

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

Minutes of Meeting

March 13, 2020

I. Chair's Announcements

Jean-Daniel Saphores, UCFW Chair

1. Agenda Overview
2. Approval of February Minutes
Action: The minutes were approved as amended.

II. Systemwide Review Items

1. Report of the Academic Council's Standardized Testing Task Force

UCI Representative Chew Lead Reviewer

Representative Chew notes that the report is both nuanced and thorough, politically sensitive, and attempts to balance competing goals; as such, support is recommended. Others asserted that the report was too nuanced, and that conditional use of test scores after significant manipulation illustrates their lack of utility, despite complicated data sets. Others suggested that if UC is to require tests, it should subsidize at least two sittings for all applicants. Still others noted that many of the identified obstacles are beyond UC's ability to solve.

Action: Analyst Feer will draft a response recording a lack of consensus on this issue.

2. BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT Writing and SAT Essay Requirement

UCI Representative Chew Lead Reviewer

Representative Chew notes that the tests provide no added value but only added cost. The value of writing is not diminished by this action.

Action: Analyst Feer will draft a response in support of the proposal.

3. Proposed Revised Presidential Policy on Protection of Human Subjects in Research

- Assign lead reviewer.

Note: Item not addressed.

4. Proposed Revised Presidential Policy on Travel Regulations

- Assign lead reviewer.

Note: Item not addressed.

5. Proposed Presidential Policy on Gender Recognition and Lived Name

- Assign lead reviewer.

Note: Item not addressed.

III. Consultation with the Office of the President – Academic Personnel and Programs

Susan Carlson, Vice Provost

Pamela Peterson, Executive Director

1. Faculty Salary Market Proposal

VP Carlson reported that further costing projections are still pending. If there are any additional specifics to add to the model, they should be received as soon as possible.

2. Use of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statements

Chair Saphores referred to the previous year's Academic Council minutes which indicate that DEI statements should not be used by themselves to filter out applicants for an academic position (as indicated in APM-15); they should only be used holistically with other components of an application (i.e., evidence of scholarship and of teaching excellence). He added that the current campus practices involving DEI statement usage in hiring procedures varies, which undermines the credibility of the effort. VP Carlson noted that these details do not match the guidance received by her office, and suggested that revised guidelines might be developed.

The Davis division is currently voting on whether/how to use DEI statements, following reports of significant confusion in process and usage. The San Diego division has required DEI statements at hiring since 2011, but they are evaluated in a holistic context; nevertheless, data are difficult to acquire. The Berkeley division has concerns about how the statements are used—as a filter or as a tie-breaker or other? How much flexibility should be retained by the divisions versus the need for consistency in high profile areas remains a point of debate at all levels.

Action: Analyst Feer will draft a memo call for a new proposal or a more fulsome review of the current policy.

IV. Report: Task Force on Investment and Retirement

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

1. TFIR of February 24, 2020

TFIR discussed retiree health financing in detail. Federal regulations require UC to list the retiree health obligation in the same manner as the pension liability. Because UC funds retiree health on a pay-as-you-go basis, the associated liability for full funding would cripple UC. UC could begin prefunding retiree health, but doing so would bring the obligation to pay into the normal cost column, and could implicate the non-vested status of the benefit. Also, “pay-as-you-go” is cheaper on a 5-10 year basis. Impacts on borrowing capacity remain unclear, but TFIR has been told that creditors understand the federal regulations are not designed for higher education institutions, even though they have to abide by these regulations. Any changes would have tax implications for the employee/retiree and the institution; the full extent of this impacts is not yet known.

2. UCRS Advisory Board of February 28, 2020

The Regents changed key plan assumptions last July 1. One impact is that the lump-sum payout amounts have increased about 9% on average. Changes to the survivor benefit are expected to be minimal, but data are slim at present.

3. Long-Term Impacts of Recent Market Fluctuations

Note: See item V below.

V. Consultation with the Office of the Chief Investment Officer

Jagdeep Bachher, Chief Investment Officer

Arthur Guimaraes, Associate CIO

CIO Bachher summarized the recent market volatility experienced to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. Stimulus packages are still being prepared, which will hopefully calm markets. The pension fund is 50% stock, so a proportional loss can be expected. The pension fund also has a good amount of cash and liquidity as a buffer. The current situation is “wait and see.” The March 31 reports will show better the real impact of recent changes. Retirees are invited to a webinar next Friday with Fidelity. Retiree behavior is so far unchanged. Additionally, the target date funds are rebalancing their stock and bond allocations.

VI. Consultation with Senate Leadership

Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Vice Chair

1. Presidential Search

The search is proceeding apace. The Academic Advisory Committee met with the Regents Special Committee on March 2. The current goal is to announce the next president at the May Regents meeting.

2. February Council

- The Council adopted a statement calling for openness in research and in support of foreign nationals with certain federal funding.
- The graduate student strikes at UCSC continue. Members noted that communications and transparency are lacking. The COLA issue is widespread, but the underlying issue must be addressed separately. How to address both sets of concerns should be UC's focus. Some have proposed that a new model of graduate education be considered, rather than another series of bandage solutions. Reliance upon faculty discretionary funds and a lack of state support remain obstacles.
- UC remains hopeful about the state budget, but those reports were issued before COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and the like. The May budget revise is the next milestone. The likelihood of a Regent vote on tuition increases in May is unclear. UCOP has not undertaken an assessment of why Prop 13 failed; the administration is looking forward.

3. COVID-19 Preparedness

Vice Chair Gauvain noted that the Senate does not have an emergency plan. While actions should be student-focused, the faculty welfare perspective should inform many decisions and processes. Because the target is still moving and new information and data are still emerging, there are many categories of action, some of which may change. This list includes: clear communications regarding examination protocols; clarifying residency requirements; the “digital divide” for students, faculty, and staff; the intricacy of shifting courses to online delivery; the unique challenges faced in medical education; the impact to research projects and grant

practices; academic review and advancement impacts; family obligations; loss of income to students, faculty, and staff; the reality that many students may be safer on campus than off; and decision-making processes and data reporting.

VII. Report: Health Care Task Force

Mark Peterson, HCTF Chair

1. HCTF of February 28, 2020

HCTF continued to discuss the work of the Health Benefits Advisory Committee, some of whose members seem to be at cross-purposes. HCTF also discussed how better to assess mental health outcomes for employees.

2. Salary of UCMC Senate Faculty

Reports that the 95% rule is being applied unevenly and that morale in many departments is perilously low have led to the formation of joint Senate-administration working group to assess the Health Sciences Compensation Plan in 2020. Further details will be shared as they are learned.

VIII. Consultation with the Office of the President – Human Resources

Ellen Lorenz, Director, Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC)

Recent software changes to the retiree benefits administration systems have been more challenging than anticipated. The transition is a work in-progress, and feedback is welcome. Many retirees have experienced greater access, and process improvements to survivor benefits, for example, have been welcomed. Additional functionality is being added monthly, and should be completed by May.

Members, however, raised concerns that the improvements were overstated and that many essential software functions require improvement. Many have concerns about staffing levels, especially as COVID-19 effects remain unknown. Director Lorenz noted that many temporary staff are now contract employees. Members were unsure if staffing levels would be adequate for the upcoming retirement season, especially as service-level agreement metrics continue not to be met.

IX. Climate Change

Adam Aron, UCSD Representative

1. Data Collection

Members will be solicited to answer campus action questions via email. Once collated, next steps will be determined.

2. Transparency in Investments

Many are concerned that UC policy may allow for re-investment in fossil fuel companies since the language is only about current risk, not about values or morals. There may also be uncertainty about “downstream” divestment, such as for coal burners not just coal extractors.

That UC cannot control outside investors who manage various funds is another concern, even though they only manage ~20% of the total portfolio.

X. Administrative Burden on Faculty

With Andrew Baird, Chair, University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP)

The administrative burden in the research area has grown considerably in recent years. This has negatively impacted morale and efficiency. Concerns regarding hardware and software, data ownership versus maintenance, grant accounting and administration, among other areas, have all been widely reported. The changes seem to be ad hoc work-arounds due to cuts in staffing, not undertaken in a methodical, managed manner; faculty and staff were not appropriately consulted. How to quantify the burden to decision-makers is unclear. That audits check compliance, not efficiency, is another obstacle, as the number of steps seems to increase continually. UCFW reiterated the need for audits to also provide feedback about best practices to lighten the administrative burden on staff and faculty.

XI. Campus Updates

Note: Item not addressed.

Adjournment 4 pm.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: Jean-Daniel Saphores, UCFW Chair

Attendance:

Jean-Daniel Saphores, UCFW Chair

Shelley Halpain, UCFW Vice Chair

David Steigmann, UCB

Moradewun, Adejunmobi, UCD

Ken Chew, UCI

Tzung Hsiai, UCLA

Jayson Beaster-Jones, UCM

Abhi Ghosh, UCR

Adam Aron, UCSD

Jill Hollenbach, UCSF

Grant McGuire, UCSC

Mark Peterson, HCTF Chair

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

Caroline Kane, CUCEA Chair