

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) met three times by videoconference (including one informal meeting) in Academic Year 2021-2022 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.

POSTING POLITICAL STATEMENTS ON DEPARTMENT WEBSITES

A critical issue this year was faculty members posting political statements on department websites. Academic Council asked UCAF to provide recommendations on this issue including whether - under the law, UC policy, or principles of academic freedom - departments should be able to issue such statements and, if so, how and what kind of disclaimers and procedures might be necessary. Following consultation with UC Legal at the Office of the President, UCAF submitted a set of [proposed recommendations](#) to Council, which were disseminated for systemwide Senate review in December. Based on the feedback from the review, the committee was instructed by Council to further debate concerns about coercion or chilling effects on less powerful members of a department, the need to employ such statements more judiciously and responsibly, and whether space should be allocated for minority statements. UCAF's [final recommendations](#) were endorsed by Council in May and transmitted to the divisional Senates and the administration.

MANDATORY RECORDINGS OF CLASSES AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

As the campuses were reopening in fall 2021, a conflict emerged related to faculty control over the modality of their teaching amidst calls from disabled students to require that all lectures be recorded. UCAF was asked by Council to provide recommendations regarding the mandated recording of classes. The committee solicited input from the divisional academic freedom committees and received expert guidance from UC Legal on the issue of recordings in the context of disability accommodations. In February, Council endorsed a [set of recommendations](#) from UCAF which were distributed to the divisional Senates.

UPDATED MEMO ON THE USE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENTS

In June 2021, a memo from UCAF and the Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Equity (UCAADE) to Council on the use of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) statements was forwarded to the systemwide Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EO/AA) administrators group. This April, UCAADE's chair met with the committee to report a number of concerns raised by the EO/AA group that highlighted the disparate perspectives of the Senate and the administration. The revised recommendations emphasized best practices that focus on the central role of faculty in the evaluation of DEI contributions. The updated [memo on the use of statements on contributions to DEI](#) for UC academic positions was endorsed by Council in April and disseminated to the provost in May 2022.

OTHER ISSUES AND ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

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

- Systemwide review of proposed revisions to APM 025 and APM 671
- Second systemwide Senate review of a proposed Presidential Policy on UC Research Data
- Systemwide review of the Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations

Additionally, UCAF devoted part of each regular meeting to reports on issues facing local committees, including how the data from recorded lectures are utilized and the China Initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

Ty Alper, Chair (B)

Sean Gailmard (B)

Terry Dalton (I)

David Jennings (M)

Farrell Ackerman (SD)

Alenda Chang (SB)

Perry Meade (Undergraduate Student)

Melike Pekmezci, Vice Chair (SF)

Carol Hess (D)

Susanne Lohmann (LA)

Ivy Zhang (R)

Donald Taylor (SF)

Minghui Hu (SC)

Robert Horwitz (Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*, (SD))

Susan Cochran (Vice Chair, Academic Senate, *Ex Officio*, (LA))

Brenda Abrams, Principal Analyst