

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Wednesday, January 26, 2022****10:00 – 11:30 am****Minutes of Meeting**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 10:00 am on January 26, 2022, via Zoom. Chair David Jennings presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *David Jennings*

- A. Chair Jennings asked FWAF members for their input on spring 2022 committee meeting modality. FWAF members confirmed they would prefer to continue to meet via Zoom only.
- B. November 18, 2021 Divisional Council meeting
- Divisional Council discussed the process and distribution of the \$1 million in funds allocated by the Chancellor to the Academic Senate from the campus MacKenzie Scott gift. Areas that were prioritized for funding included the annual Senate faculty grants program and student fellowships.
 - LASC Chair Maria DePrano provided an update to Divisional Council on LASC and UCOLASC business. The Library's shortage of funds has resulted in understaffing which has led to Library closures on Saturdays.
 - A historically high number of staff hiring is presently occurring which indicates the Chancellor's efforts to strengthen the institution.
- C. Feedback received by FWAF members from faculty members from office hours and departmental meetings
- Concerns about child care issues, including the shortened hours and reduced services of the ECEC. The ECEC often sends children home as a precautionary measure, thereby disrupting their parents' work day.
 - Concerns about how the pandemic will affect faculty's advancements and promotions, specifically, requests to stop the clock and getting their research back on track. Faculty also spoke to FWAF members about how the Oracle financial system has hindered their research.
 - Concerns about online instruction. While faculty had the option of not including student evaluations from a particular semester early in the pandemic, faculty are still concerned. Some faculty suggested peer evaluation of their syllabi.

Action: Chair Jennings will summarize the above themes and hold a discussion with FWAF at the February 23 meeting about a potential follow up message to faculty.

II. Updates on Spring 2020 Instruction

Chair Jennings contacted the chairs of UGC, GC, and VPDUE Frey in December 2021 regarding flexibility for faculty for instruction modality. He did not receive feedback. FWAF members discussed the possibility of department chairs being empowered to exercise flexibility in course modality. Many faculty members are concerned about the resumption of in-person instruction next week as many have young children who cannot be vaccinated and have other vulnerable family members in their households.

Action: Chair Jennings will draft a memo addressed to the chairs of GC, UGC, the Senate Chair, and VPDUE Frey with a request to allow department chairs flexibility over instruction modality. (**Note:** after this meeting, the campus issued a communication to all Senate faculty regarding instruction. It was decided that a memo from FWAF is unnecessary at this time.)

III. Vice Chair's Report– *Tea Lempiälä*

A. Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC) Meeting (1/20/22)

Vice Chair Lempiälä had no relevant updates for FWAF.

B. Discussion on Family Friendly Policy and ECEC

FWAF has not received the administration's feedback to FWAF's 2021 presentation on ECEC and recommendations for creating a family friendly campus. FWAF has also invited Interim CFO Schnier to share his presentation but has not received a response.

FWAF Vice Chair Lempiälä suggested that FWAF should frame the issue as a larger concern about family-friendly policies in general rather than confine the issue to just the ECEC. FWAF needs to impart to the administration that family-friendly policies affect faculty recruitment and retention, not just faculty welfare. FWAF members agreed and suggested that FWAF form a subcommittee that is charged with addressing family-friendly policies.

Action: FWAF identified members of the subcommittee on family-friendly policies (Chair Jennings, Vice Chair Lempiälä, and members Reyes, Frank, and Loebman). The subcommittee will meet in two weeks to discuss an action plan. The subcommittee will report on their progress at the February 23 FWAF meeting.

IV. Consent Calendar

A. Today's agenda

B. Meeting Minutes (12/2/21)

Action: the Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

V. UCFW Updates –*Jayson Beaster-Jones*

Meetings on 12/10/21 and 1/14/22

Documents from UCFW related to the Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) principle which were mentioned in the December 2, 2021 FWAF meeting were hyperlinked on today's agenda.

- The Oracle roll out is affecting UCSD and Merced the most.
- Discussion about a one-time cost of living increase for UC retirees given the rapid rise in inflation.
- Student loan forgiveness is one of the Biden administration's priorities. However, individuals seeking loan forgiveness need to request it now, as they may not have the chance next year.
- Discussion of a 4% increase to faculty salaries (base salary only, not the scales) plus an extra 1.5% increase to the campuses to use at their discretion.
- UCSD is discussing implementing half-steps for faculty advancements to assist those faculty who were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UCFW Task Force on Investment and Retirement discussed allowing UC employees under the 2013 retirement plan to shift away from the 403B option back to the pension option.

VI. Systemwide Review Item: UCAF Recommendations on Departmental Statements– **David Jennings**

FWAF received an extension to the initial review deadline in order to discuss this item further.

Background: at the request of the Academic Council, the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) made two recommendations on departmental statements on political, religious, or commercial issues:

- Recommendation #1: When a departmental statement is issued or endorsed indicating support, endorsement, or opposition with regard to any commercial, religious, or political activity or issue, the statement should be accompanied by a disclaimer in the form of an explicit statement that the department's statement should not be taken as a position or endorsement of the University of California, or of the campus, as a whole.
- Recommendation #2: When a department chooses to issue or endorse a statement with regard to any commercial, religious, or political activity or issue, it should indicate in some manner whose views within the department the statement represents. In addition, departments should ensure that minority viewpoints are provided a reasonable and proportionate opportunity to express their views on the same platform as the departmental statement.

Prior to this meeting, FWAF Chair Jennings and Vice Chair Lempiälä provided comments which were hyperlinked on today's agenda.

FWAF members were mainly concerned about the “proportionate opportunity” of minority viewpoints under Recommendation 2. FWAF did not reach a consensus on endorsing this recommendation. Some members were concerned that the language was vague enough to leave room for the minority to gain undue space for voicing its view. Other members believed that the recommendation should have further specified how a department indicates for whom it is speaking (the language of the recommendation – “in some manner” – is too open ended).

Action: the committee analyst will distribute a draft memo for FWAF members’ review. The final memo to Divisional Council will be transmitted by the deadline of February 2 and will outline 1) the committee’s concerns and 2) state that Recommendation 2 would benefit from further consideration.

D. Consultation with Associate Vice Provost for the Faculty – **Zulema Valdez**

A. Revised Faculty Equity Advisor (FEA) appointment process.

AVPF Valdez explained to FWAF members that when the Committee for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) were trying to identify FEAs for this year, they discovered a lack of sufficient information in the appointment process. The FEA selection process was therefore delayed and caused the FEAs to miss the trainings they could have taken at another UC campus. AVPF Valdez is proposing a revised appointment process which was hyperlinked on today’s agenda.

AVPF Valdez explained to FWAF members that the FEA process document is about 75% the same as the original; her revisions simply seek to clarify which individuals are responsible for which piece of the process so that the FEA appointment process is smoother next year and FEAs can receive training in a timely manner.

FWAF members asked whether current FEAs can simply be reappointed rather than having EDI seek a new group of FEAs each cycle. The campus has a limited number of faculty who are willing, available, and qualified to serve as FEAs. AVPF Valdez agreed with this rationale, however, she pointed out that the argument against reappointment is that UC Merced wants to see a cultural shift in how the campus thinks about EDI. More faculty members training and serving as FEAs will benefit the campus as we move towards a cultural shift.

Action: AVPF Valdez will consult with EDI on FWAF’s suggestion of adding reappointment language to the FEA appointment process document.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Attest: David Jennings, FWAF Chair