

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)

Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 4, 2025
2:30pm – 3:15pm

I. Proposed Bylaws: The Faculty Welfare Committee and the Academic Freedom Committee¹ – Chair Beaster-Jones

At the October 10, 2024 FWAF meeting, members discussed and unanimously endorsed the proposal to split FWAF into two committees: The Faculty Welfare Committee and the Academic Freedom Committee.

On November 1, 2024, FWAF transmitted a [memo](#) to DivCo inviting them to review FWAF's proposal.

At their November 18, 2024 meeting, members of the Divisional Council (DivCo) unanimously endorsed FWAF's proposal to split into two committees, effective AY 25-26. The next step is to invite CRE to review and approve the proposed revised and new Bylaws for the two committees.

At the March 10, 2025 FWAF meeting, members reviewed the proposed revisions to the Faculty Welfare Bylaws and decided to add language under "Duties" proposed by Executive Director Paul stating that the committee will consult with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Members also reviewed the proposed Academic Freedom Bylaws and decided to add a graduate student and a non-Senate member to its membership as ex-officio, non-voting.

- The proposed amendments to the existing FWAF Bylaws for the new Faculty Welfare Committee are available [here](#).
- The proposed new Bylaws for the Academic Freedom Committee are available [here](#). Please note that since FWAF is considering the addition of a student representative, this change will automatically result in the need to expand Titles III and IV of the Bylaws. The new Academic Freedom committee will need to be included under Title IV. Proposed revisions are available [here](#).

Members reviewed the proposed amendments to the existing FWAF Bylaws for the new Faculty Welfare Committee. Chair Beaster-Jones suggested including an emeritus member, which the FWAF Analyst confirmed was already included in the existing language. A member also noted that the numbering will need to be revised once points 2 and 6 are removed in the final version.

Members reviewed the proposed new Bylaws for the Academic Freedom Committee. Executive Director Paul made three minor additional editorial edits.

¹ The Bylaws for Academic Freedom and Faculty Welfare committees at other UC campuses are available [here](#).

Referring to point 2 of the committee's duties:

*“Reviews and makes recommendations with respect to any University-related issues that may affect the academic freedom of **Senate Faculty within** the University Community.”*

A member questioned whether non-Senate faculty and students should be included since a graduate student is being considered in its membership. Chair Beaster-Jones clarified that the Senate bylaws specifically apply to Senate faculty. However, there are other policies in place that protect the academic freedom of students and non-Senate faculty, which are outlined in APM 10 for non-Senate faculty. Furthermore, addressing academic freedom for students and non-Senate faculty may be outside the committee's current scope, which focuses on Senate faculty. Executive Director Paul confirmed that graduate and undergraduate student affairs are handled separately from the Senate's work. It was concluded that the non-Senate faculty and graduate student representative serve as non-voting members of the committee. Their role would be to gain an understanding of the faculty's situation and provide commentary and insight, but they would not have voting rights.

A member questioned whether voting members could have discussions without non-voting members present. Executive Director Paul clarified that the committee is welcome to hold an executive session at select meetings or all meetings where only voting members are present. The Bylaws do not need to include this information, as the [Guide to Executive Session](#) includes relative information and is shared with members at the start of each Fall semester.

A member wondered about the issue of retaliation, noting that especially in the form of institutional or government actions targeting individuals, could potentially affect academic freedom. Chair Beaster-Jones clarified that the committee's role would be to provide advice on academic freedom issues related to retaliation, rather than handling specific cases of retaliation, which would fall more under the Privilege and Tenure (P&T) Committee. Members also discussed the potential for retaliation in the context of broad misconduct policies, where academic freedom issues might be mistakenly linked to misconduct. It was agreed that academic freedom includes the right to free inquiry and exchange of ideas, but whether issues like retaliation should be explicitly added to the committee's duties in the Bylaws was uncertain. Ultimately, the committee decided that the current wording in the Bylaws is sufficient, and there is no need to add additional language regarding retaliation.

Members reviewed the proposed revisions to Bylaws II.III.6 and II.IV.1 and agreed that the revisions were straightforward. No concerns were raised.

Action:

- Voting members unanimously approved the proposed revisions to the existing FWAF Bylaws for the new Faculty Welfare Committee.
- Voting members unanimously approved the proposed new Bylaws for the Academic Freedom Committee.
- Voting members unanimously approved the proposed revisions to Bylaws II.III.6 and II.IV.1.
- The FWAF Analyst transmitted a memo to CRE requesting review of the proposed revised and new Bylaws.