



Committee on Academic Freedom

Annual Report 2001 – 2002

Patrick Fox, PhD
Chair

During the 2001-2002 academic year, the Committee on Academic Freedom enjoyed a productive year during which it met three times. The Committee's work was augmented by the use of electronic communications to gather data and facilitate communication amongst Committee members. Meg Wallhagen, PhD, RN, CS, GNP, served as the Committee's Representative to the University Committee on Academic Freedom.

Issues reviewed and acted on by the Committee included:

- Revision of Committee Bylaws
- Review of Petition for UCSF Policy Not to Accept Tobacco Industry Funding
- Continued Review of Academic Senate Initial Report and Recommendations on the Future of Clinician Scientists
- Review of Proposed Policy Related to Faculty Misconduct
- Continued Discussion of Concerns Related to Student Evaluation of Teaching Faculty

University Issues

During the academic year, various system-wide issues were discussed at the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) meetings which took place during the months of October 2001 through June 2002. The topics, as reported to the membership, were as follows:

- *Student Evaluations of Teaching Faculty* – M. Wallhagen provided the Committee with updates related to continued consideration by UCAF of concerns related to student evaluations of teaching faculty when they include inappropriate or crude language. Students are not always aware of the significance of student evaluations in relation to faculty promotions and merit increases. Procedures related to addressing improper language in student evaluations differ considerably across the UC campuses and across the four schools of UCSF. These procedures range from administrative editing of student evaluations prior to release to the individual faculty member to submission of student comments unedited. Discussion of this issue will continue at both the campus and system-wide levels and will highlight the contrasting needs of addressing this problem while maintaining student anonymity throughout the evaluation process.
- *Awareness of Academic Freedom Issues* - Throughout the year the Committee discussed the current level of awareness of Academic Freedom issues at both the campus and system-wide levels. In response to similar discussions at divisional meetings of Committees on Academic Freedom, UCAF is moving forward with plans for a symposium on issues related to Academic Freedom to be held in October, 2002.

UCSF Campus- Issues

Academic Senate Initial Report and Recommendations on the Future of Clinician Scientists <http://www.ucsf.edu/senate/0-announcements/clinicianscientistreport.html>

Vice-Chancellor Bainton joined the meeting of February 20, 2002 to discuss concerns related to promotion criteria across departments raised by committee members:

- The requirement, or perceived requirement, implemented by certain UCSF departments that for Ladder Rank and In Residence series, in order to be promoted or advanced a faculty member must be a Principal Investigator on a RO1 (or equivalent). The Committee had previously considered whether this perception might constitute a limitation of academic freedom.
- Inconsistencies in promotion criteria across departments and schools.

In discussion of these issues, Vice-Chancellor Bainton provided the following information:

- The UC Academic Personnel Manual (APM) outlines minimal requirements related to grant authorship for promotion for all Senate series.
- Only two departments at UCSF have written criteria outlining specific grant authorship requirements for promotion.
- The four schools at UCSF have no written policy beyond that outlined in the APM. However, Vice-Chancellor Bainton noted that in each of the four schools, promotion and advancement in some series would be unlikely without an RO1 or strong evidence of research independence. The Committee discussed whether research independence can be adequately demonstrated without an RO1. Members questioned whether promotion dependent on obtaining an RO1 could constrain some faculty who would be limited to research in major areas of investigation. The Committee supports promotion and advancement dependent on research independence demonstrated by an RO1 or equivalent but acknowledged that individual departments must have a high degree of autonomy in determining specific advancement requirements.

The Committee acknowledged that in order to further discuss this issue, it would need to obtain and evaluate statistics related to potential denial of promotions for lack of demonstration of research independence. Because details of specific promotion applications are confidential and numbers related to promotion and rejection of promotion are not available, the Committee agreed that no further discussion of this issue will take place in academic year 2002-2003.

- The number of faculty appointed to the In-Residence series is decreasing. While there is no cap on numbers that may be appointed to this series, the Committee expressed concern that the recent requirement that departments guarantee support for In Residence Faculty who experience a lapse in grant funding may be the reason fewer faculty are being appointed to this series.

Petition for UCSF Policy Not to Accept Tobacco Industry Funding

A petition for a UCSF Policy Not to Accept Tobacco Industry Research Funding (attached) was prepared and sponsored by the Tobacco Control Group of the UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center and the UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. At the request of Senate Chair Daniel Bikle, a joint Task Force of members of the Committees on Academic Freedom and Research reviewed the petition and made recommendations to hold a Town Hall Meeting of the UCSF faculty to consider the proposed policy. During its review, the Task Force members recognized that there is a need to disseminate background information to the petition to a broad faculty audience. The Committee agreed that the issues underlying such a policy should be presented to the faculty as a whole and that this in turn could lead to a faculty vote on a formal recommendation to the Chancellor regarding the implementation of a policy not to accept Tobacco Industry Funding at UCSF.

The Committee acknowledged in its deliberations, the extensive harm to public health caused by tobacco and the failure of the tobacco industry to act with integrity and responsibility. The Committee questioned whether a policy prohibiting the acceptance of tobacco industry funding should be extended to other industries such as alcohol and defense.

Committee members recognized that further information would be needed by faculty members to enable them to make an informed decision on whether or not to accept the proposed policy. The Committee focused the remainder of its discussion on developing a procedure by which faculty could obtain such information.

The Task Force forwarded its recommendations on a process for review to Academic Senate Chair, Daniel Bikle which was considered by the Coordinating Committee of the Academic Senate on June 12, 2002. The Task Force recommended that the proposed policy be reviewed by the Faculty Councils of all Schools and that the Academic Senate consider sponsoring a full faculty forum/Town Hall meeting at which the issue could be discussed by both proponents and opponents. Following input, the Task Force will formulate final recommendations on the proposed policy which would be put to the faculty for a straw vote. (Attachment 1)

Revision of Committee Bylaws

The Committee voted unanimously to approve bylaw revisions forwarded to the Committee by the Academic Senate Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction. Existing bylaws will be used until August 2002. The text of the new Committee bylaws reads as follows:

140. Committee on Academic Freedom

Membership: This Committee shall consist of five members with a representative from each of the Schools on the San Francisco campus and one representative from the Clinical Professor or Adjunct Professor series. The Statewide Representative does not have to be a current member. This member shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee. A quorum shall consist of 3 members.

Duties:

To serve as a resource for individual Faculty and students who feel that their academic freedom has been compromised.

To study any condition within or outside the University, which in the judgment of the Committee may affect the academic freedom of the University, its Faculty and students, and to report thereon to the Division.

At least every 5 years, to assess and to report to the Division, the culture of the San Francisco campus in terms of academic freedom and how this culture affects:

Acceptance of positions and resignation from positions in the University.

The reputation of the University and the individual members of the Faculty.

Issues for the 2002-03 Academic Year

- The Committee will continue its participation in the Task Force review of the “Petition for a UCSF Policy Not to Accept Tobacco Industry Funding” and will work to implement recommendations made in its initial report sent to Academic Senate Chair, Daniel Bikle (Attachment 1).
- The Committee will continue to respond to requests as they arise, from the Chair of the Academic Senate and the faculty to review issues related to Academic Freedom.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee on Academic Freedom

Patrick Fox, Chair

Steve Kahl, Vice Chair

Linda Centore

Mark Eisner

Ricardo Munoz

Meg Wallhagen, UCAF Representative

Prepared by

Elizabeth Langdon-Gray

Senate Analyst

476-1307

Elangdon-gray@senate.ucsf.edu