

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Wednesday, September 27, 2023****3:30pm – 5:00pm****ADMIN 345****MINUTES OF MEETING**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 3:30pm on September 27, 2023. Chair Jayson Beaster-Jones presiding.

I. Welcome and Introductions**II. Chair's Report – Jayson Beaster-Jones****A. Meeting Modality**

FWAF members agreed to hold meetings in person.

B. Meeting Schedule: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00pm

- September 27
- October 18
- November 15
- December 13

C. Representation on Systemwide Senate Committees

- Jayson Beaster-Jones will serve as the UCM Representative on the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW)

UCFW meets monthly with the first meeting being held on October 13. Chair Beaster-Jones will report updates at the October 18 FWAF meeting.

UCFW considers and reports on matters concerning the economic welfare of the faculty including salaries, benefits, insurance, retirement, housing, and conditions of employment.

- David Jennings will serve as the UCM Representative on the University Committee of Academic Freedom (UCAF)
The first UCAF meeting will be held on September 28. Member Jennings will report updates at the October 18 FWAF meeting. If any members have items they would like to address, they are asked to please inform member Jennings.

UCAF studies and reports to the Assembly upon any condition within or outside the University that may affect the academic freedom of the University and its academic community.

The September 28 UCAF meeting agenda will include a discussion of the departmental voting rights of Teaching Professors.

It was noted that in a UCAF meeting from last year, one topic addressed was if there

ought to be a UCAF representative on the Academic Council. Currently, there is not a UCAF representative on the Academic Council.

D. Informational Items

- FWAF website (includes a description of the committee's duties, membership, and the committee's Bylaws)
- UCM Senate Bylaws and Regulations
- Systemwide Senate Bylaws and Regulations
- Senate Consultation Guidelines

E. Campus and systemwide review items. FWAF members to discuss whether they prefer to review all items distributed by Divisional Council this year, or allow the FWAF Chair to only forward items relevant to FWAF.

Chair Beaster-Jones provided information on FWAF's role in opining on various campus and systemwide review items. Chair Beaster-Jones will ask for lead reviewers and comments will be collected by the Senate staff in order to draft response memos.

F. DivCo Updates

DivCo is made up of all committee Chairs in addition to three at-large members.

III. Consultation with VPAP Tom Hansford

VPAP Hansford addressed a faculty welfare issue that occurred over the summer. A significant number of faculty did not receive their requested summer salary in a timely manner. The Academic Personnel Office worked to troubleshoot each individual case and is now conducting an analysis to identify where the main source of the issue occurred. VPAP Hansford emphasized that this issue is a top priority so that it does not reoccur next summer.

VPAP Hansford introduced the topic of rebuilding campus community and faculty community for discussion. Some initiatives have already been introduced, but the campus is looking for additional activities to help address this concern. Proposed ideas include a weekly or monthly casual get together with faculty, or faculty lunches in the Pavilion. Members had the following comments:

- The initiatives were a good idea and could also encourage collaborations between faculty across campus.
- While planning and advertising these activities, it would be beneficial to keep in mind that the goal is to improve faculty morale. Promoting this idea would help to increase the attendance at the events.
- A venue off campus might attract more people to attend.
- A more cost-efficient option may be to host a coffee hour rather than a faculty lunch. Rather than the campus providing the coffee, it might increase attendance to bring in an outside vendor to provide the beverages. In addition, the coffee hour could be held in the middle of the day to help increase attendance.

VPAP Hansford asked for the committee's input as to what issues they would like to address throughout the year. The discussion included the following items:

- Difficulties with increasing workload, a decline in the number of TAs, and an increase in class sizes.
- Frustrations with how shared governance is implemented on campus.

- Administrative support for grants and research funding.
- Faculty would like the administration to be more transparent. It was also noted that a town hall format was not preferred.
- Difficulties in the cost of Postdoctoral Scholars hiring due to the commitment of a two-year contract.
- Faculty salary compression and inversion.

VPAP Hansford closed the discussion with the reiteration that he will welcome input and guidance on recommended priorities throughout the year.

IV. **Consent Calendar**

- A. Today's agenda
- B. May 5 draft Meeting Minutes
- C. FWAF Conflict of Interest Policy¹

Action: Today's agenda, the May 5 Meeting Minutes, and the Conflict of Interest policy were approved as presented. The FWAF analyst will update the Senate website accordingly.

V. **Review of FWAF AY 23-24 Priorities – Jayson Beaster-Jones**

Members discussed priorities in order to plan for AY 23-24. The discussion included the following topics:

- Issues with grants management. There are concerns that the high probability of mistakes may lead to a loss or unavailability of funds. It was also noted that this would be a red flag if an audit were to occur on campus.
- Issues regarding the shift to Oracle.
- Creation of a Work Life Balance or Family Friendly task force. Members discussed the challenges of obtaining childcare in the ECEC and in Merced in general.

VI. **Request from MWP Director Beck**

The Merrit Writing Program was given a mandate from the SSHA Dean to increase instructors' teaching loads by 20%. The committee discussed the impacts of raising MWP course caps. Arguments against increasing class size included an increase in faculty workload, loss in student retention in larger courses, university rankings in relation to class size, and the importance of prioritizing educational best practices over budget. Currently, MWP resides in SSHA and is also included in the SSHA's budget. This creates a significant strain on the school's budget. Various solutions were presented including making MWP its own school, cutting MWP, or moving it out of SSHA and under another school. The committee did not vote on any particular action item after the discussion.

Action: FWAF to formulate a response to Dr. Beck.

VII. **Systemwide Review Items**

- A. Amendments to Senate Bylaw 55 - Departmental Voting Rights

The amendments were proposed by the University Committee on Academic Personnel (UCAP) and endorsed by Academic Council last academic year. The memo from Academic Council Chair James Steintrager (hyperlinked above) offers some background for the proposed amendments.

FWAF is a lead reviewer.

Action: Members Jennings and Ma will serve as lead reviewers. Their comments will be circulated via email by Friday, October 13 and will serve as the basis for FWAF's official response to the Senate Chair by Friday, October 20, 2023.

B. New Academic Personnel Manual (APM) section 672 – Negotiated Salary Program

The proposed new APM would codify into policy to Negotiated Salary Trial Program (NSTP), which was first implemented in 2013. The Academic Senate reviewed the report of the NSTP Phase 2 Taskforce in July 2022. The Senate also reviewed the NSTP in 2017 and prior to this, when it was proposed in 2012. The memo from Vice Provost Haynes was hyperlinked on the agenda and offers additional background.

The purpose of the Negotiated Salary Program (NSP) is to provide a mechanism for participating campuses to augment faculty compensation basis according to the competitive requirements of academic disciplines. Specific goals of the Program include:

- To recruit and retain outstanding faculty by leveraging external, non-state-appropriated funds;
- To encourage and recognize significant contributions to the University mission; and
- To offer negotiated compensation to participating general campus faculty.

Key Policy Provisions

- **Eligibility:** Eligibility is limited to Senate faculty and Acting appointees in Senate titles. Faculty who hold appointments in a Health Sciences school, college, or department with a Health Sciences Compensation Plan are not eligible to participate in the NSP.
- **Implementation Plan:** Each campus must develop an Implementation Plan that is consistent with the policy. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed by the appropriate division Academic Senate committee, approved by the Chancellor, and reviewed by the UC Provost/EVP prior to implementation.
- **Contingency Plan:** The Campus Implementation Plan must include a Contingency Plan outlining a strategy for covering the agreed-upon compensation to each NSP participant in the event that current-year income is unexpectedly insufficient to do so.
- **Good Standing Criteria:** Written Good Standing Criteria shall be established at the campus level and must be included in the Campus Implementation Plan. Faculty participants in the NSP must be in Good Standing, make significant contributions to the mission of the University, and meet all other conditions of the campus plan.
- **Negotiated Salary Component:** The Negotiated Salary component cannot exceed 30% of the Base Salary that was in effect on July 1 of the proposed participation year.
- **Range Adjustments:** Covered Compensation is eligible for the general range adjustment, but the Negotiated Salary Component will be adjusted so that the Total UC

Salary Rate remains unchanged.

- **Summer NINTHS:** To be eligible for NSP, the candidate must take the maximum amount of summer salary available to them unless the Campus Implementation Plan includes provisions allowing participants to take fewer summer nINTHS. Locations have authority to grant exceptions to the summer nINTHS requirement. Campus Implementation Plans shall address the process by which a participant may request an exception to the summer nINTHS requirement.
- **Leaves of Absence:** Salaried leaves of absence will be paid at the Total UC Salary Rate, which includes the Negotiated Salary Component. In the event of a funding shortfall, the Contingency Plan will be implemented to resolve the shortfall.
- **Data Collection:** Appendix A (third attachment) establishes minimum requirements for collection of data on which locations must be prepared to report, if requested to do so.

FWAF is a lead reviewer.

Action: Chair Beaster-Jones will serve as lead reviewer. His comments will be circulated via email by Monday, October 9. FWAF analyst will include comments in the October 18 FWAF agenda.

C. Proposed Presidential Policy on Vaccination Programs

Action: Member De Alba will serve as lead reviewer. Her comments will be circulated via email by Sunday, October 15. FWAF analyst will include comments in the October 18 FWAF agenda.

D. Proposed revisions to the UC Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations

The revisions finalize the Interim Policy of the same name that underwent a systemwide review in Spring 2022. The memo from Dr. King, UC Health (hyperlinked on the agenda) provides a summary of policy revisions and concerns they address.

Action: Member Dodson will serve as lead reviewer. His comments will be circulated via email by Monday, October 2 and will serve as the basis for FWAF's official response to the Senate Chair by Monday, October 9, 2023.

VIII. Other Business

Member Jennings is on the systemwide Achievement Related to Opportunity (ARO) taskforce. Other institutions have already implemented ARO, so the taskforce is currently discussing how ARO principles can be implemented on our campus. If members have comments, the taskforce is accepting feedback and input.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.