

Committee on Academic Freedom
Miriam Kuppermann, Chair

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

Primary Focus Points for the Year:

- Review of policies and issues that may affect the academic freedom of UCSF Faculty.

Task Forces, Special Committees, and Sub-Committees:

- Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns

Issue(s) for Next Year (2008-2009)

- Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns

2007-2008 Members

Miriam Kuppermann, Chair

Elizabeth Boyd, Vice Chair

C. Anthony Hunt

Descartes Li

Arthur Miller

Roberta Rehm

Mary White

Maurice Zwass

Number of Meetings: 5

Senate Analyst: Kathleen Dargan

<http://senate.ucsf.edu/0-committee/a-acf.html>

Divisional Business

This year, the Academic Senate Committee on Academic Freedom took up the following issue related to the San Francisco Division:

Campus Issue 1

Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns

Contract and grant cost overruns can negatively impact individual investigators as well as departments, divisions, and/or schools. The issue was first brought before the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) in October, 2006 when a member of the committee asked if there was a policy that addressed the issue of UCSF responsibility and authority as it related to principal investigator over-expenditure. The incident discussed involved an investigator who was told by his chair that his overrun would be forgiven if he left the university. Another incident in the form of an anonymous report was regarding a non-ladder rank, junior faculty member who had over spent her grant accounts and who had, apparently, been told to repay the overrun from personal funds. Neither case was brought forth as a formal complaint before the committee, but several of the committee members recalled other anecdotes that echoed these incidents, including rumors that principal investigators had been forced to take unpaid vacation time to offset

overruns, to transfer money from other federal grants to “cover” these losses (which is a violation of the terms of most federal grants), or to write a check to the department out of personal bank accounts.

In October 2007 a task force, chaired by a member of the Committee on Academic Freedom, was convened to investigate campus and departmental policies related to faculty overspending of contracts or grants awarded to principal investigators. The Task Force to Review Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns was comprised of:

Elizabeth Boyd, PhD, Chair, Rep. from Clinical Pharmacy
Deborah Adey, MD, Committee on Academic Planning & Budget
Al Burlingame, PhD, School of Pharmacy
Jacque Duncan, MD, Committee on Academic Freedom
Steve Kaye, PhD, School of Nursing
Phil Rosenthal, MD, School of Medicine
Lenore Pereira, PhD, Department of Cell & Tissue Biology

After completing a preliminary investigation of written university policies related to cost overruns, CAF concluded that there appeared to be a lack of clear and concise policies on appropriate procedures for faculty who overspend their grant accounts and that each department or division seemed to handle such incidents differently. *Contracts and Grants policy 300-19, III. A.4* <http://policies.ucsf.edu/300/30019.htm> states that "in the case of cost overrun, the PI is responsible for the transfer of such overrun out of the project," and policy *300-19, III. B.4.* states that if an overdraft is not cleared by the PI in a timely manner, the accounting office has the authority to transfer the over-expenditures to other funds. Neither policy defines timeliness or what happens if there are not other funds upon which to legally draw.

A report, [Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns](#), was included in a Communication to UCSF Senate Chair David Gardner. The issue was the subject of discussion between Chair Gardner and Chancellor Michael Bishop. The Committee awaits the decision of Chancellor Bishop.

Task Forces and Other Committee Service

This year, members of the Academic Senate Committee on Academic Freedom served on the following Academic Senate task forces or other campus committees as representatives of CAF or the Academic Senate. Where possible, the reports from these task forces or committees are linked to or attached to this Annual Report.

- Task Force to Review UCSF Policies for Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns: [Report](#)

Going Forward

Ongoing issues under review or actions which the Committee will continue into 2008-2009:

Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns

This will be an ongoing concern for the Committee. It is expected that information will be forthcoming from the Chancellor. In its Communication to Chair Gardner dated February 25, 2008, the Committee made the following recommendations:

1. Clear, written campus-wide policies detailing methods to prevent and processes for managing of grant cost overruns should be established;
2. Clear, written campus-wide policies on types of disciplinary actions to which faculty may be subject and steps for faculty who dispute such actions also should be established;

3. These policies must emphasize the shared nature of the responsibility and the recognition that Departments who do not provide timely information to investigators cannot hold investigators solely responsible for overruns; and
4. A special task force or committee to draft and circulate these policies should be appointed. This committee should include representatives from all academic series (including the Adjunct and Clinical series) and should include both senior and junior faculty members.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Communication from the Chair of the Task Force to Review [Faculty Reimbursement of Grant Cost Overruns](#) to UCSF Senate Chair David Gardner (February 25, 2008).

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