

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (UCAF)
ANNUAL REPORT 1999-2000**

TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE:

The charge of the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) is to study and report to the Assembly upon any condition within or outside the University that, in the Committee's judgment, may affect the academic freedom of the University, its faculty, and its students.

The Committee met once during the 1999-2000 academic year. At the request of the Academic Senate, the major business of the Committee was to review and comment on several proposed University policies to determine if there were academic freedom issues that might require Senate attention.

University of California Electronic Communications Policy. Although the Committee recommended several changes to the Electronic Communications Policy, to tighten up the language and restrain administrators from arbitrary decisions, these were of a minor nature and the policy was thought to be well crafted and comprehensive. Since the campuses have substantial responsibility for implementation of this policy, as indicated in many places in the document, UCAF recommended strongly that Divisional Senate Committees have the opportunity to review their implementation guidelines.

APM-025, Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty Members. During its review, UCAF did not think that there were any substantive academic freedom issues related to the proposed revision of APM-025.

APM-075, Policy on Termination for Incompetent Performance. UCAF reviewed the Senate's consensus document crafted by the past Academic Council Chair on APM-075. Members thought that the procedural components of the draft were well thought out. The following bulleted points, under Section II.B, were deemed particularly important and UCAF recommended vigorously that these be incorporated in the policy:

- “Incompetence must be determined on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation of all areas of performance.”
- “The faculty member's job should be treated as a coherent whole and the burden of proof of incompetent performance should be placed on those who make that charge.”
- “Unlike the tenure decision, where the burden of proof is on the faculty member to show evidence of accomplishment and promise, for termination the burden of proof of incompetent performance is on the institution.”
- “Proof of incompetent performance in a single area (research, teaching, or service) will be subject to especially high standards and would rarely result in termination.”

Following its deliberations, UCAF recommended that the policy be reviewed in five years after its implementation.

During a general discussion, UCAF members talked about the Committee's charge and what is meant by “academic freedom.” There was a suggestion that at a future meeting the Committee craft a definition of the role academic freedom plays within the UC academic system. It would

be useful both as a guide in helping the Committee make decisions, and also in informing faculty generally.

The Committee also discussed the lack of UCAF representation on the Academic Council, Assembly, and on campus governance groups. To some extent, this marginalizes the Committee and could be a disservice to the cause. Such issues as web use by faculty and students, and new instructional technology generally do have implications for academic freedom, and representation at the systemwide level is important because that is where such policies are first aired. Provisions should be made for UCAF to have a more active voice systemwide.

Respectfully submitted:

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