UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Academic Senate

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Minutes of Meeting
September 30, 2025

I. Approval of the Agenda

Action Taken: The agenda was approved 11-0-0.

II. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Barry O'Neill

The Chair asked members to introduce themselves.

Chair O'Neill reviewed UCAF's functions, including advising the Academic Council, reviewing policies for academic freedom implications, and fostering communication among divisional committees. He emphasized the importance of proactive engagement, cross-campus coordination, and consideration of minority opinions. Chair O'Neill also suggested revisiting UCAF representation on the Academic Council.

The Chair emphasized the need for confidentiality regarding committee deliberations. Members may share systemwide updates with divisional CAFs, but should confirm before distributing sensitive materials. The group discussed risks related to email, meeting recordings, and the California Public Records Act. Analyst Harms will create a Box folder for UCAF members to share relevant materials and articles.

III. The Department of Education's Request for Names from UC Divisions

The Chair discussed the surrendering of names from some divisions through UCOP to the federal government regarding reports of anti-Semitism. Members reported that the Berkeley Chancellor and general counsel vigorously resisted the order, but could not ignore the order.

Members discussed the issue at length.

IV. Campus Reports

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

V. UCAF Involvement: UCPT Request and Systemwide Review: Interim Systemwide Guidelines on Faculty Discipline and Revisions to APM - 015 and 016 PDF

Chair Barry O'Neill
Guests: UCPT Chair Susan Amussen
UCPT Vice Chair Michael Robinson-Dorn

UCPT Chair Susan Amussen gave an overview of what was required in the review of the interim guidelines related to faculty discipline. She explained that UCPT has been charged with forming a workgroup for the Senate's response and it includes P&T analysts and UCPT members. UCAF has been asked to work with UCPT on Attachment B (expressive activities and extramural speech). She introduced UCPT Vice Chair Michael Robinson-Dorn, who is heading up the Attachment B Workgroup. UCPT is also working with UCRJ to draft a new bylaw in response to the APM change. The draft of the comments needs to be completed by October 17, so that Senate Chair Palazoglu has time to confer with the Regents. The timetable is very rigid. UCPT Chair Amussen asked for UCAF's input in developing the draft response.

UCPT Vice Chair Michael Robinson-Dorn explained that the Attachment B Workgroup – and the Senate – needs a coherent response so that they are on the same page and united in strength.

The committee discussed some draft feedback from various sources and the strong points of each. It was agreed that the draft documents were – while not duplicative – similar in their arguments and approach. There was some discussion about the review timeline not being supportive of campuses on the quarter system. A suggestion was made to add an executive summary to the response.

VI. Discussion: Attachment B

Chair Barry O'Neill
Guests: Brian Soucek, UC Davis
UCPT Chair Susan Amussen
UCPT Vice Chair Michael Robinson-Dorn

Professor Soucek introduced a draft document that he had co-authored with another faculty member in response to Attachment B. The committee discussed an FAQ on extramural speech that was included in the document. Members discussed the language of Attachment B relative to the AAUP Statement of Ethics.

After collecting input from the group, Professor Soucek explained that he would work on a revised version of his document with his co-author. He asked that UCAF endorse the final version either as it stands, or as a part of the committee's larger comments.

VII. Consultation with the Academic Senate Leadership

Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Senate Chair
Susannah Scott, Academic Senate Vice Chair

Academic Senate Chair Palazoglu introduced the new Senate Vice Chair, Susannah Scott. He told the group that Council met for the first time on September 24, and important items were covered. President Milliken issued a statement to provide some details on where he stands on the matter of UCLA grant suspensions and the subsequent DOJ demands. UC is not going to release the so-called draft settlement proposal publicly. The Regents have been briefed on the ongoing discussions and planning, and the Senate leadership has been present at these briefings. The Senate Leadership has also been meeting with the President on a regular basis to share faculty's perspective and learn about his efforts and his thinking. The President said that UCOP is engaging in good-faith negotiations but has rejected both the financial demand and certain provisions that came with the settlement. He explained that alternatives, such as suing or refusing to negotiate, could have triggered severe consequences, as seen at other institutions, where billions in research funding were frozen, international student enrollment was restricted, and financial aid displaced under government control. The President talked more about the more recent news about incident reporting at Berkeley. The DOE Office of Civil Rights required UC to provide some information – originally it was redacted information, but the DOE said that was not sufficient. The OCR is looking into how Title VI complaints are addressed at Berkeley. President Milliken said that most universities facing similar demands have also complied with such requests. He acknowledged that UC could have communicated more effectively about the circumstances and rationale for producing these files. He is reviewing past practices to ensure stronger protections and clearer communication going forward, and he stressed his commitment to balancing legal obligations with protecting students, faculty, and staff.

In response to a question, President Milliken also said that additional information, including FAQs and some explanatory materials, would be released soon. He agreed that the faculty perspective on these would be valuable, and he pledged to find ways to incorporate them early in the process going forward.

Academic Council met with Deputy General Counsel Woodall about the Berkeley incident in executive session. While he could not share details. Senate Chair Palazoglu said that Council is working on statements for UCLA and UCB that stress the Senate's position on these events. Council also heard from Systemwide Academic Personnel about union issues. There are faculty on the negotiating team and there is also a faculty advisory body. There are ongoing discussions, and hopefully UC and the union are close to a settlement.

At the Regents' meeting, CFO Brostrom made a presentation on the budget noting that this is the last year of the governor's compact. Funds continue to be deferred and uncertainty remains. Core funding per-student continues to decline. There is an increase in employer contributions to healthcare and UCRP. He also discussed the Tuition Stability Plan (cohort tuition plan). The University will now use the Higher Education Price Index (as opposed to California Consumer Price Index) as a basis for the cohorts to increase the tuition. OP is going to add a point to it to address continuing capital needs and buffer against inflation. It

is also changing the 45 percent return-to-aid to 35 percent for that cohort to reach overall one-third return-to-aid goal.

The UCAD (UC Adaptation to Disruption) taskforce published its interim report which had a number of recommendations. UCAD now is joining a group of administrators called UCAD Plus. Provost Newman is very excited about this new structure to address implementation aspects of the interim report. These groups are expected to report back in January.

Provost Newman issued interim guidelines on discipline procedures that are now undergoing systemwide review. The report that the workgroup put together had two specific recommendations: a case management procedure and a piece that eliminated a multi-part investigation in favor of a single investigation. A workgroup has been convened to look at the interim guidelines; the group has two Senate representatives.

UCPT is forming a workgroup to look at specific items: the APM revisions overall, Attachment B (with UCAF), and conforming bylaw changes (with UCRJ). The Senate leadership will be meeting with a group of Regents to inform them of the progress of the work. Chair Palazoglu emphasized that it is critical to ensure that Attachment B is acceptable to the faculty.

Members had questions and there was discussion.

VIII. Systemwide Information and Items Under Systemwide Review

Chair O'Neill summarized two systemwide consultations (in addition to the 015-016 review) that are relevant to UCAF: (1) Online Program Management (OPM) and (2) Information Technology Accessibility. Both intersect with academic freedom, faculty autonomy, and privacy. Members agreed to provide feedback and commentary. Professor Haselton volunteered to assist with the AI and privacy component.

The Chair invited members to contact him if they would like to respond to any of these items.

A. Systemwide Senate Review of UCAD Interim Report

B. Presidential Interim Policy for the University of California's Use of Online Program Management Companies

C. Interim Systemwide Guidelines on Faculty Discipline and Revisions to APM - 015 and 016

D. Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices
Due December 10, 2025

E. Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy IMT-1300 Information Technology Accessibility

F. Systemwide Senate Review of Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 140

G. Systemwide Review of Proposed Presidential Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

H. Systemwide Review of Proposed Revisions to the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) Section 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

IX. New Business

Chair O'Neill invited members to suggest agenda topics for future meetings.

X. Executive Session

No minutes are taken during Executive Session.

The committee adjourned at 2:10 p.m.