COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
Patrick J. Fox, PhD, Chair

Tuesday, January 7, 2003
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Room S30

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: P. Fox (Chair), M. Eisner, S. Gansky, B. Jacobs
Absent: S. Kahl
Guests: Margaret Tempero, MD, Deputy Director, UCSF Cancer Center

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of November 5, 2002 were approved unanimously and with no changes.

Chair’s Report

None.

System-Wide Committee on Academic Freedom Report – P. Fox, Chair

Chair Fox provided the following updates to members of the committee:

- The University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) recently responded to a request for review of the State of California Proposed Revised Master Plan for Education which was authored by a Joint Committee of the Legislature (http://www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/current.htm) in September, 2002. UCAF raised concerns regarding Joint Committee proposals that standardized measures of student achievement be put in place throughout the University. UCAF asserted that standardized measures of achievement would represent too mechanistic an approach by which to measure achievement across diverse disciplines. UCAF is currently awaiting a response to their concerns.

- The Federal Government has recently identified certain areas of research as representing Sensitive Unclassified Technical Information (SUTI) in light of recent national security crises. Research projects which produce data identified as SUTI may be subject to publication, analysis and dissemination restrictions. UCAF is currently reviewing the possible ramifications of SUTI classifications and will conduct an ongoing consideration of this issue as representing a possible limitation of faculty and student academic freedom.

- UCAF recently reviewed the proposed Racial Privacy Initiative (http://www.ucop.edu/senate/rpi.pdf). UCAF submitted several recommendations for modifications of this initiative to University Academic Senate Chair, Gayle Binion and is currently awaiting a response to this review.
Discussion of Policies and Procedures of UCSF Cancer Center Protocol Review Committee

Margaret Tempero, MD, Deputy Director of the UCSF Cancer Center answered questions relating to the policies and procedures of the UCSF Cancer Center Protocol Review Committee (PRC). In answering informal questions posed by Committee members and in subsequent discussion, the following points were made:

- The Cancer Center Protocol Review Committee was formed during the academic year 1993-1994 in response to new requirements from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The NCI requires that all affiliated cancer centers maintain protocol review committees in response to concerns that cancer patients were often being enrolled in clinical trials with little scientific merit. Protocol review committees focus on in-depth considerations of the scientific design of protocols and focus particularly on the bio-statistical aspects of such designs. These committees work in tandem with Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) which work to ensure the equitable and ethical treatment of human research subjects according to federal and state guidelines. The IRB at UCSF is constituted by the Committee on Human Research (CHR) which interacts considerably with the PRC. The Cancer Center has welcomed the PRC as a mechanism for improving the quality of protocols and the use of human subject resources.
- The PRC reviews only those protocols which involve therapeutic cancer treatment.
- Protocols of non-Cancer Center members which involve therapeutic cancer treatment are also reviewed by the PRC.
- Protocols involving therapeutic cancer treatment must be reviewed by the PRC before they are forwarded to CHR for review.
- Prior to review by the PRC, protocols are prioritized by disease-based site committees which work to identify outstanding protocols in order to make efficient use of human subject resources.
- The UCSF Cancer Center PRC membership includes oncology specialists – primarily experts in radiation oncology, medical oncology and surgical oncology. Specialists from supportive care, pharmacy and nursing are also members. The PRC may request the services of a non-member reviewer from the faculty at UCSF at anytime. There is no fixed term limit on PRC membership.
- Following PRC review, should differences of opinion exist between the principal investigator (PI) and the PRC, the PI may file a grievance with the Cancer Center Clinical Research Steering Committee. Prior to filing a grievance, the PI may rebut PRC recommendations.
- Information regarding the PRC is primarily available to UCSF faculty through the PRC website (http://cc.ucsf.edu/cores/crss%5Findex.asp).

Committee members expressed concern that some aspects of the policies and procedures of the PRC may compromise the academic freedom of UCSF faculty. Specifically, committee members questioned whether investigators not affiliated with the UCSF Cancer Center should be required to submit protocols to the PRC. Committee members also expressed concern that PRC policies and guidelines are not adequately publicized among UCSF faculty and that there is inadequate representation on the PRC of experts in alternative cancer therapies.

Committee members requested that Senate Analyst E. Langdon-Gray obtain aggregate data on the number of protocols received and reviewed by the PRC each year. Following receipt of this data, the committee will continue discussion of this topic at its meeting of February 4, 2003.

Tobacco Industry Funding of Research at UCSF

Discussion of this issue is postponed until the February 4, 2003 meeting of the Committee.
The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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