

University Committee on Faculty Welfare

Minutes of Meeting

November 12, 2021

I. Chair's Announcements

Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

1. Academic Council of October 27, 2021

- Unit 18 lecturers continue to press for a new union contract. Traditionally, union members are not also members of the Senate, but Senate membership is one of the asks. A related issue arises from Assembly Bill 1550 which would allow union membership to continue after a lecturer changed series. UC asked for a veto of AB 1550, but Governor Newsom signed it.
- The Regents have called for an increase in California resident enrollment of 20,000 students (including 4,000 graduate students) by 2030. Housing shortages and limited course availability concerns will be exacerbated absent significant increases in state support.
- The Regents have asked the Senate to consider entrepreneurial activities in academic reviews.
- Academic Integrity issues continue in the online teaching/learning environment. UC Legal has been asked to help identify enterprise solutions.
- Governor Newsom signed AB 928 which calls for a singular general education transfer pathway from the California Community Colleges to the California State University and the University of California. Ease of use must be balanced with academic preparation.
- A memorial to the Regents on Climate Change is being considered. Specific verbiage and the path forward are still being considered.
- A joint Senate-administration report with recommendations on mitigating the impact of COVID on academic advancement will be released soon. Recommendations are expected to include funds for research support as well as review-related items.
- Graduate students are petitioning to unionize, but the definition of "employee" in the graduate student context is under discussion.
- Finance EVP Brostrom confirmed that the budget being submitted to the Regents includes a 4% increase for faculty salaries, in addition to merit increase funds.
- The University Committee on Academic Freedom is developing a position regarding political statements on department websites.
- Regents Policy 1203 which governs the granting of emeritus status may undergo further review.

II. Report: UCFW Health Care Task Force

Michael Ong, HCTF Chair

1. HCTF of October 15, 2021

- UC Care is conducting a request for proposals (RFP) for its third-party administrator (TPA) to start in 2023. Health insurance, care management, and virtual care will be evaluated. UCFW Vice Chair Dalton is the Senate representative to the RFP committee.
- An RFP for a behavioral health “carve out” of UC Care is also being conducted. Traditional and virtual care delivery will be evaluated. UCSF Professor Emeritus Joel Dimsdale is the Senate representative to the RFP committee.
- Oversight of UC Care affiliations with entities that follow non-science based care delivery policies could be enhanced. The Regents have asked for annual reporting, but more metrics could be added and more frequent updates could be useful. Further, traditional grievance procedures may not be sufficient for concerns in these environments.
- Some have called for a greater retiree/emeriti voice in retiree health decision-making.

2. Behavioral Health Access

With Joel Dimsdale, UCSF Professor Emeritus

As with other issues, the COVID pandemic has put behavioral health needs and gaps in high relief. HCTF has convened a joint Senate-administration working group to assess the current state of behavioral health needs and access and to propose possible solutions. A general lack of providers has reduced access and increased prices, while insurance reimbursement rates have flagged. Child care is an acute shortage, especially in more rural areas. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are at capacity. In addition to more funds to increase reimbursement rates, some plan design changes could also increase access. A full report is expected in the spring.

III. **Consultation with the Office of the President – Human Resources**

Cheryl Lloyd, Vice President

1. Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC) Update
VP Lloyd noted that many personnel and software changes to RASC are underway. A revised plan for retirement counseling will soon be submitted to Operations EVP Nava. Quality assurance upgrades are underway. On-site operations will begin next week, with staggered staffing for safety.
2. Update on HR Transformation Project
VP Lloyd presented the new organization chart for systemwide HR. Recruitment firms have been contacted to help with the first two positions to be filled which focus on compensation. Other positions have interim personnel.
3. COVID Costs
Senate Bill 510 asks providers to cover the costs of COVID surveillance testing, which will likely be a pass-along bill to users since no provider has adequate reserves.
4. Benefits Surveys
While many are concerned about survey creep, the strategic utility of a comprehensive benefits survey should not be dismissed. Faculty expertise can supplement UCOP efforts.
5. Hiring and On-Boarding Assessment

Delays related to UC Path are being identified and will be addressed. Hiring processes are known to be elaborate and could be improved; indeed, UC has lost several good candidates due to slowness and complexity. Staff shortages cause further delays.

Members noted that efficiency, not just compliance, must be valued in the process. Student hires, especially, must move through the system quickly: A six-week process takes half a term, leaving students in precarious positions. Staff shortages are, in part, being caused by onerous software and bureaucratic requirements. The overall increase in faculty administrative burden is negatively impacting scholarship. Perhaps members of the UC community should be HR “clients” or “customers” but “colleagues”.

IV. Report: UCFW Task Force on Investment and Retirement

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

1. TFIR of October 25, 2021

- TFIR met with RASC leadership and is hopeful that RASC will soon be operating smoothly.
- TFIR heard from Finance EVP Brostrom about a proposal to lower the employer contribution to UCRP and make up the difference with further loans from the Short-Term Investment Pool. TFIR is concerned that making policy exceptions in response to short-term market performance could set a dangerous precedent. TFIR is also concerned about the delayed consultation opportunity. That some Regents continue to call for increased employee contributions causes further concern.

V. Report: Council of UC Emeriti Associations

Harry Powell, CUCEA Chair

1. Joint Benefit Committee Fall 2021 Report

Professor Powell reviewed the role of the Joint Benefits Committee (JBC) and summarized the findings of their current report. Recent improvements to RASC are welcome, but more remains to be done. Overall total remuneration may need to increase to achieve the needed staffing levels to provide adequate, if not excellent, support. Engagement with administration on these and related issues is improving. JBC continues to press for campus-based retirement counseling, but even remote video counseling is considered an improvement over phone-based interactions. A fully engaged emeriti community can improve research, mentoring, advising, and more.

VI. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership

Robert Horwitz, Academic Council Chair

Susan Cochran, Academic Council Vice Chair

1. Teaching Modalities

Chair Horwitz reminded members that the re-opening guidelines issued last year including Shared Governance in process for determining teaching modalities. These decisions should not simply be imposed from above. Achieving the right balance with student accommodation requests is difficult, though; someone will be burdened either way.

Members noted that student evaluations of teachers and courses have become notably nasty, especially regarding COVID measures. Many evaluations seem to be about the COVID situation, not teaching efficacy. See also Item VII below.

2. General Updates

- UCFW is asked to form a working group to advise further on campus safety, particularly in the UC context. See also Item IX below.
- The first report of the Mitigating the Impacts of COVID on Advancement working group has been circulated and presented to the Council of Chancellors as well as the Council of Vice Chancellors. Achievement relative to opportunity (ARO) is recommended in merit and promotion reviews. A second report is being developed.
- The Senate may submit another memorial to the Regents on Climate Change. The first called upon the Regents to divest certain University holdings of fossil fuel funds.
- The University Committees on Academic Freedom (UCAF) and Research Policy (UCORP) have been asked to lead the Senate response to the Regent's request to include entrepreneurial activities in academic reviews.
- President Drake reported to the Council that: 1) A joint working group will be formed to discuss whether approval of Masters programs should be kept at the systemwide level or be given to the campuses. 2) An oversight body will be formed to monitor UC Online. 3) UC Press has raised concerns about contracting requirements given their non-profit budget limitations. 4) Final determinations for adjustments to the salary scales and equity adjustments are forthcoming.
- The Regents will consider whether to lower the employer contribution to UCRP and borrow from STIP to maintain the funding ratio. The Senate has concerns about long-term policy decisions and the impact to employee contributions.
- UC Legal has low expectations that a "class action"-type suit could work to stop academic integrity violations in the online arena. Discussions continue.
- The Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates (ICAS) will lead development of the singular general education transfer pathway required by AB 928. Unit caps and academic preparation concerns are foremost at this early stage.

VII. UCFW Business

1. General Updates and Teaching Modalities

B: A lack of consultation and flexibility by the administration has hampered campus conversations regarding COVID response measures. Ventilation concerns remain in many buildings. Student voices and union demands seem to overlap in many instances. A lack of staff to process accommodations requests has led to long delays, as long as eight weeks into term in some cases.

D: About 95% of courses are in-person; only about 130 requests for exception were filed by faculty; most were for medical conditions or unvaccinated dependents. The process will be repeated next term.

I: Policy gaps have been addressed with COVID-specific contingencies, resulting in significant variation across the campus. Senior faculty feel more comfortable asking for exceptions.

LA: A non-Senate administration task force is in charge of approving exceptions, and they seem rigid in their application so far. Concerns regarding immunocompromised sensitivity and flexibility for those with unvaccinated dependents have arisen.

M: A delay in developing and promulgating a policy specific for immunocompromised individuals further eroded trust in many corners. The administration continues to push for maximum in-person delivery. A broader decision-tree model that includes more stakeholders is needed. Greater consistency in policy application is needed, even though some oversight is with HR and not department leads.

R: The campus has a goal of 80% in-person classes. Additional guidance regarding streaming and dual-mode delivery is needed. Some have proposed reserving X seats per class for online delivery.

SD: 1) The medical school is conducting a climate survey. 2) The Disability Accommodation Office has been doing well handling requests. Faculty have successfully engaged with chairs regarding accommodations, too. The campus has used a broad interpretation of instructor.

SF: In-person classes are capped at 35 people. Documentation for accommodation implementation is needed for clinical reasons as well as personnel considerations.

SB: The campus expectation is that classes will be in-person, but exceptions can be made. A temporary 2-week remote instruction option is available, if needed.

SC: Exceptions to in-person instruction are being given to those who are immunocompromised or have unvaccinated dependents. Housing limitations could cause some students not to graduate if in-person instruction becomes mandatory.

Chair Hollenbach asked what data would be useful to inform future decision-making. Members noted that most surveillance tracking has become laxer with the passage of time, contributing to data gaps. Whether the vaccinated should be subject to mandatory testing is unclear. Members are encouraged to share drafts and process summaries, not just final outcomes, to improve the development of best practices.

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

Susan Carlson, Vice Provost

1. COVID Impacts to Advancement

VP Carlson's office is tracking merits and advancements, normalized to 2019-20. So far, 2020-21 outcomes are not significantly different. More details will be available next month.

Active Service/Modified Duty (ASMD) requests and outcomes are also still forthcoming as 7 of 8 campuses in the program have reported.

Members suggested adding ARO to academic reviews on a permanent basis, and highlighted the need for long-term tracking since COVID impacts to research and creative output may not be known for years.

2. Faculty Salary Competitiveness

The gap with the Comparison 8 average is down to 4.1%. The budget proposal going to the Regents next week includes funds for scale increases as well as merit increases. Final allocation percentages are still being determined. Some will be given across-the-board, and some in targeted efforts to address equity, compression, and inversion, as well as exceptional merit, if past programs are followed. Allocation suggestions will be solicited when dollar amounts are known.

IX. **Campus Safety Orientation Task Force**

Carroll Seron, UCI Professor Emerita

This task force will focus on what safety personnel should understand about being part of the UC community to which they now belong. UCFW Vice Chair Dalton will coordinate the task force. Campus contacts and faculty experts should be forwarded. Chair Hollenbach noted that the Senate is working with the administration, which has removed “defunding” from the table. Early thinking is that a training course could be developed, but resources will be needed for the course and for delivery. The efficacy of online modules should be considered against delivery flexibility and access. The academic literature in the area will also be consulted.

X. **Systemwide Review Items**

➤ Assign Lead Reviewers

- Proposed Revisions to APM 759 (Leaves of Absence/Other Leaves Without Pay)
 - UCD Representative Bales and UCSC Representative Orlandi will serve as lead reviewers.
- Proposed Presidential Policy on Abusive Conduct and Bullying in the Workplace
 - UCLA Representative Schutze will serve as lead reviewer.
- Proposed Revisions to APM 025 and APM 671 (Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities of Faculty Members)
 - HCTF Chair Ong will serve as lead reviewer.

➤ Determine Committee Position

- Ethnic Studies Proposal and Senate Regulation 478 Revisions
 - The committee elected not to opine on this item.
- Proposed Revisions to UC Presidential Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
UCFW Vice Chair Dalton, Lead Reviewer

Some of the changes are for legal compliance, which largely codify current practices. Giving Title IX offices discretion on whether to proceed over “victim’s” preferences could be problematic and have a chilling effect. Examples of deceptive intent or false claims would improve the policy, or such references should be omitted. Further guidance for handling situations off-campus are needed.

 - Analyst Feer will draft a memo for electronic approval.
- Proposed Presidential Policy on Integrated Past Management

- The committee elected not to opine on this item.
- Proposed Revisions to Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices
 - The committee elected not to opine on this item.

XI. New Business

None.

Adjournment: 4 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Analyst

Attest: Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

Attendance:

Jill Hollenbach, UCFW Chair

Terry Dalton, UCFW Vice Chair

Laura Nelson, UCB

Karen Bales, UCD

Carson Schutze, UCLA

Jayson Beaster-Jones, UCM

John Heraty, UCR

Kim Cooper, UCSD

Jenny Liu, UCSF

Lisa Parks, UCSB

Nico Orlandi, UCSC

Mike Ong, HCTF Chair

David Brownstone, TFIR Chair

Terry Hendershott, UCRS Advisory Board Faculty Representative

Harry Powell, CUCEA Chair