



**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**November 14, 2025**

Attendance: Karen Bales, Chair (UCD); Sasha Sher, Vice Chair (UCSC); Keith Gillespie, UCB; Janet Foley, UCD; Ben Lourie, UCI; Reza Ahmadi, UCLA; David Rouff, UCM; Salman Asif, UCR; Julie Bykowski, UCSD; Alon Witztum, UCSF; Matthew Helgeson, UCSB; Yat Li, UCSC; Vickie Mays, HCTF Chair (UCLA); Jill Hollenbach, TFIR Chair (UCSF); Zoran Nenadic, UCRS Advisory Board Representative (UCI); Joel Dimsdale, CUCEA Chair (UCSD)

**I. Consultation with Academic Senate Leadership**

*Ahmet Palazoglu, Academic Council Chair*

- How and whether to respond to recent settlements by other higher education institutions in response to lawsuits and investigations initiated by the federal administration is still under discussion. Many factors are being weighed, such as financial implications, freedom of speech issues, academic freedom standards, and likelihood and severity of future actions. Some continue to call for clear statements of defiance, while others suggest a more cautious approach. Members noted that continued silence from the administration did little to allay fears or slow rumors.
- The administration is aware of the consternation surrounding its decision to release certain personally identifiable information (PII) to the federal government in response to a Department of Education request for details regarding UCB's Title IX investigation processes. Several alternatives were sought, but ultimately it was decided withholding the information could not withstand a legal appeal. Many are concerned that a precedent of capitulation has been set and that other campuses and other areas of investigation will now follow suit. Balancing the needs of transparency and privacy will be considered for each case, individually.
- The Regents will see the projected 2026-27 budget next week, but with the Compact ending (and already having been deferred), and a new governor soon to be elected, the future is uncertain.
- Several relevant bond measures will be on a future ballot. An affordable housing bond has been proposed, as has a bond to establish a California Science Foundation. The latter is in response to changes in federal research funding

practices, and State Government Relations is developing campaigns for each campus.

- The Tuition Stability Plan renewal is also on next week's Regents agenda. A new benchmark index is proposed as well as allowing an optional 1% increase over inflation, but still capped at 5%.
- HCTF Chair Mays will join the Academic Council next week to discuss the health plan premium increases.
- UCFW's memos regarding the Total Remuneration Study's progress and the importance of UC's continued support for gender-affirming care will be presented to the Academic Council by UCFW Chair Bales next week, too.
- The University reached a new contract with UPTE for certain academic laborers. Negotiations with UAW continue.
- No official decisions regarding the Presidential Post-doctoral Fellowship Program's hiring incentive provision have been reached as the process continues. The program continues to receive significant support and additional funding options are being investigated. Funds currently come from UCOP's discretionary budget, which is relatively small.
- The University continues to strategize regarding to proceed in the new academic and political environment. UCAD+ will soon launch, merging faculty leaders with administration counterparts to explore key areas under threat and most impacted by the changes. Each subgroup will have faculty and administration co-chairs, and a preliminary report is expected by the end of winter.
- The Academic Council will also consider responses to the proposed revisions to APM 015, 016 regarding faculty discipline. The feedback has been considerable, so the discussion is expected to be robust.

## **II. Consultation with the Office of the President – Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs (FAAP) and Systemwide Academic Programs (SWAP)**

*Monica Varsanyi, Vice Provost, FAAP*

*Amy Lee, Deputy Provost, SWAP*

*Kelly Anders, Executive Director, SWAP*

- Vice Provost Varsanyi noted that no final decisions regarding the PPFP have been made, and that as the review process continues, more information on past operations and possible alternatives will emerge. Members are encouraged to seek program support from local sources, in addition to continuing to submit letters of support and the like.
- Vice Provost Varsanyi also noted that work on the Total Remuneration Study continues due to methodological differences with the external contractor, Deloitte. Whether to focus on the cost to the employer or on the value to the employee is at the center of issues such as how to value retiree health benefits as an individual nears retirement, whether geographic cost differentials can be accounted for, and when to apply different algorithms for different sexes due to behavioral differences. Additionally, process, scheduling, and consultation

expectations do seem to be being met. Senate expertise should be leveraged, although some assert that the consultant is ultimately responsible to the contracting party, which is Systemwide Human Resources. Members noted additional underlying issues regarding the RFP/procurement process followed for this project and others, which often do not set projects up for success. Significant turnover in the administration can also impact project timeliness and efficacy.

### **III. Consultation with the Office of the President – Office of Loan Programs**

*Jennifer Mays, Director, OLP*

*Megan Gutekunst, Associate Vice President, Finance Management*

Participation in the Mortgage Origination Program (MOP) remains strong, and this year's funding, approximately \$400M this year, and local allocations were adequate. The campuses administer most of the program locally. ZIP loans have been given to more than 600 individuals. Future funding projections are being developed, and recruitment and retention needs are an important factor in that process. Most MOP funding comes from STIP at this point. The MOP interest rate is currently 4.75% and is based on the four-quarter STIP average plus an administrative fee of 0.25%. The yield rate has bounced back from COVID lows of around 30% to today between 50-60%. Most loans go to new faculty, but that is a local decision. From the systemwide perspective, hazard insurance rejections are not yet prominent. Some locations are still eligible for the CA FAIR plan.

### **IV. Consultation with the Office fo the President – Systemwide Human Resources**

*Maynard Jenkins, Senior Executive Director, Benefits Programs and Strategy*

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

*Laura Tauber, Executive Director, UC Self-Funded Health Plans*

#### **1. Open Enrollment Rate Changes**

Mr. Jenkins began by explaining the rationale behind the switch to a market portfolio approach as being the growing disparity between plan premiums using the traditional risk adjustment process and the University's obligation to offer employees a variety of competitive plans to meet each individual's needs. Mercer Consulting helped clarify that UC's contribution rates by plan did not the market and often highly exceeded competitors' contributions or were highly deficient in contrast. So in order to place UC mid-market regarding employer contribution rates to each plan while maintaining on an aggregate support level to each individual, some internal shifts were necessary. Unfortunately, for some plans and paybands, this shift comes on top of a few years of already steep increases due to COVID increase deferrals, the delayed impact of changes in plan design, and is combined with continued high medical inflation. Nevertheless, UC increased its contribution again this year and provides approximately 80% premium coverage on average. One plan design issue is the use of weight loss drugs, usually in the GLP-1 category,

which is rapidly changing as are plan parameters for prescription approval and renewal.

An impact analysis shows the number individuals positively impacted and those significantly negatively impacted by dollar amount changes to their incumbent plans. For example, <7% of Kaiser enrollees show a positive impact from these changes. The lower paybands are also disproportionately negatively impacted during this course correction effort. Some have called for careful reconsideration of paybanding, overall.

Members again noted access limitations to plan by region that diminish the choice ostensibly being offered. Members also noted that many infer from the University's actions that another goal of the change in methodology is to encourage enrollment in UC-funded plans. Members added that the late notice of significant rate changes was viewed with suspicion by many, especially given the specific impacts of the rate increases.

## **V. Chair's Announcements**

*Karen Bales, UCFW Chair*

### **1. HCTF Update**

*With Vickie Mays, HCTF Chair*

Communications roll outs for health- and insurance-related business are often late and confusing. HCTF gets access to confidential information and can spot trends, but often HCTF only gets information at the last minute, or after decisions have been made, not before.

Members noted that Senate communication goals and administration communication goals may differ as their interests do not always overlap. For example, in the previous item, that Kaiser may have been over subsidized for various reasons was viewed by the administration as a problem to be fixed rather than as a plan bonus to employees based on enrollment and utilization.

One option for sharing Senate perspectives on important health- and insurance-related issues is the emeriti network who also receive frequent briefings from HR. Broader coordination between administrative units could also help message dissemination, consistency, and context.

### **2. TFIR Update**

*With Jill Hollenbach, TFIR Chair*

- The Regents will receive UCRP valuations at their meeting next week. TFIR previewed them and found nothing surprising given market returns and allocations.
- TFIR is growing concerned that some statements to the Regents regarding faculty perspectives on investment practices are being made cavalierly and with demonstration of corroboration.

### **3. Universitywide Police Policies and Administrative Procedures, aka "Gold Book", Review**

Last year, UCD Representative Foley volunteered to be UCFW's and the Senate's representative to workgroup reviewing proposed changes to the "Gold Book". She has since reported that the workgroup is not being asked to review the changes, but rather to summarize them for the upcoming systemwide review materials. Several questions regarding the drafters of the changes, the impetus behind them, and the likelihood of meaningful change after systemwide review have arisen. The deadline for implementation also needs clarification.

Director of Systemwide Community Safety Jody Stiger has been invited to next month's meeting to address these and related questions.

4. Consent Calendar

- Minutes of October 10, 2025 Meeting
- Correspondence Report

Note- Item not addressed.

**VI. Systemwide Review Items**

- Proposed Presidential Policy on Sustainable Practices

*Prof Gilless, UCB, Lead Reviewer*

The revisions include a nuanced approach regarding the national labs and the division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the monitoring requirements are specific and appropriate, and in many cases, better than industry standards. There are also improvements to the commuter provisions.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo of support for electronic approval.

- Proposed Presidential Policy IMT-1300 Information Technology Accessibility

*Prof Bykowski, UCSD, Lead Reviewer*

There was no "red-line" copy available since the policy is a near total rewrite of the previous policy, and the impetus was a desire to be in compliance with ADA Section 504. Nevertheless, this is an unfunded mandate with significant labor associated with it. There are eight areas identified for improvement, but no resources – human or other – identified or provided. If contracted vendors cannot comply, especially in the health sciences, the impacts are unclear. If legacy content cannot be brought into compliance, they may have to be abandoned or recreated wholesale. How graphs, charts, tables or other images can be brought into compliance is unclear. Indeed, laboratory work, medical procedures, and studio and performance arts will be challenging to bring into compliance.

The composition of exemption committees is not specified, nor are the standards by which they could grant exemptions. The role of the Senate in the review and exemption granting process requires clarification.

Implicated in this policy, as well as in other practices, is the definition of reasonable accommodation, which remains non-standardized.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo declining support for electronic approval.

- Proposed Revisions to Senate Bylaw 140

*Prof Lourie, UCI, Lead Reviewer*

The University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity (UCAADE) was operationally compliant with California's Proposition 209, and so to question the timing of the current proposal is natural. Changing the committee's name to "Accountability in Anti-Discrimination and Equity" is not objectionable, but there is concern that the other changes to the bylaw may endanger some of the committee's critical work. Specifically, the removal of "targets" in the revisions may hinder the committee's ability to defend members of the University community.

Regents Policy 4400 remains in effect, and that fact should help the Senate continue its operations, regardless of the committee's name.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo declining support for electronic approval.

- Proposed Presidential Policy on Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

*Prof Witztum, UCSF, Lead Reviewer*

The proposed changes are to the ca. 1990 policy, and they update language to match contemporary standards and state and federal regulations regarding fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism. This policy is essentially a place-holder for more specific campus policies, which means that local committees and Senate divisions will need to continue to monitor implementation in this important area.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo of support for electronic approval.

- Proposed Revisions to the APM 036 (General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

*Prof Li, UCSC, Lead Reviewer*

The proposed revisions include two parts: to bring UC into compliance with new laws impacting the California Education Code, and to address policy gaps under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act. There are no red flags about how the revisions accomplish the latter goal, but there are several concerns about the former.

This is the second systemwide review of proposed changes intended to bring UC into compliance with new state laws regarding vetting potential recipients of official letters of recommendation for any Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment findings against them. Previously addressed vagaries remain unclear. What an "official" letter of recommendation is remains unclear as the language still seems to include any letter authored by any supervisor which poses a considerable work burden and is inconsistent with academic norms; the language on page 6 could be further improved. The timeline for investigation is still unspecified, and who will conduct the investigation – and within what privacy parameters and with what resources – is also undefined. Out of state employers cannot be forced to comply with disclosure requests, and student employees may be protected as juvenile records may be sealed. Faculty who may be recalled have raised umbrage at being subjected to this practice. Finally,

the consequences of someone being found in violation of the policy for a lack of due diligence are not specified.

Analyst Feer will draft a memo declining support for electronic approval.

**VII. New Business and Further Discussion**

None.

Adjournment: 2:35 pm

Minutes prepared by Kenneth Feer, Principal Policy Analyst

Attest: Karen Bales, UCFW Chair