

Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF)
Minutes of Meeting
February 18, 2016

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 2:00 pm on February 18, 2016 in Room 397 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Rudy Ortiz presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Ortiz welcomed new campus Ombuds, Callale Concon.

--UCAF meeting December 15, 2015. Major items of discussion included the Regents' Statement of Principles Against Intolerance and the retirement options benefits task force. These same issues, along with the cybersecurity measures recently taken by UCOP, will be discussed at the next UCAF meeting.

--Division Council meeting February 1. The main item of discussion was the cybersecurity issue and how the Merced Senate would respond to systemwide. CIO Ann Kovalchick will be invited to the next Division Council meeting to share her perspective. At the meeting, Chair Ortiz related to Division Council members that FWAF's police advisory board memo was received by the Vice Provost for the Faculty and will next be discussed by others in senior leadership.

II. Consultation with UCFW Representative Sean Malloy

Professor Malloy updated FWAF members on the January 25 UCFW meeting where the major items of discussion were the retirement options benefits task force and the cybersecurity measures taken by UCOP. With regard to the retirement program, the consensus at UCFW is that the proposed revisions are unpopular for three major reasons: 1) the process violated the spirit and letter of shared governance; the proposed modifications to the retirement program were determined by the "Committee of Two" (UC President Napolitano and Governor Brown) and did not include Senate faculty; 2) the

review period for the Academic Senate to review the modifications and respond was unreasonably short, and 3) the proposed revisions would significantly disadvantage the benefits of UC employees hired after July 1, 2016. Though neither option contained in the proposal is optimal, option A is slightly preferred for retirement readiness and retention of employees. The next step is for President Napolitano is to review comments, whereupon, the proposal will be submitted to the Regents for a vote.

With regard to the cybersecurity issue, UCAF members were debriefed by the systemwide CIO on the technical components. The committee members were largely satisfied by the explanation and several fears were allayed. However, the process of implementation was problematic for the following reasons: 1) the system was installed in August 2015 but was not disclosed to Senate faculty until December and this occurred only after UCB faculty discovered its existence from their IT staff, 2) as a result of the cyberattack at UCLA, UCOP decided that individuals who were involved in installing the system should be placed under attorney/client privilege which means they were unable to answer many questions. This compounded the fear across the system about the implementation of the system. Lastly, 3) the publicity surrounding this process has been negative and could have been avoided with better strategic communication.

III. Consultation with Director of Campus Climate De Acker

At the November 19, 2015 meeting, Associate Chancellor Putney raised the issue of threat assessment resource guides and the plan to collaborate with Student Affairs and Counseling & Psychological Services. These guides are intended to help all campus constituents, including faculty members, on identifying and dealing with threats.

At today's meeting, Director Acker distributed a resource guide on recognizing signs of a distressed colleague and whom individuals can speak to for help or to report the behavior. The campus behavioral interventional team is knowledgeable about these issues and how to either report them, or refer individuals to appropriate parties.

Chair Ortiz pointed out the need for a preventive system and training for the campus community on how to respond to emergencies.

The committee then held a brief discussion on how to address distressed faculty members and the roles of the deans, bylaw chairs, and faculty mentors. Faculty should feel comfortable with approaching their colleagues and mentors but there is a question of whether unit chairs and deans are willing to assume the responsibility. This would require training for deans and unit chairs, to equip them to handle these situations. However, some faculty members are unwilling to speak to their senior colleagues or their mentors for fear of retaliation in their next personnel review. Several faculty members are also reluctant to report the distressed behavior of colleagues for fear of getting their colleagues into trouble. Compounding these problems is the fact that there is a lack of appropriate mental health care in the community and no resources available for faculty members to find area providers.

A committee member suggested the need to foster a social network among faculty members, such as holding faculty-only social events and creating recreational activities both on campus and in the community. This could help alleviate the sense of isolation felt by many faculty members.

Director Acker concluded by encouraging faculty members to contact her with questions and concerns.

IV. Active Service Modified Duty

Currently, faculty members can request active service modified duty for reasons of child birth and child care. However, several faculty members would like this option due to other major life events, such as caring for a sick parent. Additional discussion on this item continued later in the meeting (see below).

V. Family-Friendly Academic Scheduling

Faculty members are facing child care challenges due to the fact that Merced school district calendars do not align with UCM's, specifically, spring break and the President's Day extended holiday. Due to the lack of child activities in the community, faculty members are compelled to either bring their children to campus or try to find babysitting which has proven very difficult. The lack of activities in the community is especially problematic during the summer as faculty members are still working on campus. A solution would be to offer additional activities for children on campus, similar to that of the current Bobcat Writing camp, but that would extend to about 6-8 weeks. (Summer camps in the community are only in session for 2 weeks at a time.) Committee members agreed that this should be a priority for the campus, as it is a recruitment and retention issue for the faculty.

ACTION: Chair Ortiz will raise these issues at the next Division Council meeting and seek guidance on which campus unit should be consulted with assisting faculty members in finding solutions and resources. With regard to active service modified duty and APM 760, member Malloy will draft a memo for FWAF's review which will then be transmitted to Division Council.

VI. Campus Review Item

Proposed minor in World Heritage.

ACTION: The Senate Chair will be informed that FWAF has no comments.

VII. Systemwide Review Item

Guiding principles for search waivers in the appointment of UC academic employees.

ACTION: FWAF members to review and provide comments by Wednesday, February 24. A final memo will be sent to the Senate Chair.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Attest: Rudy Ortiz, Chair