

University Committee on Faculty Welfare

Minutes of Meeting

February 10, 2023

**I. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

*Susan Cochran, Academic Council Chair*

*James Steintrager, Academic Council Vice Chair*

- Some Regents are concerned about the University's cybersecurity practices and risk exposure and have requested an external review of practices. Others in the University community note that academic cyber-risk is different from business cyber-risk and should follow different standards and protocols.
- At the Academic Council, 1) feedback regarding the updated vaccine policy was considered, and opt-out provisions were suggested given that some populations have been vocal about opposing boosters; 2) feedback regarding faculty salary increases was presented to President Drake, and Council will follow-up with other UCOP executives. Requests for a new total remuneration study and a comprehensive benefits survey were also advanced and received buy-in from COO Nava.
- At the Academic Assembly, 1) changes to SR 610 and 630 regarding residency were approved. New requirements dictate at least 1 year on campus with six units per term. The logic is to provide students with access to the full complement of resources for academic growth; 2) the academic quality of online courses and reporting requirements to the state were further discussed. Reporting requirements to accreditors are also a factor. Asynchronous course delivery and student disengagement could further challenge academic quality. The University Committee on Education Policy (UCEP) is working on a comprehensive statement.
- Labor issues continue to be at the fore: 1) The attestation forms do not seem to have worked since many are unsure if they are signing as students or as employees. Many influential individuals and groups in the University community view unions with trepidation and question their motives. Grant funding implications are still top of mind for many researchers, and workload considerations that could result from loss of TAs or GSIs are still unclear. The future of lecturers is also in question as they could be next to be accreted, further impacting ladder-rank workloads. Members noted that treating students as employees is a significant shift in process and will take careful implementation. 2) As a result of funding remaining flat but costs increasing, the number of graduate students enrolled is likely to decline. 3) How to administer these changes, such as the use of timesheets and the role of non-faculty supervisors, must be clarified. 4) Planning for the next round of union activity is underway already. This putsch seems to be part of a national trend. 5) The professionalization of the University is a disturbing trend to many.

- Members noted that housing continues to be a problem in many campus communities. Students, faculty, and staff are all impacted by shortages and high prices.
- Members also noted that the student debt landscape is also changing, and that creative thinking that realizes that a one-size-fits-all approach may no longer be appropriate is needed. Some suggested that mortgage program eligibility should be expanded.

## **II. COVID, Boosters, and Next Steps**

*Jill Hollenbach, Immediate Past UCFW Chair (UCSF)*

Professor Hollenbach presented slides showing the University's current risk and infection rates. Less infection necessarily leads to less transmission, but data are incomplete. Asymptomatic spread is less than symptomatic spread, and the use of PPI does have measurable impacts. The balance between personal choice and public health is still under discussion in many quarters, but medical science focuses on public health. Continual improvement in diagnosis, treatments, and prevention will hopefully ease concerns among personal choice advocates. Vaccine efficacy against mutated variants will likely decline, causing some to question the utility of mandates, and some science indicates that vaccine efficacy declines after three shots. Other vaccine mandates have been in place at the health systems for years, but for different areas of the University, this is a new requirement. The immediate crisis seems to have passed, but the disease is not going to disappear, so next steps should be clear and have a clear justification.

Members noted that mandates post-crisis are less straightforward, especially given data time-lags. Professor Hollenbach noted that side-effects and inaccuracies still need to be addressed, and that vaccine is still the most effective option against the disease. Some suggested that the degree of contagion should be a factor, as well as the individual's obligation to the community, and others wondered about the severity of consequences for violation and whether they actually compel compliance. The issue has now become politicized, so messaging must change to positive incentives and basic education, which is slower but better in the long-term. Some wondered how motivated that administration is by liability concerns, and others wondered whether the University is the right place for assessing this kind of social issue. Being overly communicative seems to be a good strategy to fight rumors and misinformation.

## **III. Task Force on Investment and Retirement (TFIR) Update**

*David Brownstone, TFIR Chair*

### **1. TFIR of January 23, 2023**

- The proposed Secure 2.0 Act is still in flux at the federal level. Still, changes to deferred annuities are expected, and any "catch-up" contributions (for those whose annual salary exceeds \$145K) will likely have to be through Roth contributions. UC should move to implement Roth accounts to ensure that impacted individuals can be made or make themselves whole. There are different tax structures for Roth accounts, which are valuable for junior faculty, but could be difficult for UCPATH to process. The question of

whether pension contributions can be redirected to student loan payments is under investigation, but early indications are that such activity is not allowed.

- The next UCRP experience study is underway. It will assess pension liability and performance assumptions vis-a-vis demographics, length of employment, and external factors such as inflation trends and the rate of return. Changes to the assumptions will impact the funded status, and by extension, contribution rates for both the employer and the employee. There has been significant cohort mobility since the last study in 2018, so it's likely that significant changes could be made as a result of the findings this time. External consultants will meet with the Office of the Chief Investment Officer (OCIO) to discuss investment returns, and TFIR will meet with OCIO later this month. OCIO receive bonuses if return targets are met. Employer contribution rates were lowered at the beginning of COVID, and TFIR asserts that they should be restored to previous levels, if not higher. Members noted that some OCIO investments have raised questions, but the proportion of those investments to the overall portfolio limits their potential impact.
- TFIR will hear again from the Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC), focusing on survivor benefits and reported delays in processing those benefits. CUCEA is also working on this issue, pushing for an extension of benefits guarantees until processing delays can be resolved. The UCRS Advisory Board is also monitoring this situation. If conditions do not improve soon, a memo to the Academic Council may be needed to bring more executive attention to the problem.
- Some have asked for consideration of a deferred equity annuity plan, but such cannot compete with a pension plan, though it is better than a private market option if one wants to secure extra income later in retirement.

#### **IV. Health Care Task Force (HCTF) Update**

*Michael Ong, HCTF Chair*

##### **1. HCTF of January 20, 2023**

- There were no significant enrollment changes as shown in the Open Enrollment outcomes, but more data parsing will occur.
- The UC Medicare PPO plan for out-of-state retirees is being reviewed to determine if it provides adequate support in non-California markets.
- Delta Dental has reduced reimbursement rates to specialists, but overall participation by providers remains constant. No dental plan is "insurance" in the usual sense, but it still a good plan, especially considering the limited number of insurers in this area. Changing plans could cause up to 30% disruption. HCTF will continue to monitor the situation.
- There will not be a HealthNet Blue & Gold RFP at this time, despite recent contract issues. Some speculate that the contract shenanigans may be a negotiation tactic, but the uncertainty that resulted may have impacted Open Enrollment choices, which some individuals may wish to revisit now that things are settled once more. More frequent and more consistent communications from UC would help members, but the University cannot comment on in-progress negotiations. Identification of alternatives and

contingency plans could occur, though, and members should be better informed of their rights when such situations arise. Previous experiences at Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara belie the claim that this was a unique situation and that UC cannot be prepared for these now seemingly regular tactics.

- Discussions continue with the administration regarding the best structure and population for the benefits survey. Any survey must present data on a by campus basis, in addition to other bases.

## **V. UCFW Business**

### **1. Consent Calendar: Draft Minutes of January 13, 2023**

- The consent calendar was approved as noticed.

### **2. Chair's Updates**

*Terry Dalton, UCFW Chair*

- How best to include achievement relative to opportunity (ARO) principles in academic reviews, whether amending the APM or by developing new guidelines, is under discussion with other Senate committees, and the Provost is convening a workgroup to consider the questions. The interplay with new labor contracts could complicate adjustments since the causes of productivity impacts could be multi-faceted. Members noted that terms should be defined clearly, and that campus efforts at mitigation should be indexed and evaluated for efficacy/replication. Short-term shifts in funding are not a workable solution as the University reverts to the status quo ante, and waiting too long to make decisions and take action will have further deleterious impacts, especially for junior faculty.

### **3. Campus Updates**

- Members noted that impacts from the strike are focused on current students, not future students and long-term impacts to programs, projects, and departments.

## **VI. New Business and Further Discussion**

- Chair Dalton will poll the committee for a spring in-person meeting.

Adjournment 3:05 pm

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Terry Dalton, UCFW Chair

Attendance:

Terry Dalton, Chair (UCI)

John Heraty, Vice Chair (UCR)

Nancy Wallace, UCB

Jant Foley, UCD

Lisa Naugle, UCI

Phillip Bonacich, UCLA

David Jennings, UCM

Robert Clare, UCR

Juan Pablo Pardo Guerra, UCSD

Elizabeth Rogers, UCSF

Subhash Suri, UCSB

Alexander Sher, UCSC

Mike Ong, HCTF Chair

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

Henning Bohn, UCRS AB Representative

Jo Anne Boorkman, CUCEA Chair