COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
Patrick Fox, PhD, Chair

Minutes
October 3, 2001
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: P. Fox (Chair), L. Centore, M. Eisner, S. Kahl, M. Wallhagen

ABSENT: R. Munoz

Chair Fox called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Chair's Report

Following introductions of all Committee members, Chair Fox gave an overview of the accomplishments and activities of the Committee during the year 2000-2001 and outlined agenda items for the year ahead:

- The 2000-2001 Committee submitted suggested bylaw revisions to the Academic Senate Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction in Spring 2001 and is currently awaiting approval of these revisions. Chair Fox will provide the current Committee with an update of the status of this approval at the next meeting. Existing bylaws will be used until August 2002.
- Chair Fox noted that issues associated with the Academic Senate Initial Report and Recommendations on the Future of Clinician Scientists ([http://www.ucsf.edu/senate/0-announcements/clinicianscientistreport.html](http://www.ucsf.edu/senate/0-announcements/clinicianscientistreport.html)) will remain of importance to the Committee this year. Chair Fox emphasized that the matter of certain UCSF departments having a requirement, or a perceived requirement that in order to be promoted or advanced, that a faculty member must be a Principal Investigator on an RO1 (or equivalent), is a potential threat to academic freedom since it may restrict the type of research an investigator may pursue. Chair Fox also noted that issues related to inconsistencies regarding departmental promotion policies across Schools and departments will require consideration by the Committee in the coming year. The Committee will invite Vice-Chancellor Dorothy Bainton to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss promotion criteria and provide the Committee with additional information.

Campus-Wide Awareness of Academic Freedom Issues
The Committee discussed the current level of awareness of Academic Freedom issues at the campus-wide and system-wide levels. M. Walhagen, UCSF Representative to the University Academic Freedom Committee (UCAF), asked the Committee to consider whether the impetus for increased awareness should come from divisional Academic Freedom committees or from the System-wide committee. The Committee supported the idea that the University Academic Freedom Committee should organize an Academic Freedom symposium. The Committee suggested that this symposium be the forum for future discussion and that it produce recommendations which would then be implemented by each campus committee. M. Walhagen agreed to convey these recommendations to UCAF.

M. Wallhagen informed the Committee that the System-Wide Committee on Academic Freedom has expressed concern that students are sometimes including crude or inappropriate language in their evaluations of teaching faculty. Students are not always aware of the significance that these evaluations have in faculty promotions and merit considerations. Chair Fox noted that in the past, discussions of this issue have focused on variations in the procedures used across UCSF Schools for obtaining student input. Some schools participate in “administrative editing” of student evaluations prior to release, while in other schools individual faculty members submit evaluations with student comments unedited. Previous discussions highlighted the contrasting needs of addressing this problem while at the same time maintaining student anonymity throughout the evaluation process. Further discussion of this issue will continue at both the systemwide and divisional levels.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee discussed the Burrill/UCSF Venture Fund agreement and its Academic Freedom implications. The Committee noted the potential for conflict between investigators’ desire to publish results openly and a desire to keep results confidential so as not to lose a competitive advantage in cases where research may result in a commercially viable product. The Committee agreed to discuss this issue further at the January meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am

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