

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)**Friday, March 17, 2023****Minutes of Meeting**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 10:30 am on March 17, via Zoom. Chair David Jennings presiding.

I. Chair's Report – *David Jennings***A. Divisional Council meeting updates March 6 and March 13**

- The CCGA review of the Gallo School pre-proposal has been received.
- CAPRA drafted a proposal for the EVC/Provost on strike compensation for faculty. CAPRA will revise the proposal in response to feedback from Divisional Council members. The final version will be transmitted to the EVC/Provost.
- Divisional Council approved CAPRA's report on its fall 2022 survey of department chairs on staffing.
- FWAF Member Justin Yeakel attended a Divisional Council meeting to discuss the ongoing problems with the campus financial systems.

B. UCFW meeting March 10

- UCFW discussed the proposed Presidential Policy on Anti-Discrimination and found much to criticize. UCFW members believe that the policy does not fill its intended purpose, gives undue powers to certain individuals with no checks and balances, and removes Senate control.

II. Consultation with VPAP Tom Hansford

- VPAP Hansford discussed the patterns of abusive conduct and acknowledged that faculty have a difference of opinion on how this should be addressed. Yesterday, he led a workshop for department chairs on the new abusive conduct policy. Some department chairs are reluctant to report incidents of abusive conduct.
- The departments are submitting their faculty academic personnel cases in a timely manner thus far.
- The EVC/Provost's faculty social events appear to be well-received.
- VPAP Hansford is re-starting the faculty mentoring program after it was on hiatus for a few years. He asked FWAF members to encourage their colleagues to utilize this program. Faculty in the program will receive funding to travel to their external mentor's campus and their external mentor will be compensated for their travel to UC Merced.
- Some progress has been made with regards to postdoc hiring. Faculty were previously unable to make a hiring offer to postdocs until the postdoc candidates had completed their PhDs. Now, faculty can make offers prior to post docs completing their degrees.
- The Senate Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) asked VPAP Hansford to conduct an analysis of faculty academic personnel actions last year to assess if there was any bias in decision making. VPAP Hansford presented his findings to EDI at their meeting yesterday and he will provide the same presentation to Deans Council. VPAP

Hansford stated that from the information he assembled from last year's actions, there is no evidence of bias and that women of color were advanced more than any other group. He added that he wants to continue collecting and assessing this information each year. The new Assistant Vice Chancellor of APO has been hired and will begin his role on Monday, March 20. One of his projects will be to improve academic personnel data collection.

- VPAP Hansford is keeping abreast of the campus financial systems issues and the challenges around the cost of graduate students following the strike settlement.
- VPAP Hansford brought to FWAF's attention some ongoing issues around retiring from the UC. He has heard that across the system, some faculty who've retired did not receive their pensions for months and/or their medical coverage mistakenly stopped. VPAP Hansford advised faculty considering retirement to submit their paperwork as early as possible. FWAF Chair Jennings stated that FWAF used to have an emeritus committee member in accordance with the committee bylaws. He will request that CoC continue to locate an emeritus member.

III. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. Draft February 17 meeting minutes

Action: The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

IV. COVID Mitigation Funds – *Chair Jennings*

Linked on today's agenda were: CoR's proposal, VPAP Hansford's input on CoR's proposal, and FWAF's draft Call for Proposals for COVID Mitigation.

Background: EVC/Provost Camfield and Vice Provost for Academic Personnel (VPAP) Hansford invited a proposal from the Senate Committee on Research (CoR) on the allocation of potential COVID mitigation funds that would be awarded to the Senate. CoR submitted its proposal to the VPAP which was ultimately reviewed favorably by the EVC/Provost. The EVC/Provost informed CoR that he will award the Senate \$50,000 to allocate to the faculty to mitigate COVID impacts.

At the February 17 FWAF meeting, members discussed the potential costs of buying out a course and discussed whether faculty could use this funding for that purpose. On March 2, 2023, FWAF Chair Jennings contacted the School Deans to inquire about the cost of buying out a course.

FWAF Chair Jennings discussed the information he received from the School Deans. FWAF members agreed that the cost to buy out a course is high and considered whether the committee

should only offer the COVID mitigation funding to assistant professors. Members agreed that even if it can only fund 2-3 faculty members with these funds, it would have a positive impact.

FWAF members agreed that the draft call for proposals should be revised to require that applicants need to demonstrate that they were disproportionately burdened by the COVID pandemic and articulate how the course buyout would make a difference to them. The draft call for proposals will also be modified to include an explanation of FWAF's review process for transparency.

Action: FWAF Chair Jennings will revise the call for proposals. After FWAF approves the call, the call will be submitted to CoR for review and approval. The call will then be transmitted to Divisional Council for approval before being issued to the Senate faculty.

V. Ongoing Issues with Campus Financial Systems

FWAF Member Yeakel continued his discussion with CoR on the ongoing problems with the campus financial systems and grant accounting. He pointed out that some staff have resigned because of these difficulties and more staff may do so. He added that he is assuring them that their input is confidential, because they fear for their jobs. FWAF Member Yeakel stated that the administration's solution of simply hiring and training more staff is not adequate, because it is problematic and unrealistic to train new staff to use a broken system. He suggested that solutions need to occur from the bottom up rather than a top-down approach. It is imperative that the administration listen to the staff who use the system and listen to their input.

FWAF Member Yeakel informed FWAF members that UC San Diego also had major challenges with implementing and using Oracle but they formulated a Chancellor's Advisory Committee to help guide the solutions. UC Davis strategically implemented one new system at a time and involved their campus IT at each step. UC Merced rolled out all new things at one time apparently without fully consulting IT.

FWAF Member Yeakel stated that he has spoken with CoR Chair Jason Sexton and EDI Chair Carrie Menke. They discussed whether the three committees should draft a joint memo to the administration using CoR's 2021 and 2022 memos as a basis. FWAF members also suggested that committee chair Jennings and member Yeakel should attend a CoR meeting to raise these issues. When discussing the issues about faculty grant accounting, FWAF members pointed out that it is illegal to mishandle federal funds. FWAF Member Yeakel wondered if Campus Counsel should be consulted.

Action: The committee analyst will coordinate with the CoR Chair to invite FWAF Chair Jennings to a CoR meeting to discuss the aforementioned issues.

- VI. Systemwide Review Item
- A. Proposed Presidential Policy Responding to Immigration Enforcement Issues Involving Patients in UC Health Facilities

Action: The lead reviewer will submit his comments to the committee analyst by Monday, April 3 and the analyst will distribute the comments to FWAF. FWAF will review the comments via email. FWAF's memo is due to the Senate Chair by Friday, April 7.

- VII. Request from UCAF
- In an email from the UCAF analyst on February 8, 2023, UCAF members were asked to consider the College Board's changes to the African American Studies curriculum. This will be on UCAF's March 23, 2023 agenda.

Action: FWAF will provide their feedback via email. UCAF representative Justin Yeakel will convey FWAF's feedback to UCAF for the March 23 meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Attest: David Jennings, FWAF Chair