

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Thursday, December 2, 2021****10:00 – 11:30 am****Minutes of Meeting**

The meeting was convened at 10:01AM, with Chair Jennings presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *David Jennings*

- A. Chair discussed the Spring 2022 meeting modality with members. It was decided to continue meeting in zoom.
- B. Divisional Council meeting, November 18: 1) DivCo discussed the distribution priorities and process of the McKenzie Scott gift funds allocated by the Chancellor, such as student fellowships. It may be possible to fund undocumented students. 2) CAP has not received any cases from the departments this fall. They will likely have to do about 70 reviews all in Spring. Usually there are cases they can handle in Fall. Due to this, there will likely be delay in the processing of cases. 3) the shortage of funds for the library has led to understaffing, which is affecting library operation (closures on weekends). 4) A historically large number of staff hiring is happening right now, indicating the chancellor's efforts to strengthen the institution.
- C. Updates on Action Plan on collecting feedback from faculty on Covid-related, and other, faculty welfare issues
- Attend departmental meetings (ongoing, report from completed visits)
 - Follow up with google form/email depository/office hour sessions this Fall
 - Upon collection of information in Fall, consult with EDI, CAP and P&T
 - Survey in Spring (with input for prioritization of issues)

Members reported on the departmental meetings they have attended. A member stated response had been positive and faculty seemed receptive to the idea. The member made the point that we cared about all of their concerns and short- and long-term impacts of Covid-19. Another member shared that faculty discussed intermediate and long-term impact at the department meeting he attended. Some expressed concerns that the consideration of the impact of Covid-19 may unwittingly favor the tenure/promotion cases of some faculty populations over others. He forwarded the systemwide working group's preliminary report to the department and recommends all to do so.

Action: Chair will update the slides, develop the google form, and craft a follow-up email. Members will fill the google form to ensure none can see the others' responses.

- D. Recap on the discussion with the CAP Chair—talking points were made available to FWAF members. It seems that APO has already made some efforts, but department chairs still feel not enough guidance and assistance have been given. FWAF members discussed the pros and cons of the Stop the Clock (STC) measure, the Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) principle recommended by the systemwide working group (MCIF—Mitigating Covid-19 Impacts on Faculty), and whether the campus and

systemwide messages have been consistent. There needs to be one place where all relevant information is collated. UCFW reviewed a document on how different institutions are implementing the ARO principle. (The document was later shared with FWAF.)

Action: Further discussion in Spring 2022. Committee will review the MCIF Working Group’s preliminary report and identify the recommendations that FWAF agrees with, to present to APO.

II. Vice Chair’s Report– **Tea Lempiala**

A. Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC)—there were no updates.

III. Consent Calendar

A. Today’s agenda

B. Meeting Minutes (11/4/21)

Action: The consent calendar was approved as presented.

- IV. UCFW Updates –**Jayson Beaster-Jones (10:25-10:35)** At its 11/12 meeting, UCFW discussed Unit-18 strike and access to mental healthcare. There are “ghost providers” who are listed but do not actually provide the service. Merced, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz are most impacted. UCFW also discussed the wide variance in covid teaching/modality plans across campuses. It appears that each campus made its plan individually. FWAF members discussed the need for better communication and greater flexibility in teaching modality given the new variant that affects the vaccinated. It appears that UGC is concerned about “accidental online degree” and not emergency/temporary modality shifts.

Action: Chair Jennings will reach out to Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Sarah Frey, as well as UGC and GC Chairs, to advocate for greater flexibility for faculty and to request clarifications on conditions under which courses can be moved online.

V. Systemwide Review Items

A. Proposed Presidential Policy on Abusive Conduct/Bullying in the Workplace

Lead Reviewer: Jayson Beaster-Jones

This is a newly proposed policy “responsive to a request from the Regents and the Academic Senate for a systemwide policy that addresses the University’s responsibilities and procedures related to abusive conduct/bullying” (per cover letter). Page 2 defines bullying, which is helpful, but there is unclear delineation between bullying and title IX or VII complaints. The boundaries between the existing policies and practices and this new policy are not clear. SSHA Executive Committee has been discussing the possibility that this releases some faculty from what would normally be considered racially charged conducts. AVPF Valdez added that some are concerned that, when talking about bullying, if it is not explicitly underscored that power dynamics are involved, the more vulnerable party might be considered bullying when expressing legitimate concerns. The lead reviewer stated that page 3 discusses power dynamics but its meaning is unclear. The AVPF stated that UCM is only one of the two campuses that have a campus policy on bullying (in effect since 2017). UCM policy applies to all, while Berkeley’s does not apply to students.

Members agreed that further clarification is needed on the relationship between the proposed policy, on one hand, and APM 015, Title IX and VII, and UC Merced’s campus policy on bullying, on the other.

Action: Transmit FWAF comments above to Senate Chair by 12/6/21.

VI. Campus Review Items (none at this time)

VII. Discussion Item: Conflict Resolution Guidelines—**David Jennings**

During AY 20-21, a Senate-Administration joint workgroup (including a FWAF member) met monthly and produced a final report including draft graduate student-faculty conflict resolution guidelines. Graduate Council (GC) requested the review of the guidelines by FWAF, CoR and EDI as well as department and graduate group chairs, and school deans. GC is considering integrating the conflict resolution guidelines into Graduate P&P Handbook and/or Graduate Group P&Ps.

Action: Due to lack of time, members will provide comments by December 6, by email.

VIII. Consultation with Interim CFO Kurt Schnier/Discussion on ECEC—**Tea Lempiala**

Interim CFO Schnier did not respond to FWAF’s invitation. FWAF previously (10/22/21) met with the Chancellor and the interim CFO. Another meeting had been promised, but this does not seem to be happening. FWAF has not received the Administration’s feedback on FWAF’s presentation about ECEC and recommendations for creating a family friendly campus. FWAF will continue to advocate for family friendly policies, but members also support creating a committee that include staff and students, as they too are impacted by the dearth of childcare.

At the 10/22 meeting, ECEC was portrayed as a large expense that benefits a small fraction of campus. FWAF needs to demonstrate that it is a part of the larger family friendly policy, where the need for all types of care is addressed. For example, Bright Horizons services are not available in Merced. Afterschool and summer childcare is also lacking. Members discussed the message to send to the administration. While the lack of childcare is a social issue at large, UC has the capacity to work towards making substantial social changes, and it has tried to lead the way in other areas. If UC Merced is not going to try, availability of childcare services should not be mentioned during recruitment. Limited availability of childcare also affects retention. A member wondered how UCM plans to become an R1 institution and diversity its faculty without adequate childcare. FWAF’s communication to the administration should contain information on the limited childcare availability in Merced in general and describe how it impacts faculty when ECEC is on limited hours.

Chair Jennings added that, in addition to FWAF’s perspective in support of women, justice, diversity, and the campus as a community, the message, for it to have an impact, needs to incorporate the administration’s perspective, which is financial. Members suggested linking availability of childcare to increased productivity. As UC Merced has more junior faculty in proportion compared to other campuses, childcare is of particular importance.

Action: Continue development of FWAF's message to the administration.

- IX. Consultation with Associate Vice Provost for the Faculty – **Zulema Valdez**
- A. FEA training at UC Merced—this was the first ever training offered by UC Merced. The 2-hour training went very well. Normally, FEAs go to the training at UC Irvine or UC Davis, but due to delay in FEA appointments, this year's FEAs could not attend the one at Irvine, and the Davis training was cancelled for the day they were planning to go. Thus the campus training became the sole training for this year's FEAs.
- B. Contribution to Diversity Statements in faculty recruitment--This is the 2nd year of using contribution to diversity statements in the first round. 6 other campuses are doing the same. UCM has the most diverse campus in the system. With the diversity grant program (from which the AVPF had received funding) and FEAs, the number of female faculty has increased significantly. At systemwide, there has been only 1% increase in URM faculty. AVPF Valdez shared the links to the systemwide and campus demographic information on faculty (for campus level information, one needs to register to view the information).
- X. Other Business No other businesses were presented.
- XI. Informational Items There were no informational items for this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38AM.