

University Committee on Faculty Welfare

Minutes of Meeting

February 9, 2024

**I. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

*Steve Cheung, Academic Council Vice Chair*

1. Regents Update: a) A decision to defer action on hiring students who are undocumented was not well received by student activists. b) How to respect free speech while indemnifying the university through a policy on website usage remains unclear. Many proposals were floated, and it may be possible not to adopt any policy. Recent political events may be having an outsized influence on deliberations.
2. Senate AI Task Force: Several efforts are underway and it is hoped they are coordinating and not working at cross purposes.
3. Budget: Internal borrowing from STIP/TRIP is expected to cover any state budget shortfalls for the pension plan, at least. The fate of the budget compact is unknown at present.
4. SB 791: The legislation would require universal background checks for all hires, including students. The cost of compliance is daunting.

**II. UCFW Business**

1. Systemwide Review Items

- Revised Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-46 Use of Vehicles and Driver Authorization

Several aspects of the revision should be clarified, such as when coverage extends to personal vehicles and what is considered university business. In the event of an incident, next steps are unclear as is the extent of coverage offered by the university. Field work coverage should be further explained. Whether students are covered by the policy is unclear. This would add to the training/administrative burden.

Many of these concerns were raised in the previous review of the policy, 5 years ago, and remain unaddressed. Reimbursement for mechanical repairs, not just health costs, should be added to the policy. How to interact with third parties and the workers compensation process should be made clear. If inspections are required to use personal vehicles, the compliance process must be clear and reimbursable.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo for electronic approval.

- Systemwide Senate Review of Proposed Regents Policy on Use of University Administrative Websites

Many feel that self-governance under current guidelines is sufficient, and the proposed policy is unnecessary. The proposed policy also has several flaws which would make implementation challenging. Determining and enforcing the distinction between political opinion and political assessment would be difficult. Advertising certain speaker talks or medical procedures would become problematic. A “slippery slope” effect could result.

The level of application is also unclear. How a unit is to be defined, for example, requires clarification.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo for electronic approval.

- Revised Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-50 Controlled Substances Use in Research and Teaching

This policy is not designed to apply to patient care situations. The controlled substance analogs need clarification as many seem to conflate levels of restriction.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo for electronic approval.

## 2. Campus Updates

Merced: A local financial management task force has been empaneled to address the 3+ years of turmoil that have followed adoption of the Oracle financial accounting software. Since many departments are impacted, the membership is large. Faculty co-leads have been named for each subgroup. Rapid campus growth and unique DIY procedures led to a loss of data that had not been adequately backed up. Work has become labor and time intensive. Members wondered why a centralized approach was not followed, at least to remediation. Staff have reacted negatively to the software as well, compounding problems of being underpaid and overworked. The timing of the graduate student strike further heightened sensitivities.

Members wondered who was being held accountable for this type of bad decision. Anecdotes suggest that leads have “failed upward”. Performance guarantees in contracts should be stricter.

Members identified several specific flaws in the software that impact end users disproportionately, including a lack of system compatibility, a lack of report generation, blocked vendors and items, and a lack of transparency involving pricing and balance reporting.

### III. **Consultation with the Office of the President – Procurement Services**

*Paul Williams, Chief Procurement Office and Associate Vice President*

#### 1. Systemwide Procurement Overview

One goal is to work as one system, including the health sciences and the labs, for sourcing, tools, and processes. Certain areas have already been identified for targeted improvements, and internal groups are working.

Members noted that faculty bring expertise in many areas and could contribute to all parts of the procurement process, and not just in an advisory role. The Senate has many standing bodies that can be contacted for expertise.

#### 2. Oracle Financial Accounting Software

Members asked if the contract allowed for punitive actions. But Oracle is providing the services asked for by UC. Members noted that future contracts should be reviewed more carefully.

Members noted that a lack of central leadership has led several campuses to make the same poor decision. At impacted locations, the administration does not seem to be taking responsibility for the decisions or for trying to fix the long-standing and well-known problems. Efforts to improve transparency and communications would also benefit from faculty involvement.

Members asked about alternatives to Oracle, but they seem to be limited. End user fixes are needed post haste.

UCFW will continue this discussion at future meetings.

#### **IV. Report: UCFW Task Force on Investment and Retirement**

*Jill Hollenbach, TFIR Chair*

##### **1. TFIR of January 22, 2024**

- UCOP seems resistant to change the UCRP default, but the reason is unclear. Only marginal impacts to the funding ratio are projected, and the switch makes financial sense for upwards of 70% of new hires. TFIR will draft a memo for UCFW endorsement.
- The new retirement counselors have been trained and begun working with employees. Appointments are being made up to two months in advance, which is impressive considering how new the service is. Webinars on preparing for counseling are also being developed.

#### **V. Report: UCFW Health Care Task Force**

*Michael Ong, HCTF Chair*

##### **1. HCTF of January 19, 2024**

- A preliminary agreement has been reached with Anthem, but the aftermath could lead to the rebid of UC Care and the other programs administered by Anthem (UC SHIP, UC SHIP Vision, and the resident/fellow plan). A list of changes to include in the next RFP should be developed and submitted.
- Preliminary data from last fall's Open Enrollment show a significant out-migration from HSP, indicating a likely "death spiral" due to insolvency. Plan usage varies widely by campus and available providers.
- Delta Dental access continues to be discussed. Anecdotes suggest that providers who lose as much as 40% of their business due to leaving the network still make more profit after the withdrawal. Other insurer options are limited. Plan design changes are being considered, though.
- Prescription drug coverage remains problematic as cost reductions do not equate to efficiency, but less coverage.
- Infertility coverage remains on hold as outcomes from the pilot are still being assessed and long-term cost considerations are unclear. Plan equity with Kaiser also remains an issue.

## **VI. Chair's Announcements and UCFW Business (continued)**

*John Heraty, UCFW Chair*

### **1. Workgroup Updates**

- The faculty workload workgroup discussed post-pandemic research impacts and generated the idea of establishing contingency funds. The effort to codify achievement relative to opportunity (ARO) principles seems to have stalled in the Academic Planning Council (APC).
- The instructions modalities and online education workgroup is operating in the face of pressure to increase the number of courses and fully online degree programs. The types of data needed to support recommendations have been the subject of much debate. Quantifying instructional and opportunity costs is also the subject of much debate. All UC degrees should carry equal esteem and value. The model of success is also unknown at present.

### **2. Faculty Visas**

Recent reports indicate that scholars from certain areas are experiencing usual difficulties getting visas. Communications and legal assistance are local responsibilities, but perhaps the question could be elevated to systemwide in order to leverage the system. The extent of the trouble should be determined first.

### **3. Additional Items**

- The Office of the President is working to prepare for the next round of labor negotiations with student employee unions. The Senate is trying to secure more shared governance in the process going forward. Summer salaries are the current point of contention. Targeted state legislation complicates the situation.
- Parking continues to be an issue. Changes to electronic readers have raised privacy concerns, and unexplained vendor changes have made some suspicious. Different rates for different lots makes it difficult to pay ahead. Campuses no longer validate each other anymore, either. Revenue generation must be weighed against pledges to reduce driving in campus neighborhoods.

## **VII. Consultation with the Office of the President – Human Resources**

*Susan Pon-Gee, Senior Director, Health and Welfare Benefits*

*Hyun Swanson, Executive Director, Retirement Program Services*

*Health McHugh, Benefits Administration Director*

### **1. Recalled Retirees**

Members report that conflicting guidance is being issued by locations and noted that changing insurance is cumbersome and risks care continuity. HR senior leadership has not issued new guidance, though, so the status quo should continue unless there are exceptional circumstances that require immediate and individual attention. A workgroup has investigated the Medicare Secondary Payer rules, and a proposal has been drafted for further internal vetting. The Senate

was unaware of this workgroup despite several previous conversations on the topic and has not yet seen a copy of the proposal, raising concerns about shared governance. The option to continue on active medical plans raises different care and cost considerations and does not address the crux of the issue.

**VIII. New Business**

None.

Adjournment: 3:40 pm

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: John Heraty, UCFW Chair

Attendance:

John Heraty, Chair

Juan Pablo Pardo Guerra, Vice Chair

Nancy Wallace, UCB

Karen Bales, UCD

Pauline Yahr, UCI Alternate

Carla Janzen, UCLA

Jayson Beaster Jones, UCM

Abhijit Ghosh, UCR

Cat Mosti, UCSF

John W. I. Lee, UCSB

Alexander Sher, UCSC

Michael Ong, HCTF Chair

Jill Hollenbach, TFIR Chair

Jo Anne Boorkman, CUCEA Chair