

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (UCAF)

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) met two times in Academic Year 2017-2018 to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in Senate Bylaw 130. Highlights of the Committee's activities and accomplishments are noted in this report.

Campus Climate and Free Speech Issues and UC Student Association Letter

In December, UCAF had a lengthy discussion about free speech and hate speech on UC campuses. This conversation was prompted by a letter to President Napolitano and the Board of Regents, dated Oct. 23, 2017, from representatives of the UC Student Association (USCA). Senior Counsel Elisabeth Yap in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) at the Office of the President was invited to the meeting to clarify the legal issues and UC policies related to free speech and hate speech. UCAF learned that OGC is providing guidance and support to the campuses on issues related to speech, protest, and climate. While climate is a high priority for the chancellors, there will be variations across the campuses about how these matters are handled.

Counselor Yap explained that the University generally has the right to condemn certain speakers or types of speech, exercising its own right to speak but that UC is a public institution and there are many spaces on UC campuses where members of the public have the legal right to express themselves regardless of their viewpoints. UCAF members agreed that hateful speech causes real harms and that the University should provide resources to aid those students who are targeted and negatively impacted by that speech. In May, [UCAF's response to the UCSA letter](#) was forwarded by the Academic Council to the Student Association's president.

Federal Government Funding Priorities and Policies

In March, UCAF discussed new screening policies for discretionary grants instituted by federal funding agencies such as the [Interior Department](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#). The American Association of University Professors [reported](#) on this subject in October 2017. Members investigated whether any researchers on their campuses had recently encountered problems with politicized grant administration. The committee did not learn of any UC research or projects have been affected to date although the policies may have had a chilling effect on UC faculty. UCAF related its concerns in [a memo to Academic Council](#) in May and the memo was subsequently transmitted to CAP chairs and to President Napolitano.

Other Issues and Additional Business

In response to requests for formal comment from the Academic Council, UCAF also issued views on the following:

- Task Force Report on the Fourth Year of the Negotiated Salary Trial Program
- The Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication's Proposed Declaration of Rights and Principles to Transform Scholarly Communication

Additionally, UCAF devoted part of each regular meeting to reports on issues facing local committees, including the need to raise awareness of academic freedom.

Respectfully submitted,

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