaming. An alternate path should be found if there is a lack of information, but the situation is still justifiable. Transparency must be balanced with privacy.

Others suggested that reviewers are already compassionate, and that a 50% reward could be misinterpreted as unsatisfactory performance. Chair Hollenbach permission framework is needed to allow for a different way of applying the same standards. A pilot program could provide proof of concept. Coordination with other Senate committees is encouraged.

III. Report: UCFW Task Force on Investment and Retirement (TFIR)

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

1. TFIR of February 28, 2022

- The Chief Investment Officer is reviewing the fund allocations for the target date funds in the Retirement Savings Program. This work is “under the hood,” so communications are unclear at this point.
- TFIR has continued work on its pension choice modeling tool for new hires. The model accommodates the PEPRA cap and the faculty supplemental 403(b) fund. The model also allows projections for the Second Choice, for those who initially chose the defined contribution plan but want to switch to the defined benefit plan. The model includes a staff/faculty toggle, and projects the percent of final salary that can be expected. Members noted that careful communications would need to accompany the model, since even though these are UC hires, this topic is esoteric and complicated. Some worry about possible legal liability for giving bad advice to someone. The final model should be included in campus Academic Personnel offer letter templates.

IV. Report: UCFW Health Care Task Force (HCTF)

Michael Ong, HCTF Chair

1. HCTF of February 18, 2022

- Navitus: This Rx transition has been a disaster. More than 8,000 transition issues have been reported, including over 400 retirees. Resolution requires manual data entry due to software transition issues, too. Prior authorizations seem to double the work. Most tickets have been resolved, but this poor level of performance must carry consequences. Savings to the institution are unlikely to outweigh difficulties to UC community members.
- Fertility Benefits: Human Resources is considering an overlay, but an RFP process would be needed. The final benefit design also needs to be determined.
- Benefits Budget: A practice from the Napolitano era limited budget increases to the benefits plans to 4% annually. This “cap” is not policy. With the Senate calling for the addition of fertility benefits, expanded behavioral health coverage, and more, this practice is not sustainable. And then there is the rate of medical inflation. A robust state budget leaves room for more institutional spending on benefits. Members noted that out-of-state retirees are also facing inflation, but their subsidy has not increased since the current model was launched.

V. Consultation with the Office of the President – Human Resources

Cheryl Lloyd, Vice President

1. UC Path Oversight and Interactions with RASC

VP Lloyd clarified that UC Path was not under her supervision, but rather reports to COO Nava. Nevertheless, as a member of the UC Path oversight board, VP Lloyd shared that there is a new executive director for UC Path, and monthly leadership updates with HR, APP, and others are occurring. The new UC Path budget has room for more staff and better training. Deloitte will provide an external review.

There are regular meetings between RASC and UC Path. Successful systems, such as telephony, are being shared, too.

Members noted that UC Path sign-on security could be enhanced.

2. Rx Transition Update

The Executive Steering Committee meets later today, and hopefully some concrete actions will result. It is unclear if the gaps in service were misrepresented or miscommunicated. It is unclear if UC failed in its due diligence, or if Navitus overrepresented their capabilities. This level of disruption is not worth the institutional savings.

Members encouraged a drastic response and noted that commercial Rx discount companies were both cheaper and easier to use. Members asked for a time frame for full resolution, but none can be given at present. Members wondered if there are root problems in the procurement/RFP process itself.

3. Fertility Coverage

Fellows and residents will receive this benefit, so other cohorts will expect it, as well. VP Lloyd noted that the recruitment for the Total Rewards executive director is underway. More employee preference information would be useful in designing and costing out a benefit. Members noted that costs for this coverage were unlikely to drop, so acting sooner would save money in the long run. Members also noted that this is a recruitment and retention concern.

4. Benefits for Recalled Retirees

A provision in the Affordable Care Act overlaps oddly with a provision in Medicare, causing the FTE calculation question for recalled retirees on less than 100% time. UC Legal is investigating, and an outside counsel will also be engaged. The time frame is unclear.

5. Local Retirement Counselors

The RASC budget was approved by COO Nava and is going to the president for final approval. Counselors will be hired and trained by RASC and assigned to support specific campuses. They will operate in a hybrid fashion for now.

6. Other Items

- HR is starting a team for survivor benefits with a dedicated line.
- Members asked for more information on limits on staff promotion opportunities. VP Lloyd indicated that promotion varies by location. UCOP is already forming a CORO working group to investigate the issue. VP Lloyd suggested UCFW invite the staff compensation and promotion team to discuss the PPSM and Career Tracks.
- Members noted that dental providers are dropping Delta Dental as an insurer. VP Lloyd will look into the situation.

VI. UCFW Business

1. ARO Beyond COVID – Next Steps

The chair of the Riverside divisional Faculty Welfare committee developed a possible model for incorporating ARO principles into faculty reviews, which may be shared to help spark discussion. Securing buy-in from chairs and deans could be a challenge, but amending the APM would help ensure consistency. Including useful materials and findings from the final Mitigating the Impact of COVID on Faculty report would strengthen any UCFW recommendations.

When discussing life circumstances – even for disaster accommodation, privacy concerns remain. Yet the academy has changed, and the evaluation and rewards system needs to change, too. ARO principles should not be pitted against academic standards.

It was noted that the decoupling of merit reviews and promotions was an odd legacy practice.

2. Proactive Planning for the Next Crisis

Securing more Shared Governance and faculty participation in planning efforts continues to be a challenge. Morale is suffering on this front, too.

3. Other Campus Updates: Mask Mandates

UCB: The campus already dropped its mandate to a mixed response. No concern for the faculty perspective was given. There was no clear justification for the decision.

UCD: The county ended mandates in February, and the campus complied. Poor central communications continue to be an issue. Testing protocols continue, though.

UCI: Mandates will be dropped March 19. The campus had a mixed response.

UCLA: A deadline has been set, unless testing data dictate a reversal. Mandatory testing will also soon end. No Senate consultation was offered.

UCM: Mandates seem to whipsaw, but clear communications mitigate negative responses.

UCR: Mandates will be in place through the end of spring quarter, but conflicting information is already circulating. The faculty were not involved in the decision-making. The current system leaves it to individual faculty to decide to enforce or not.

UCSD: No decision has been made.

UCSF: No changes have been announced as of yet.

UCSB: Mandates are in place through the end of winter quarter. Decisions for spring have not yet been made.

UCSC: (absent during this item)

Chair Hollenbach suggested a memo covering principles for how to handle crisis planning, including Shared Governance, metrics, communications standards, and decision-making transparency expectations. Members should send best practices.

VII. Systemwide Review Items

➤ Assign Lead Reviewer

- Proposed Presidential Policy on UC Research Data – Second Systemwide Review
 - ❖ UCD Representative Bales will serve as lead reviewer.

➤ Determine Committee Position

- Recommendations for Department Political Statements
 - ❖ Analyst Feer will draft a memo based on last month's discussion.

VIII. Chair's Announcements

Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

1. Academic Council of February 23, 2022

A volunteer is sought to sit on the Advancing Faculty Diversity proposal review committee.

IX. New Business

- Members noted that implementation of the new lecturer contract has proven onerous.

Adjournment 4:05 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

Attendance:

Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

Terry Dalton, UCFW Vice Chair

Laura Nelson, UCB

Karen Bales, UCD

Carson Schutze, UCLA

Jayson Beaster-Jones, UCM

John Heraty, UCR

Kim Cooper, UCSD

Jenny Liu, UCSF

Lisa Parks, UCSB

Nico Orlandi, UCSC

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

Michael Ong, HCTF Chair

Henning Bohn, UCRS Advisory Board Faculty Representative

Harry Powell, CUCEA Chair