

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Meeting Minutes****Wednesday, May 12, 2021****10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon****[Zoom Meeting \(https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/2092009728\)](https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/2092009728)****Documents available at: UCM Box "[FWAF AY 20-21](#)"**

Pursuant to the call, the meeting was convened at 10:34AM, Chair Frank presiding.

- I. Chair's Report – ***Carolyn Frank*** **10:30-10:40**
 - A. DivCo (4/30/21) discussed MAPP 500, which recommends all academic appointees, including postdocs, to go through the same hiring process as faculty hires. The reason behind the push seems to be an attempt to increase diversity, but the proposed change will increase everyone's workload. FWAF members discussed alternatives to meet the diversity goals without a cumbersome process, such as requiring a diversity statement, and awarding more fellowships modeled after UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship. A member asked who suggested the MAPP revision, and FWAF Chair responded she would follow up.
- II. Consent Calendar
 - A. Today's agenda
 - B. [Minutes](#) from the 4/28/21 meeting

Action: The consent calendar was approved as presented.

- III. Campus Review Item- ***Carolyn Frank*** **10:40-10:55**
 - A. [Request for revision to the Grade Appeal Policy by the Ombudsperson](#)

CRE received the request from the Ombuds office to include it in the grade appeal policy that appears in the Catalog. Graduate Council invited FWAF to comment on the proposal, citing concerns about how the proposed revision may affect faculty welfare. Chair pointed out that there are two grounds for grade appeal in the policy that were not included in the CRE memo. Members commented that deans (of schools, and Dean of Students) would be more knowledgeable about grading than ombuds, and wondered why a student should go directly to the ombuds. The ombuds office could be overwhelmed by students. Members understand grade appeal might involve confidentiality issues (in cases of discrimination or arbitrary treatment), and are not opposed to ombuds having a role in some fashion, but need more information on what prompted the request. The existing policy explains that cases of alleged discrimination or arbitrary treatment "will be reviewed as a Title VI and/or Title IX matter by the appropriate officer(s)."

Action: Provide comments to the Graduate Council based on the above.

- IV. Systemwide Review Item - ***Carolyn Frank*** **10:55-11:10**
 - A. [Proposed Presidential Policy for the SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) Vaccination Program](#) –the proposed policy mandates all UC faculty, staff and students without approved waivers to receive vaccination prior to the beginning of Fall 2021 term. Exemptions can be granted on medical or religious basis, which is described as "deeply held beliefs." FWAF members wondered how the beliefs could be measured/determined, and how the campus would keep track of people with exemptions. If the exempt individuals are on campus, how do we know not to be in their proximity, for all to stay safe? Chair Frank shared an [article](#) about vaccine hesitancy and the importance of communication on vaccine. Members discussed the importance of providing

information as a dialogue, rather than as a one-directional presentation, and of information being provided by sources trusted by the hesitant population. It was suggested that UC Merced host listening sessions (for why people are hesitant), mediated by people who can provide information to steer them to accepting vaccine, identify what groups are resistant to vaccination, and which groups the university should target (for example, people with political resistance, people with historical fear, or people who feel they lack sufficient information). Information campaign needs to reach not only students but families of students as they have influence on students. Solidarity between institutions of higher learning would be beneficial. While there are universities that are not mandating vaccination, many are, as shown in [this article](#).

Action: Transmit review to Senate Chair by May 17, 2021.

V. Discussion: ECEC Governance/Committee on Family Friendly Policies -**Carolyn Frank 11:10-11:30**

Possible structures include campus-wide ECEC Advisory Council and a Committee on Family Friendly Policies (CFFP) as UCFW and UCAADE [recommended](#). Members reviewed FWAF's [draft memo](#) and concluded that the memo would offer recommendations for ECEC Parent Committee (PAC), instead of the Advisory Council, and CFFP, as follows:

PAC should:

- continue to serve as a parent forum
- have more inclusive scheduling, i.e., make it easier for all interested parents to attend
- be led by a parent, not the ECEC Director
- have a formal structure with a Chair and defined membership
- continue to meet even when ECEC is not in operation

CFFP should:

- Have staff and student representatives, but report to the Senate
- Be a committee with a charge and bylaws specifying membership and structure (chair, vice chair, etc.)
- Be the committee with a broad mandate, including after school care and care during vacations, in addition to early childhood care.

Members also discussed the rationale for establishing CFFP beyond those provided in the UCFW/UCAADE memo. (1) Senate committees are uniquely well suited to initiate conversations with the administration and advocate for faculty interests, yet (2) there are many stakeholders affected besides faculty families (students and staff). (3) Parents from across the community are likely to be better positioned to inform and advocate for childcare. (4) The Senate can advocate using the existing channels on behalf of CFFP, while CFFP also advocates for its interests through its own available channels.

Action: Revise the memo based on the above discussion.

VI. Discussion: CRI Workgroup – **Mehmet Baykara 11:30-11:45**

Member Baykara updated on the 5/10 workgroup meeting. Future work on flowchart and text will be handled by GC but FWAF and D&E will be consulted. GC will contact the committees. Student R&R document is still in revision, will be finalized in AY 21-22. Graduate Division will reach out to OSRR on coordination in handling graduate student cases. Workgroup's final report will be ready by end of this AY.

Action: FWAF will provide feedback when requested.

VII. Consultation with AVPF Valdez--tabled

VIII. Other Business: FWAFF discussed the systemwide letter on UC Healthcare Affiliations (see item IX). The letter clarified that it does not propose to end health care options for people who have no good options other than these affiliates, but members felt that the memo should have been clearer about this aspect. There are concerns about the impact on quality of care, especially for UC Merced faculty, if the affiliation is taken away. Not merely health insurance aspect but the care aspect needs to be taken into consideration. Members also wondered about the status of the proposed medical clinic for faculty and staff, which was announced by the provost over a year ago.

IX. Informational Items:

[UCCS Webinar](#) on Diversity Statements and Academic Freedom (5/5/21)

Systemwide Senate [Guidelines and Recommendations](#) for Fall Campus Re-opening that emphasizes the importance of Shared Governance (i.e., consultation with Faculty). President Drake supports these Guidelines and Recommendations.

Systemwide Senate [Letter on the revision of the "Gold Book"](#) voicing its opposition to the Gold Book policies, which the Senate found "inappropriate for a university environment and inconsistent with current national conversations about policing and UC's own internal discussions about campus safety."

Systemwide Senate [Letter on UC Healthcare Affiliations](#), which rejects affiliations with external providers that include discriminatory policy-based restrictions on health care. In addition, it offers five principles to guide an independent panel's consideration of existing and proposed affiliations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45AM.