

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (UCAF)  
2003-04 ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:**

Budget restrictions limited the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) to two meetings in Academic Year 2003-04: November 21, 2003 and March 23, 2004, in Oakland. Highlights of the Committee's activities and accomplishments are noted in this report.

**Resolution on the USA Patriot Act**

UCAF was interested in the mounting efforts on campuses to address the USA Patriot Act, which included divisional resolutions at Berkeley, Santa Cruz and Irvine opposing the Act and planned resolutions and educational forums at other divisions. To UCAF, these efforts revealed a widespread concern that the Patriot Act might be implemented in a way that could compromise civil liberties and academic freedom on campus. Members agreed that it would be important for members of the campus community to educate themselves about actual and potential dangers posed by the Patriot Act. A resolution was also developed and set before the committee in April, which passed unanimously.

“Be it resolved that the University of California Senate Committee on Academic Freedom supports efforts in the UC Academic Senate and on UC campuses to implement safeguards against potential threats to civil liberties and academic freedom posed by the USA PATRIOT Act and related acts of government legislation.”

In June, Academic Council unanimously endorsed a similar version of UCAF's resolution, which was forwarded to the president.

UCAF members will continue to monitor the implementation and effects of the Patriot Act along with efforts to oppose or address it at the campus level. In addition, members may consider taking steps to gather, compile and disseminate data on faculty opinion and experiences in relation to the Patriot Act.

**APM 010**

In November, several months after the Academic Assembly approved a revised University statement on Academic Freedom, UCLA's CAF asked UCAF to endorse its position that APM 010 be re-opened to a systemwide examination on the grounds that not enough time and effort had been devoted to educating faculty and involving them in the revision. UCAF members agreed that the process of Senate review had been conducted hastily and that educational efforts could have been more thorough, but the committee declined to endorse the UCLA position. Nevertheless, members thought that current interest around the APM revision provided an ideal opportunity to increase educational efforts about academic freedom and to clearly communicate the new policy at the campus level. Members were considering ways to engage their local committees in this effort.

### **Academic Freedom Forum Website**

A webpage for the June 2003 Systemwide Senate Forum on Academic Freedom was created on the Senate website. It contains speaker presentations, along with other relevant materials, academic freedom links, and resources. Members saw the webpage as a good means to disseminate information and knowledge from the event to a larger audience.

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ucaf/afforum/>

### **Academic Freedom and Students**

Student Regent Matt Murray joined UCAF in March to get input into a policy he had drafted on academic freedom for students. Regent Murray's position was that a new policy should address ambiguities about student academic freedom—in particular, students who are engaged as teaching assistants, post docs or researchers in scholarly inquiry, research and publishing activities in a capacity similar to faculty. It was not clear to UCAF that the notion of academic freedom as it relates to the professoriate can apply in the same sense to students. However, members concluded that it would be useful to have an affirmative policy or statement, consistent with the faculty code of conduct, as a clear reference for students about their rights and responsibilities. It was suggested that the starting point for such a policy or statement might be the faculty regulations relating to students outlined in APM 015. UCAF plans to take the issue up again next year.

### **Corporate and Economic Pressures on Academic Freedom**

UCSF Professor Lisa Bero joined UCAF to discuss her research into the correlations between corporate sponsorship of research and research findings that are friendly to the interests of the funders. The committee discussed how such ties could compromise freedom of inquiry and the stated mission of the university to discover new knowledge, and how inappropriate influences make it difficult for the academic community to judge scholarship quality, cast suspicion on the professoriate, and call into question the notion of self-regulation, a foundation of academic freedom. UCAF believes that it is the responsibility of the academic community to take control of this issue by managing its own conflicts of interest ethically, so controls are not imposed from the outside. In July, UCAF was asked to comment on a UCORP resolution regarding restrictions on sources of research funding. The committee took the opportunity to discuss some of these issues, and called upon Academic Council and appropriate Senate committees to investigate the problem.

Members also discussed the extent to which corporate funding of grants and clinical trials interacts with the academic personnel process as a possible incentive or disincentive for merit increases and promotions. It was suggested that CAPs and CAFs could work together on the issue. The committee will continue to discuss these issues in the future.

### **Proposed New Policy on Sexual Harassment**

In November, UCAF sent comments to Council about a proposed new university policy on sexual harassment. The comments focused on Paragraph G of the policy, entitled "Free Speech and Academic Freedom." UCAF suggested that more emphasis be placed

on protections for students, and the protection of scholarship. UCAF submitted two alternative formulations of Paragraph G to Academic Council.

### **Other Issues and Activities**

Finally, members devoted part of each regular meeting to reports and updates about issues facing local committees. Discussion included the authority of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs); civil liberties issue in connection with federal government access to student records; hate speech and conditions of civility on campus; university policy regarding the withholding of pay during a strike, political influence in federal scientific review panels; and discussion of academic freedom cases at other universities.

Respectfully submitted,

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