

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 10, 2024
1:00pm – 2:30pm
Zoom

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 1:00pm on October 10, 2024. Chair Beaster-Jones presiding.

I. Consent Calendar – Chair Beaster-Jones

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [September 5 Draft Meeting Minutes](#)

Today's agenda and the September 5 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Chair Beaster-Jones

A. Divisional Council Meetings (September 9, 23 and October 7)

- DivCo discussed faculty hiring and how to increase hiring in the context of flat enrollment numbers. Faculty lines in SoE and SNS have been approved.
- Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (VCSA) Brian O'Bruba presented the future phases for outdoor space activation which includes more shade, more furniture options (comfortable, colorful, variety of configurations), and more nighttime lighting.
- The university budget and systemwide budget have slightly increased; however, enrollment has remained flat. As a result, hiring will freeze until a significant number of students are enrolled.
- UC Merced's budget is based on a projection of 12,000 students, yet current enrollment stands at 9,500 students. In light of this discrepancy, the university is pursuing strategies to increase enrollment in a bid to address its structural deficit.
- Military grade weapons are being purchased by several campuses' police departments, including UC Merced. Many faculty have shared concerns regarding the lack of consultation with the Senate prior to the purchases being made.
- Chair Mitchell provided an update on current systemwide searches.
- Divisional Council members unanimously approved the renaming of University Extension to the "Division of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)".
- The Shared Governance Retreat will take place on Wednesday, October 30, 2024.
- Divisional Council members implemented the "Senate's Two Cents", which is a summary of important points discussed at DivCo and transmitted to the faculty every two weeks.

B. COR/FWAF/SPO Meeting (September 24)

Chair Beaster-Jones met with Committee on Research (CoR) Chair Tao Ye, a former FWAF member, and the Senate Executive Director to discuss issues with members from the

Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) regarding proposal delays. SPO has held back several proposals that failed to meet specific guidelines that they recommended. Participants discussed the faculty's frustration with the current grant pre-proposal process and their academic freedom. SPO is drafting a memo to clarify their role, specific deadlines, language used in faculty interactions, etc.

III. [UCAF](#) September 27 Meeting Update – Jennifer Lu

- UCAF members discussed administrative salaries and how they are much higher than faculty salaries. The high cost of administration can detract from resources available for faculty salaries and programs.
- Members further discussed diversity and inclusion in merit and promotion cases, which is a faculty initiative.
- UC Santa Cruz faculty plans to generate a pamphlet to educate UC faculty on academic freedom, faculty welfare, and privilege & tenure.

IV. Consultation with Police Chief Chou Her

Police Chief Her will join the meeting today to discuss emergency preparedness and multiagency events as a faculty welfare issue, particularly faculty best practices, responsibilities, and areas of authority in emergency situations.

Chair Beaster-Jones introduced Chief Her and inquired about the lines of authority in the context of a multi-agency type event. Chief Her explained that in day-to-day activities, the UC Merced police are the sole responders on campus. For violent or criminal events, there is always at least one UC Merced police officer assigned to the agency that is called to campus. UC Merced has two police officers on shift at any given time, so in the event of violence, the UC Merced Police Department asks for mutual aid from the city or county. When the UC Merced police ask for assistance, the officers that come to the campus do not fall under UC Merced's rules of engagement and vice versa; however, all officers fall under the same laws and regulations across the state as first responders. The end goal is to make sure there is never a solo officer walking around campus without somebody with them. Chief Her confirmed that there have not been any recent incidents where there has been a multi-agency response.

Chair Beaster-Jones inquired about the university's purchase of military grade weapons for several campuses' police departments, including UC Merced, and the UC Merced faculty's concerns about the lack of consultation with the Senate. Chief Her clarified that the weapon is a non-lethal option for officers to use and is not intended to be used as a crowd control mechanism. The weapon is softer than a tennis ball and must be used within 15 feet of the armed suspect. There are efforts to expand this capacity. Local training is provided, and no officer is allowed to deploy this weapon without proper training. Chief Her emphasized the importance of officers using this tool in conjunction with other officers present, as it is not always effective.

Chair Beaster-Jones wondered about the faculty's roles and responsibilities during emergency situations in the classroom, as faculty do not receive such training. Chief Her explained that the UC Merced Police Department provides Violent Incident Response Training that is customizable to one's unit, department, classroom, etc., however, he rarely sees faculty attend the training and is

unsure whether it is due to a scheduling issue. Chair Beaster-Jones believes future discussions with faculty on the topic would be beneficial.

Chief Her concluded his visit by inviting members to attend the UC Merced Police Department Open House & Trick or Treat on Monday, October 14, 2024, from 5pm – 7pm. Families are welcome. He also welcomed members to come talk to him individually if they ever have any questions or concerns.

V. **Splitting the Committee – Chair Beaster-Jones**

At the September 5 FWAF meeting, members discussed the splitting of the FWAF Committee into two separate committees: The Faculty Welfare Committee and the Academic Freedom Committee.

Chair Beaster-Jones shared his [draft memo](#) with committee members noting that EVC/Provost Dumont fully supports the proposal. Faculty Welfare, Academic Freedom, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) were formerly one committee and split into two in 2015 – FWAF and EDI (formerly DEI). At all other UC campuses (except UCI and UCSB), FWAF is split into two committees: Academic Freedom and Faculty Welfare. Over the past several years, Chair Beaster-Jones has recognized that the academic freedom aspect of FWAF has not received the attention it deserves, and by splitting the committee, several academic freedom issues are more likely to be addressed.

Chair Beaster-Jones welcomed the committee’s feedback on the proposed representation of each chair on various campus and systemwide committees:

- **Faculty Welfare:** The chair attends Divisional Council and the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW)
- **Academic Freedom:** The chair attends the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) and the Protest Oversight Group (POG)

This would help manage and mitigate the amount of overall work required within the current FWAF committee and the number of overall meeting time required by members, especially for the chair. FWAF members shared no concerns and supported the proposal.

Action:

- Members unanimously supported the initiative to split FWAF into two committees: The Faculty Welfare Committee and the Academic Freedom Committee.
- Chair Beaster-Jones sent the document to Fatima who added more contextual information.
- Members will be invited to review and vote on the final document via email before transmittal to DivCo.

VI. **Discussion: Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) – Chair Beaster-Jones**

At the September 5 FWAF meeting, members agreed to include ARO on their list of AY 24-25 priorities to initiate the first steps in assisting faculty with the several hardships they have faced as a result of the pandemic.

The [Joint Senate-Administration Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Faculty Working](#)

[Group Final Report](#) was shared with committee members prior to today's meeting.

Chair Beaster-Jones summarized the main points from the report:

- Recognition of inequities based on gender and existing bias, particularly for caregivers (for both children and for adults or aging parents). These duties tend to fall on women rather than on men and do not get acknowledged in the context of tenure and promotion.
- The philosophy of ARO has been oriented around the fact that every individual has different constraints that they are working within as they move through the ranks. One of the tools that had been used prior to the pandemic was “stop the clock”, where the time did not count when something significant was happening in one's life that disrupted their research and teaching (such as childbirth). However, even this created pay inequities for the remainder of the individual's career.

The goal of ARO is to recognize that everyone goes through different events in their lives and to humanize what tenure, merit, and promotion look like. Chair Beaster-Jones proposed that FWAFF initiate discussions and eventually work with UCOP on implementing change.

VPAP Hansford joined the discussion and noted that UCOP implemented some, but not all, of the Covid Task Force's recommendations and the ARO approach. A systemwide working group concluded its work and failed to reach consensus about how to move forward. No tangible set of recommendations resulted from the working group.

VPAP Hansford further discussed the privacy concerns of ARO where individuals may be sharing information about those they provide care for. He added that there are ways to provide less detail for such instances.

Lastly, VPAP Hansford mentioned that language could be inserted into sections of the MAPP, as well as departmental guidelines regarding advancement and promotion. He recommended working closely with the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) who has shown interest and support for ARO.

Chair Beaster-Jones clarified that the goal is for people who are in good standing to find alternatives to “stop the clock” that do not create salary disadvantages over time, which tend to fall on the same categories of people repeatedly.

Action:

- Chair Beaster-Jones will poll committee members to determine if there is any interest in supporting this initiative.

VII. Consultation with VPAP Tom Hansford

A. Conduct complaints in AY 2023-24

VPAP Hansford discussed conduct processes and the Academic Personnel Office's role in handling conduct-related matters. He reported that over the past 18 months (January 2023 through June 2024), 173 conduct-related matters were reported; however, only 55 were formal complaints. Of the 55 formal complaints, only 3 went through to the end of the formal

discipline process. The other complaints stopped before reaching the end of the process because there was either never a formal complaint; there was a formal complaint, but there was no policy violation; or the issue was handled via counseling action or mediation. VPAP Hansford will provide aggregate information for the next 18 months at the end of the current academic year. He will also provide a written report to FWAF members on the number of conduct-related matters reported at UC Merced between January 2023 and June 2024.

B. New sick time-off for faculty

This item was tabled for a future FWAF meeting.

VIII. Campus Review Items

A. [Proposed Revisions to MAPP Sections 2013, 2014, 2053 and 2054](#)

The [Cover memo from VPAP Hansford](#) includes a brief summary of the proposed revisions.

FWAF is a lead reviewer.

Action:

- **Lead reviewers:** Chair Beaster-Jones and Member Nowadnick
- The lead reviewers sent their comments to Melanie, Petra, and Fatima on Tuesday, October 22, 2024.
- Members were invited to review a draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair by **Monday, October 28**.

B. [Interim Policy on Expressive Activities and Assembly: Protests, Demonstrations, Non-University Speakers and Signage on Campus and in University Facilities](#)

Updates align with mandatory directives issued by the UC Office of the President and include:

- Mandatory revisions required by [California State Senate Bill 108, SEC. 219, 34](#) implemented under [UC Merced's Campus Climate Initiative](#).
- Technical updates to owner, contact information, and resources.
- Clarifications around disruptions of a university activity, proximity of activities, signage, unauthorized structures, and consequences.
- Moved Protest Oversight Group (POG) membership/roles & responsibilities to Appendix.

FWAF is a lead reviewer.

Action:

- **Lead reviewers:** Vice Chair Ma and Member Lu
- The lead reviewers will send their comments to Melanie, Petra, and Fatima by **Monday, November 11, 2024**.
- Members will be invited to review a draft memo prior to transmittal to the Senate Chair by **Monday, November 18**.

IX. Other Business [2:25-2:30pm]

No other business was discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Attest: Jayson Beaster-Jones, FWAf Chair