



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

I. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Action Taken: *The agenda and minutes were approved 10-0-0.*

II. Chair's Report

Chair Sean Gailmard

The Chair discussed the congress on academic freedom that is being coordinated by the Provost's Office. He noted that UCAF had sent a letter to the Provost regarding it, and that she responded by inviting UCAF to co-host the event. Chair Gailmard reported that the Provost's Office already had a considerable amount of content in place. The speakers include some noted scholars and important voices in this area. The Provost's Office responded favorably to the idea of UCAF having a speaker on each of the panels and proposed a closing panel spearheaded by UCAF. The Chair asked for suggestions on suggested speakers or panelists, and members weighed in.

III. Recent Federal Government Action

A. Executive Orders and DEI Efforts

B. Department of Education Antisemitism Task Force

Chair Sean Gailmard

Chair Gailmard said that he wanted to set aside time to deliberate on recent federal government actions including the issuance of Executive Orders that roll back or restrict DEI initiatives on campuses. He also wanted to discuss the issue of the administration's cancellation of federal grants, including those that are mid-stream. The Anti-Semitism Task Force, recently announced by the DOE, has released a list of 60 universities that are under investigation for failing to aggressively protect the civil rights of Jewish students in response to protest activities on campus. He asked members what UCAF should possibly do in response and what their experiences with regard to these actions had been. Members generally agreed that UCAF should make a fairly strong response and urge the UCOP administration to say something about the actions coming from the White House. Such a statement should also include reassurance for the faculty that the University "has their back."

IV. DEI Statements in Faculty Reviews

Chair Sean Gailmard

The Chair observed that he had been asked about this by a few colleagues. He asked if members had ever been told by a dean that they must include a DEI statement in their merit packet. Members reported on campus practices. It was suggested that UCAF put forward a letter to influence the next round of reviews in the fall. After discussion, the Chair asked members to discuss it with the divisional CAFs and report back at the next meeting.

V. UCOP's Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) and Faculty Hiring

Chair Sean Gailmard

The Chair raised the issue of the PPFP and faculty hiring. He explained that the PPFP is a fellowship program that is sponsored by UCOP, and it has UC faculty panelists select the fellows. The general thrust of the fellowship has to do with issues of DEI in the faculty pipeline. While he had not found the use of the PPFP to be questionable at Berkeley, he had heard concerns about its use expressed by faculty from other divisions. Members weighed in with their campus experiences. The Chair said that the issue would be revisited, with possibly a visit from OP administration for discussion.

VI. Campus and Student Reports

Members reported on campus activities related to academic freedom.

VII. Guidance Document on Academic Freedom

The Chair said he was following up on discussion from the December meeting about possibly creating a guidance document on academic freedom, what it is, and how to protect it. He volunteered to spearhead the creation of a short document and asked if a few others might be interested in working on it. He read a portion of the document that he had started. Members discussed options for the statement and what should be included.

VIII. Update: UCAF Statement on Politicization of Research Funding and Science

The Chair updated the committee on the letter. Members did not have any suggested changes.

IX. Systemwide Information and Items Under Systemwide Review

- A. Senate Chair Cheung's Remarks to the Board of Regents
- B. Proposed Presidential Policy on the Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential
- C. Proposed Revisions to APM-675, Veterinary Medicine Salary Administration
- D. Proposed Revisions to APM 036, General University Policy Regarding Academic Appointees/Employment

- E. Proposed revisions to Senate Bylaw 170 (University Committee on Educational Policy) and Rescission of Senate Bylaw 192 (University Committee on Preparatory Education)
- F. Proposed revisions to APM 500 (Recruitment - General)
- G. Proposed revisions to Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-63 (Risk Transfer and Insurance Requirements)
- H. Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Chair Gailmard asked members to draft any suggested responses in email and send them to the group.

X. New Business

There was no new business.

XI. Executive Session

Minutes are not taken during Executive Session.

The committee adjourned at 1:35 p.m.