

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 7, 2025
3:00pm – 4:20pm**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 3:00pm on April 7, 2025. Chair Beaster-Jones presiding.

I. Consent Calendar – Vice Chair Ma

- A. Approval of Today's Agenda
- B. Approval of the [March 10 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Chair Beaster-Jones**A. March 11 and April 1 DivCo Meetings**

- The budget reduction discussions are ongoing. CAPRA emphasized maintaining the Temporary Academic Staffing (TAS) budget, with DivCo members in agreement.
- UCSF's two proposed Memorials, which aimed to include faculty with appointments exceeding 50% in both the Health Sciences Clinical series and the Adjunct series in the Academic Senate, were rejected by other UC campuses.
- UCSD is anticipating a 12% budget reduction, with projected 5% cuts annually over the next four years. This could lead to lecturer layoffs across the system, potentially increasing faculty workloads, including at UC Merced where some layoffs have already occurred. UCSC is anticipating a 15% budget cut.
- Efforts are being made to permanentize funding for Senate Committee Chair teaching releases. These releases are typically funded by departmental budgets rather than by the Senate or university; however, this is likely to change.
- UC President Drake announced a UC hiring freeze for faculty and staff.
- Divisional Council members held a consultation with Campus Legal Counsel Cesar Alvarado-Gil regarding his team's work in response to the recent federal government actions and executive orders. Counsel Alvarado-Gil's office is working with colleagues in the Association of American Universities (AAU) and other institutions across the country, conducting internal assessments on various issues, and providing advice to students with visa issues.
- UC is under investigation for actions taken by some employees during last year's protests and under investigation for admissions issues. The Faculty Association recently shared that there was a federal request from the Department of Labor for the names, personal addresses, and phone numbers of individuals across the UC system who have spoken publicly on the matter.

B. March 14 UCFW Meeting

- There has been a wave of student visa revocations nationwide, now affecting hundreds across the UC system, including at least three graduate students at UC Merced. The

lack of legal recourse has forced affected students to leave the country. A systemwide Rapid Response Task Force is being developed to address urgent federal actions and policy shifts more efficiently.

- The Regents are developing a revised mechanism for faculty discipline that still involves the Privilege and Tenure (P&T) Committees. A report is expected for review during the May Regents meeting, and UC Merced may play a leading role in responding to it.
- Due to the current federal funding situation, there has been a noticeable decline in both the number of incoming grants and the number of National Institutes of Health (NIH) solicitations.

C. Alternate for the May 21 UCAF Meeting

Action:

- Member Myers volunteered to attend the first half of the meeting (pre-lunch), and Chair Beaster-Jones volunteered to attend the second half of the meeting (post-lunch).
- The FWF Analyst sent a formal request to Executive Director Paul.

III. Faculty Association Update – Kit Myers

Faculty Association Member Lindsay Crawford will join today's meeting and provide a brief update.

The UC Merced Faculty Association website is available [here](#).

Faculty Association Member Crawford introduced herself and provided an overview of the Faculty Association at UC Merced, highlighting that it is the last UC campus to establish such an organization. The Association is part of the Council of UC Faculty Associations (CUCFA), the overarching systemwide body that connects faculty associations across the UC system. Through CUCFA, a lobbyist advocates at the state level for increased funding for UC Merced.

As an independent group, the Faculty Association represents the interests of faculty and operates separately from the Academic Senate. While the Faculty Association complements the work of the Academic Senate, its independent, non-state-funded status enables it to engage in lobbying efforts on behalf of faculty. Although it is not a union, the Association addresses similar concerns, particularly in areas such as faculty labor rights and employment-related issues.

FWAF member Myers, also a member of the Faculty Association, shared that earlier in the year, before major disruptions occurred, the Faculty Association had been focused on healthcare issues, meeting with both university administrators and state representatives to address rising healthcare costs. He also noted that CUCFA played a key role in helping establish the Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA), which has strengthened faculty labor rights. While UC Santa Cruz is the only UC campus with a formal faculty labor union, HEERA ensures that faculty across the UC system have protections that faculty in many other states may not have.

In addition to advocacy, the Faculty Association is actively working to gather faculty concerns and explore creative, non-traditional strategies to support faculty and improve communication with university leadership. Member Myers attended a meeting where participants brainstormed realistic

impactful approaches that administrators could take to better support faculty in addressing ongoing issues.

Member Crawford added that another key strength of the Faculty Association is its ability to dedicate time and resources to issues occurring at the Senate level. She pointed out that Senate committees often face time constraints, with as little as ten minutes to discuss complex matters during committee meetings, making it difficult to fully grasp the implications of certain decisions. Faculty Association members can spend more time analyzing these issues, connecting the dots, and ensuring a more comprehensive understanding, which is particularly important during periods of limited communication.

Chair Beaster-Jones inquired whether the Faculty Association or CUCFA has been engaging in discussions related to visa revocations, with a particular concern for the vulnerability of international faculty. Member Crawford confirmed that the group has identified visa-related vulnerabilities as one of the three major concerns currently prioritized by the Association, alongside academic freedom and free speech protections. She added that a proposal has been put forward to support students or faculty facing deportation or visa-related issues, with the goal of offering both financial assistance and community-based support.

Member Myers added that the Faculty Association is currently engaged in two immediate initiatives: the "Know Your Rights" workshop tailored to the specific concerns of international faculty and staff, as well as the launching of a community-based fundraising effort.

Members further discussed the confidentiality of the Faculty Association membership. Member Crawford clarified that while the board is public-facing, the membership list remains private to protect the identities and privacy of participating faculty.

IV. Campus and Systemwide Review Items – Chair Beaster-Jones and Kit Myers

A. [Interim Policy on Withdrawal of Consent to Remain on University Property](#)

(Campus wide)

The policy outlines implementing procedures of Penal Code Sections 626.4(a) and 626.6 on University Property for the University of California. The policy applies to all campus affiliates (students and employees) and non-affiliates.

- California Penal Code Section 626.4 refers to campus affiliates, includes a 14-day withdraw of consent and allows for a hearing.
- California Penal Code Section 626.6 refers to non-affiliates, includes a 7-day withdraw of consent and no hearing is afforded

The lead reviewer summarized their assessment, expressing concern about the inconsistent definitions of "disruptive". They noted that while one instance provides a specific explanation, the official definition remains overly broad. They emphasized the issue that such vagueness could allow for the removal of individuals from campus on unclear or subjective grounds. While most people would agree with removing someone who poses an immediate threat, a broad definition of disruption could be misused and lead to infringements on free speech, association, or assembly rights.

A member added that the language, "possessing a firearm and ammunition on campus" may be

ambiguous, as it implies that both a firearm and ammunition must be possessed simultaneously to be in violation. This could lead to confusion, since an individual might possess one without the other. To clarify, a suggestion was made to change “and” to “and/or”.

Action:

- Members agreed to include in the draft memo a recommendation for an “and/or” statement on page 3 when referencing weapons and/[or] ammunition.
- The final memo was transmitted to the Senate Chair on April 16, 2025.

B. [Proposed Revisions to APM 500 – Recruitment](#) (Systemwide)

The policy revisions respond to the need to address two new bills signed into state law that add and amend sections 92612.1 and 92612.2 of the California Education Code, effective January 1, 2025 (reference Senate Bill (SB) 791, Postsecondary education: academic and administrative employees: disclosure of sexual harassment, and California Assembly Bill (AB) 810, Postsecondary education: hiring practices: academic, athletic, and administrative positions).

The lead reviewer summarized their assessment, noting that the policy originated in response to a California law initially focused on sexual harassment and violence. It was suggested that referencing the original legislation in the policy text would provide important clarity and context. While the original bill was narrowly tailored, it was pointed out that a subsequent, broader bill introduced the more general concept of “misconduct.” The reviewer expressed concern that the University may have over-complied with this broader interpretation, expanding the definition of misconduct beyond academic or sexual misconduct to include potentially subjective interpretations, such as classifying certain forms of speech as misconduct. They cautioned that this could set a troubling precedent.

The lead reviewer also referenced prior pushback from various committees and individuals, particularly regarding faculty rights to respond to misconduct disclosures. In response, a revised version of the document was provided, now including language that offers faculty protections, particularly during hiring processes, by allowing responses to substantiated misconduct findings.

The lead reviewer also suggested revising the language to replace the phrase “including but not limited to,” which was noted as overly broad and potentially vague. They recommended using “relating to” instead, to more clearly specify that the policy pertains to sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of harassment and discrimination. Additionally, they expressed concern about the use of the terms “dishonesty” and “unethical conduct,” emphasizing the need to define these terms specifically in the context of academic dishonesty and academic misconduct.

Action:

- Members did not have any concerns with the draft memo.
- The final memo was transmitted to the Senate Chair on April 16, 2025.

C. [Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report](#) (Systemwide)

In September 2024, UC Provost Katherine Newman and systemwide Academic Senate Chair

Steven Cheung established a collaborative Academic Planning Council (APC) workgroup, bringing together faculty and administrators. Tasked with evaluating the existing academic calendars, the workgroup aimed to identify enhancements that will better support the University of California's mission in teaching, research, and public service. This comprehensive review focuses specifically on the academic calendars of UC's nine undergraduate campuses, excluding UC San Francisco and graduate professional programs.

The lead reviewer summarized their assessment, noting that the draft report is unlikely to move forward. They highlighted that the primary justification for the proposed shift to a unified semester system was to ease student transfers from California Community Colleges. However, the report also made clear that the scale of implementation, including the substantial reworking of course structures to accommodate an additional five weeks per term, would be prohibitively expensive in terms of time and resources.

The working group made several recommendations, the most significant being to maintain the status quo for now, recognizing that the system has higher priorities and limited capacity for such a major structural change. The reviewer noted that aside from UC Berkeley and UC Merced, there is little support from other campuses, and the proposal is not expected to advance.

The lead reviewer also recommended incorporating a Reading, Review and Recitation (RRR) week into the semester calendar to align with UC Berkeley's model. Senate Executive Director Paul clarified that the Undergraduate Council (UGC) has worked on this issue in the past and that there was pushback from School Executive Committees, so it was agreed that RRR week is optional. A member also suggested to at least remove Saturday final exams.

Action:

- Members agreed to add to the draft memo language regarding the omission of final examinations on Saturdays in relation to the RRR week suggestion.
- The final memo was transmitted to the Senate Chair on April 16, 2025.

V. Other Business

Chair Beaster-Jones shared that a current topic of discussion within his department is the impact of rescinded federal funding on faculty research. He noted that the National Endowment for the Humanities has rescinded funding that has already been allocated. Given the effect such decisions have on faculty members' ability to conduct and produce research, his department is revisiting the concept of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO), which considers the impact of uncontrollable external factors on research productivity during merit reviews, tenure, and promotion evaluations. Chair Beaster-Jones invited others to share whether similar conversations are occurring within their own departments.

A member provided an update on "Stop the Clock", noting that flexibility is being encouraged for those affected by the Grant funding situation. There was also mention of a potential third extension, though the specifics are unclear. Chair Beaster-Jones added that stopping the clock can put faculty at a permanent salary disadvantage since it prevents step advancements. Instead, an ARO framework would allow faculty to continue advancing without losing salary over the course of their career, making it a more beneficial option. He further discussed the various life factors that

can affect research productivity, such as aging parents or raising children, and stressed the need to recognize these broader life circumstances and how they impact faculty.

Members decided to further discuss “Stop the Clock” and ARO with VPAP Hansford during his report (item VI.C).

VI. Consultation with VPAP Tom Hansford

A. DEI statements

VPAP Hansford reported that the University of California Regents recently decided that all forms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statements can no longer be used in any part of the hiring process. This includes optional or indirect use and applies to all new hiring searches. However, any searches that were already underway before this decision was made are not affected and can proceed under previous rules.

There have been questions about how the UC Regents’ new hiring policy affects faculty review for advancement or promotion. The key point is that there is no change to APM 210, the section that outlines faculty evaluation criteria. This means that contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion can and should still be recognized and credited as part of a faculty member’s research, teaching, and service. It is important to note that faculty have never been required to include DEI contributions in their self-statements; it has always been optional.

B. Work Visas

Chair Beaster-Jones questioned what the university can do if faculty visas are revoked based on questionable claims by the administration. VPAP Hansford responded that when such issues arise, Campus Counsel is notified immediately in hopes they have relevant resources. However, he admitted he does not currently know what specific leverage or actions are possible. He added that if a visa is abruptly terminated without notice, the faculty member effectively ceases to be an employee, which further complicates the situation.

Chair Beaster-Jones expressed concern about the legal implications of an external agency having the authority not only to revoke someone's visa but also effectively end their employment. VPAP Hansford agreed, acknowledging it as a serious issue. He clarified that, to his knowledge, this has not yet happened to a faculty member. However, he noted recent news that several student and graduate student employees across the University of California system unexpectedly lost their F-1 visas, suggesting that this type of sudden action is not unheard of.

Due to recent events at Harvard and Columbia, Chair Beaster-Jones asked VPAP Hansford how faculty can prepare for such situations. VPAP Hansford confirmed that he will look into it and provide FWAF with an update at a future meeting.

Action:

- VPAP Hansford will collect information regarding the revocation of faculty visas and how to handle such situations. He will update the committee at a future FWAF meeting.

C. “Stop the Clock” vs. Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO)

VPAP Hansford reported on the several drawbacks to “Stop the Clock”, including that it can delay promotion and advancement, leading to long-term financial impacts; historically, it has

disproportionately affected women, who are more likely to take it and thus earn less over their careers; and it can also create confusion in the review process when someone takes “Stop the Clock” but then proceeds for tenure at the standard timeline, potentially giving the impression that they are advancing early.

Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) does not replace “Stop the Clock” but can complement or stand independently from it. ARO is especially useful during extraordinary circumstances, such as COVID or funding loss, where an individual’s ability to work was hindered. Additionally, evaluators tend to respond more positively when faculty not only mention the challenges they faced but also highlight their resilience and proactive efforts to adapt and continue their work.

VPAP Hansford concluded that neither approach is perfect, but transparency, effort, and context help reviewers make fairer evaluations.

Chair Beaster-Jones asked about the process moving forward. VPAP Hansford responded that the first step should be a conversation between himself, Chair Beaster-Jones, and CAP Chair Barlowe.

Action:

- Chair Beaster-Jones, CAP Chair Barlow, and VPAP Hansford will work together to create a statement regarding "Stop the Clock" and "Achievement Relative to Opportunity" (ARO).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Attest: Jayson Beaster-Jones, FWF Chair