

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)

Thursday, March 14, 2024

11:30am – 1:00pm

ADMIN 245

MINUTES OF MEETING

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 11:30am on March 14, 2024. Vice-Chair Yanbao Ma presiding.

**I. Consent Calendar**

- A. Today's agenda
- B. [February 15 draft Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:** Today's agenda and the February 15 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented. The FWAF analyst updated the Senate website accordingly.

**II. Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey – VPAP Hansford**

VPAP Hansford presented results from the COACHE Survey of faculty who left UC Merced over the past two academic years. Following the presentation, a discussion was held including the reasons for departure, where the accountability lies for the departures, and what is being done to address the concerns.

**Action:** FWAF analyst will add a discussion with VPAP Hansford on the COACHE Survey results to FWAF's April meeting agenda.

**III. Discussion of Healthcare Issues – All**

Guests: Sana Ramzan, Health Care Facilitator and Francesco Danzi, Professor of Mechanical Engineering

- A. FWAF members provided a list of questions for the Health Care Facilitator prior to the meeting, available [here](#).

Ms. Ramzan introduced herself to the committee and explained her role as Health Care Facilitator. She then addressed the list of questions provided prior to the meeting and discussed them with committee members. Ms. Ramzan described the process for updating the list of providers for UC Care and noted that UC Care is a UC self-funded health plan that has a team currently conducting a review of Tier 1 providers for the UC. She then explained that there is a dedicated Network Director who is responsible for negotiating with new providers as well as an Executive Director who oversees the Network Director. Then she noted that negotiations with providers are done at the UCOP level, not at the campus level. FWAF members expressed concerns that there is not a UC Merced representative present while negotiations with providers are taking place. Ms. Ramzan stated that her department does provide feedback of noted concerns at the campus level, and that FWAF could

reach out to UCOP and do the same.

Member Tokman inquired if employees on the HealthNet Blue and Gold plan could only be seen by specialists within a specified area when referred by a primary care physician. Ms. Ramzan explained the process of being referred to a specialist through a primary care physician and added that employees can always reach out to the Health Care Facilitators for assistance if unable to resolve the issue on their own. FWAF members noted that it would be beneficial to promote the Health Care Facilitator's services to employees.

FWAF members voiced their concerns regarding the lack of providers in Merced and the hardships that this creates on employees and their families. It was noted that there is a sufficient number of providers, however, the problem is that the providers are not in the UC Care plan network. Members agreed that they would like to request an explanation of the process to recruit and add providers as well as who is responsible for recruiting and adding new providers. The request could include an outline of what FWAF believes the elements of a functional healthcare system would be. It would include a consistent review of providers, direct contact with providers, and input from someone that is familiar with the area. Members would also like to ensure that there is regular contact with providers to see who is out there and who would like to join the network.

Vice-Chair Ma noted that other central valley areas, such as Madera and Fresno, have much better healthcare resources and facilities than Merced does. Further, he inquired how Merced could go about acquiring similar resources and facilities and what the procedure would be to do that.

Ms. Ramzan noted that her office has recently been made aware of the issues with Delta Dental. She has reached out to UCOP for information on this matter and will share UCOP's response with the FWAF analyst once received.

Members expressed their dissatisfaction with adding Accolade as an intermediary for UC Care. Ms. Ramzan stated that she understands the challenges associated with Accolade, however she added that there has been noted satisfaction from other employees across campus. Moreover, Ms. Ramzan added that if there are lingering issues with Accolade, the Health Care Facilitators can assist in resolving such issues.

**Actions:**

- ED Paul suggested elevating this issue to the DivCo level and consulting with the FWAF Chair before doing so as he is the UCFW representative for UC Merced.
- FWAF analyst will draft a memo to DivCo containing the committee's comments from today's meeting.
- The Health Care Facilitator will send the FWAF analyst contact information for the UCOP UC Health EVP.
- The Health Care Facilitator will send the FWAF analyst information

pertaining to Delta Dental.

- B. Discussion on Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) Access  
Vice-Chair Ma received an [email](#) from a colleague noting concerns with ECEC access.

Vice-Chair Ma noted that there is a discount provided to Postdoctoral Scholars to use the ECEC, however the same discount is not provided to faculty. Because Postdoctoral Scholars and Assistant Professors have similar salaries, members noted that the discount that is appropriate for one should be appropriate for the other. It was noted that perhaps discounts should be income based.

Member Jennings noted that a few years back FWAF looked into childcare in the area. At that time, the cost to use the ECEC was not considerably higher than other childcare providers in the area. Additionally, childcare in the United States in general is very high.

#### IV. Systemwide Review Items – Vice-Chair Ma

- A. [Proposed Amendment to Senate Regulation \(SR\) 424.A.3 Presented by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools \(BOARS\)](#)

The amendment introduces a new requirement for freshman admission to the University (Area H). The amendment to the SR is provided in red font on page 3.

Please refer to the attached memos from Academic Council Chair Steintrager and BOARS Chair Knowlton for background information about this item.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **5:00 pm on Friday, April 5, 2024.**

**Action:** FWAF members declined to opine. The FWAF analyst notified the Senate Chair that FWAF declined to opine.

- B. [Report of the University of California Systemwide Advisory Work Group on Students with Disabilities](#)

As noted in the memo from VP Gullatt, this “report is the first-ever, comprehensive record of the experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities at UC”.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **5:00 pm on Monday, April 8, 2024.**

**Action:** FWAF members declined to opine. The FWAF analyst notified the Senate Chair that FWAF declined to opine.

- C. [Proposed Academic Statement on UC Quality \(“Characteristics of Educational Quality at the University of California”\)](#)

This document was prepared by the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP).

Background information is available on the hyperlinked memos from Academic Council Chair Steintrager and UCEP Chair Cocco and the proposed statement is available on pp. 4-5.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair by **5:00 pm on Friday, April 19, 2024.**

**Action:** FWAF members decided to conduct the review via email. The FWAF analyst will reach out to members for lead reviewers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.

Attest: Yanbao Ma, FWAF Vice-Chair