

**COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)****Meeting Minutes****Thursday, September 9, 2021****10:00 – 11:30 am****SE 2 220****Zoom information:** <https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/81240114636>One tap mobile: US: [+16699006833](tel:+16699006833), [81240114636#](tel:+181240114636) or [+12532158782](tel:+12532158782), [81240114636#](tel:+181240114636)**Documents available at: UCM Box “[FWAF AY 21-22](#)”**

The meeting was called to order at 10:06AM, with Chair Jennings presiding.

- I. Chair’s Report – **David Jennings** (10:00-10:20)
  - A. Welcome—members introduced themselves.
  - B. Executive Session and Role of the Ex-Officio Member—members agreed that it is important to allocate time for consultation with the ex officio member, while also ensuring there is time for committee discussion in executive session so as not to limit the discussion. Members agreed to arrange the agenda so that voting-member only items are on the early part of the agenda, and request ex officio member’s participation when deemed beneficial. This aligns with the principles of shared governance.
  - C. Meeting modality—Committee decided to meet via zoom for the remainder of Fall 2021. If situation improves, committee will consider in-person meetings.
  - D. Representation on systemwide committees
    - i. Chair Jennings serves on the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF). Chair Jennings will identify UCAF items to bring to FWAF discussion and FWAF items to UCAF discussion, and requested member Beaster-Jones to do likewise.
    - ii. FWAF member Jayson Beaster-Jones serves on the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW). Member Beaster-Jones explained the composition and functions of UCFW, highlighting the discussions last year (Dignity Health, Childcare, and UC faculty salary equity relative to peer Universities, healthcare, retirement, and faculty housing).
  - E. [Committee Conflict of Interest policy](#)—Members discussed the meaning of “personal interest,” the reliance on members’ goodwill to act upon their conflict of interest and absence of enforcement mechanism, concerns about excluding members from discussions that are relevant to them, and whether the Col policy should be revisited periodically throughout the year.

**Action:** Review the COI policy for any need for revision, and email the suggestions by 9/28/21.

- F. Governance Retreat (Senate & Administration) August 23-24—Chair walked members through the principles of [shared governance](#) and reminded members that, other than UGC and GC, the Senate committees play an advisory role to the administration. Thus, it is beneficial to have the AVPF’s presence at FWAF meetings. Chair also reported that UCM signed an MOU, with 10-year financial commitment from UCOP, much like other campuses received in their early years.
- G. [Divisional Council](#) meeting, September 2 –one of the main goals for DivCo this year is to remove long-term and short-term obstacles to research, especially addressing the lab closures, business services

and grant administration. FWAF will lend its hand where it can, as how you feel about your job plays an important role in faculty morale and welfare.

- H. Campus and systemwide review items. FWAF members discussed whether they prefer to review all items distributed by Divisional Council this year, or to delegate the decision to FWAF chair, who would only forward items relevant to FWAF. Given the small number of members, Chair prefers the latter option so as not to overburden members.

**Action:** Analyst will forward the Senate Weekly Digest to members, and place review items on the draft agenda that may be of interest to FWAF, in addition to items FWAF is a lead review committee for.

II. FWAF priorities for AY 21-22 – *David Jennings (10:20-10:50)*

A. Faculty Welfare

- i. Understanding faculty concerns about post-pandemic welfare issues -> Action item: Solicit faculty feedback via a listening tour, a survey, etc.—attendance at faculty meetings was suggested. A member suggested, and members agreed, that this priority should be revised to include welfare issues during the pandemic also.
- ii. Strengthening effective family friendly policies on campus --> Action items: Ensure that appropriate committees are in place to oversee the ECEC and advocate for family friendly policies overall (e.g. Family Friendly Policy Committee, effective Parent Advisory Committee at the ECEC); follow-up on covid-specific policies and their effectiveness; explore the need for other policies; follow up on the Chancellor’s invitation to meet with FWAF leadership— a meeting has been scheduled on October 29. Members agreed to revisit the draft memo from last year.  
A member added the following priorities:
- iii. Oracle Financial System—research grants, reimbursements, and purchases have all been severely impacted by the new financial system. Members discussed issues that have been brought to them by faculty in their units, and what the sources of the issues might be.

**Action:** Chair Jennings will attend the 9/24/21 meeting with the CFO and update FWAF.

- iv. Moratorium on staff hire—due to staff shortage, campus functions such as hiring and purchasing are negatively impacted, which in turn affects faculty morale and welfare.

B. Inclusive Culture

- i. Continue to advocate for Teaching Professor membership on CAP—in previous years, there have been strong resistance from CAP to including a Teaching Professor among its members. CRE’s interpretation of the rules has limited the rights rather than advancing inclusiveness and equity. As there is a greater diversity among Teaching Professors, their inclusion will contribute to diversifying the CAP membership.
- ii. Ensure equity between diverse faculty (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.) in dealing with the post-pandemic challenges -> Action item: joint meeting with EDI—a member noted that surveys revealed that pandemic-related concerns were disproportionately expressed by the under-represented faculty. A member reminded FWAF of UCFW guidelines, endorsed by Academic Council, that recommended acknowledging the impact of Covid on

career trajectory, which will extend into 2026 or later. Members discussed engagement with CAP to discuss equity issues in general, and for women with young children during pandemic in particular. FWAF will continue this discussion at the next meeting.

- iii. Retiree representation and rights—members discussed the availability of UC Merced retirees and the process for obtaining a retiree member.

**Action:** Chair will request CoC to appoint a retiree to FWAF.

#### C. Academic Freedom

- i. Gather input from faculty regarding concerns about academic freedom (especially over classroom content) and craft UC Merced Academic Freedom Statement—this is a carry-over item from last AY. Chair has heard of freedom issues related to research (FOI requests), as well as classroom recordings without permissions. Chair will gather information at UCAF before moving forward.

### III. Vice Chair’s Report – *Tea Lempiala (10:50-11:00)*

- A. ECEC updates—ECEC is in limited operation (hours and capacity), no outbreaks have been reported. Major concern for FWAF has been the information vacuum. It is still unclear why it was closed and why outsourcing was considered (on hold for 2 years). Lack of accurate information was problematic, especially at ECEC staff/parent meetings. Parent Advisory Committee is still functioning as an information-sharing venue, not as a committee. A member commented that, during discussions last year, the administrative leadership did not seem sufficiently informed to make critical decisions.

AVPF Valdez recommended that FWAF advocate for hiring the Associate Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary Enterprises and Fiscal Innovation, which is a part of the Division of Finance and Administration at its meeting with the Chancellor, and that FWAF contact Berkeley Parents Network to find out what the parents provide and what the University provides. Currently parents do not have access to the service from Bright Horizon in emergency. As it is part of the benefit package for all UC employees, UC Merced should ask for a satellite operation.

**Actions:** Member Loebman will share information on how to build an inexpensive air filter with FWAF members (completed on 9/9/21). Vice Chair will contact the ECEC Director for more information on the denied request for an air filtration system.

- B. Periodic Review Oversight Committee ([PROC](#))—its first meeting was postponed to 9/30.

#### IV. Consent Calendar

- A. Today’s agenda
- B. Meeting [Minutes](#) (5/12/21)

**Action requested:** The consent calendar was approved as presented.

#### V. Campus Review Items (none at this time) – *David Jennings*

- VI. Systemwide Review Items – **David Jennings (11:00-11:05)**
- A. [Revised Presidential Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#)  
The proposed revisions are to: (i) comply with a new State law, Senate Bill (SB) 493, and (ii) better account for Prohibited Conduct in the clinical setting. The [Cover Letter](#) provides the background information and summary of the proposed revision.
- Chair would like to rotate review leads, and volunteered to review this item.
- Action:** Chair will present his review at FWF's 10/7/21 meeting.
- VII. Discussion Item: Support for Faculty during Covid-19 Pandemic—**David Jennings (11:05-11:20)**  
At a meeting hosted by the Mellon Fellowship program for incoming faculty, some new faculty members expressed that they felt inadequately informed and advised about their benefits (e.g., health and life insurance, retirement). A related issue is mentoring of junior faculty by senior faculty, which is especially important during the pandemic.
- AVPF commented on the mentorship program she previously organized, where six senior faculty members mentored 12 junior faculty. She intends to re-launch it this year. She agreed that departments should more actively engage in their own mentoring for faculty, and make sure helpful information is shared with new faculty, such as Fidelity's on-campus consultation. FWF will continue the discussion and identify the next steps at the next meeting.
- VIII. Consultation with Associate Vice Provost for the Faculty – **Zulema Valdez (11:20-11:30)**
- A. Faculty Workshop on bystander/anti-bullying—the workshop is for department and graduate group chairs, but AVPF Valdez have extended the invitation to FWF and EDI members. More information about the workshop was provided via email to members.
- IX. Other Business There were no new businesses.
- X. Informational Items No informational items were shared at this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:46AM. Att. by Chair Jennings.