



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Notice of Meeting

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

I. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Action Taken: *The agenda and minutes were approved as noticed 7-0-0.*

II. Chair's Report

Chair Sean Gailmard

Chair Gailmard remarked that the year had been very eventful for UCAF. He noted that the meeting would include a session with a representative from UC Legal to see how they advise the Senate in cases where the Senate's interests do not converge with those of the administration. He reviewed the rest of the agenda, calling attention to the meeting with the director of the PPFP.

III. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership

Steven W. Cheung, Academic Senate Chair

Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Senate Vice Chair

The Senate Chair reported that the University has a new president, JB Milliken, who will start the role on August 1. The Chair remarked that this had been a very secretive search, and there was a lot of anxiety about the candidates. Council will meet with Mr. Milliken after he starts. The transition plan is for him to come to the committee orientation in the fall. Relatedly, the AAVP position has been filled, and the successful candidate will be starting in June. Professor Susannah Scott (UCSB) has been confirmed as incoming vice chair for the Senate. She was instrumental in creating the Report on the Future of Graduate Education. The Academic Council statement on the defense of the University was amended to include welfare of international students and scholars.

Council featured a discussion about the University's budget challenges. Chair Cheung said that the state legislature is quite sympathetic to UC. The University was slated for an eight percent cut, which has been reduced to three percent. There was also a restoration of some funding, the result of which was, essentially, a flat budget for UC for 2025-26. Council also took up the matter of clinicians and their access to shared governance. Chair Cheung created a proposal for a special committee on clinicians. Council had proposed the sunset of UCOPE based on the diminishing role that UCOPE has experienced over the past few years. However, Council members wanted to reinvigorate UCOPE to address core skills in English and math. UCOPE, BOARS, and UCEP will be considering options. The total remuneration study is moving forward and there are ongoing conversations.

The May Regents' meeting focused, in part, on faculty discipline. The Regents have been very hands-on with regard to expressive activities and charged UCOP and the Senate with looking at the entire P&T timeline, from preliminary investigation to discipline by the chancellor. A workgroup has been studying the issue and has adopted the timelines for SVSH, with the understanding that there are extensions for good cause. If the Regents approve then the sanctioning guidelines, the proposal will come to the Senate for an expedited 30-day review. Separately, the Regents have agreed to move the full funding date of UCRP out by two years.

Chair Cheung reported that UC had about 159 cancellations of graduate and undergraduate international students. Of these, 157 were restored. He shared that the President has put money into a fund to secure a top immigration law firm to handle cases that are not resolved. UCEP and CCGA analyzed relevant regulations, and there is nothing that would prohibit students who are not able to return to the US from completing their degree requirements remotely.

Vice Chair Palazoglu discussed UCAD (the taskforce on adaptation to disruptions). He said that UCAD has been meeting with CFO Brostrom and others with the goal of making substantive recommendations. A report is expected by the end of June, but the workgroup will probably continue through the fall. He noted that the research enterprise has taken a significant hit in the loss of grant funding. ARO is helping with regard to promotions, but more actions will be necessary. One of the priorities of the new president is the systemwide articulation of course approvals; UCAD will be taking a hard look at how to facilitate that. [Academic Senate Task Force on UC Adaptation to Disruptions \(UCAD\)](#)

Members had questions and there was discussion.

IV. UC Congress on Academic Freedom

The Chair discussed the speakers who would be taking part in the congress and said the line up looks compelling and should provoke some real discussion. He asked for input on the last panel. Members suggested ideas and topics.

V. Consultation with UC Legal

Allison Woodall, Deputy General Counsel

Chair Gailmard asked Deputy General Counsel Woodall to what extent - in the case of a divergence of objectives between the Senate and the administration - can the Senate rely on UC Legal. Ms. Woodall explained that UC Legal is the lawyer for the institution. To the extent that the Senate needs legal advice and there is a potential conflict with the administration, UC Legal would take that request and evaluate it, including who holds the delegated authority over the topic at issue. Any action will be fact-dependent, and any such request should come through the Senate chair. The Chair asked about "grey areas," and Ms. Woodall said that such situations come down to the issue of delegated authority and that UC Legal would refer to the Bylaws and Regents' Standing Orders.

Members had questions for Deputy General Counsel Woodall, and there was discussion.

VI. Consultation with the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP)

Mark A. Lawson, Director, PPFP

Chair Gailmard informed Mr. Lawson that members had heard that the only reliable way to hire new faculty in their departments is by hiring PPFP fellows. He noted that the usual process involves shared governance wherein faculty identify their scholarly priorities. He said that UCAF is interested in understanding how the priorities are set for charting the direction that the PPFP scholars go and how the faculty selectors work.

Mr. Lawson explained that the PPFP has been around 40 years and has evolved, especially since Proposition 209. It is intended to answer a particular point made in the Master Plan regarding faculty preparation that has been reiterated through the University's strategic plans. The program itself is a two-year post-doctoral fellowship, and it had 1300 applications this last cycle. It is open to anyone, including international scholars. The PPFP does not set priorities, but it asks the Senate to notify anyone who is interested and also notifies interested schools and departments. The panel has about 275 members, representing all campuses, and faculty are recruited from certain disciplines when needed. The reviewers get a scoring rubric, based on the NIH rubric. The top 30 percent of applicants are passed to a secondary review panel, which is composed of faculty representatives from each campus. The PPFP provides a pool of candidates who have been vetted by faculty colleagues, and campuses use the PPFP at their discretion. During the Great Recession, the Covid hiring freeze, and in current times, the PPFP has been able to address hiring needs. About 40-45 percent of fellows become ladder- rank faculty within UC. And they are tenured at a rate of 96 percent and retained at 10 years at a higher rate than open-search tier hires. He showed the scoring rubric to the group.

The Chair agreed that there is nothing in the PPFP about hiring, but asserted that there is a wide-spread practice using it to alleviate dire financial stress.

Members had a debrief discussion after Mr. Lawson left the meeting.

VII. Update: Political Intervention in Academic Freedom and Free Speech

Chair Gailmard remarked that there had been an ad hoc meeting last month of a few members to discuss this topic. He did not feel a strong sense of what to do about it, but advised members to keep an eye on the federal updates page. He noted that Harvard and Columbia have been flashpoints in this arena.

VIII. Campus/Systemwide Mutual Aid Pacts

Chair Gailmard observed that the Big 10 have pledged to cooperate if one of their members experienced a threat to their autonomy. This has gained some traction. Professor Schoenman added that the idea seems to be to try to find ways to coordinate as well as possible through filing amicus briefs, PR campaigns, etc. He has attended a few meetings

of faculty interested in forming such an alliance, but so far has been the only person from California.

Members discussed options, and decided that UCAF should write a letter to UCAD/Council making clear that faculty should be involved in any legal strategies.

IX. Campus Reports

Members reported on issues related to academic freedom from their campuses.

X. Systemwide Information and Items Under Systemwide Review

A. Senate Chair Cheung's Remarks to the Board of Regents

B. Proposed Revisions to APM 360 (Appointment and Promotion, Librarian Series)

After some comments from members, the Chair said he would write a letter to Council regarding these revisions.

XI. New Business

There was no new business.

XII. Executive Session

Minutes are not taken during Executive Session.

The committee adjourned at 2:35 p.m.