

Welfare Council Meeting Minutes

10/22/2021

1:00 p.m.

239 Tigert (Provost's Conference Room)

If unable to attend in person, Zoom link =

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/99080891127?pwd=N3RNT1d2bHY3MGdHdHRvK21wWWI3UT09>

Present: Chris Hass, Sarah Lynne, Lisa King, Ray Issa, Mei-Fang Lan, Laurie Bialosky, Stephanie Bogart, Sean Trainor, Amanda Phalin, Shannon Edwards, and Lisa Anthony

1. **Call to Order** – Sarah Lynne, Welfare Council Chair
 - The meeting was called to order by Welfare Council Chair Lynne at 1:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of September 17, 2021 Minutes**
 - The minutes were approved.
3. **Report from Chair / Steering Committee Updates**
 - At yesterday's Faculty Senate meeting, the [Welfare Council COVID Resolution](#) was presented as an Information Item. Academic freedom and tenure are currently critical Faculty Senate topics.
4. **Update from Contributing Chairs**
 - **Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards (AFTPRS) Committee** – Ray Issa, AFTPRS Chair
 - Chair Issa hosted a training and orientation session for the committee at the beginning of the month. Although this is specifically a grievance committee, many members are initially confused about the committee's purpose. The mission of the Welfare Council states 'academic freedom' is its area of concern, so members feel it may be helpful to consider renaming the AFTPRS to increase mission clarity.
 - **Compensation & Equity Committee** – Sean Trainor, Compensation & Equity Committee Chair
 - [Faculty Titles Resolution](#) was presented as an Information Item at yesterday's Faculty Senate. It is hoped that provisional basis working titles can be utilized at the end of this fall and be fully implemented by HR by fall 2022.
 - The committee discussed a draft version of a multi-year contract resolution. It is not yet ready for presentation to this council.
 - A [Faculty Senate resolution](#) pertaining to the [support of the international community](#) may be a helpful model.
 - <http://gatorsforhighered.ufl.edu/resources/economic-impact/> may be a helpful resource, as well as [the Association of American Universities academic principles statement](#).
 - The committee also discussed if compensation in the form of salary, rather than higher matching benefits, would be most desirable to most faculty. Chair Trainor

is collaborating with Budget Council Chair Ashley Ghiaseddin to share faculty feedback on this topic, including working on equity and compensation issues to develop more robust processes that faculty can use when they feel they are not being paid or treated equitably. The best way forward may be to provide faculty with usable tools. Please share any faculty feedback with Chair Trainor.

5. Old Business

- **COVID-19 Resolutions**
 - [UF Faculty Senate August 26, 2021 Resolution: Calling for Requirement of Safety Measures to Protect our Campus from COVID-19](#)
 - [Welfare Council Resolution for Faculty Senate Steering Committee Review on September 2, 2021](#)
 - Council discussed that the first 'whereas' clause in the resolution is no longer accurate because Florida is now in a moderate to high COVID case count across the state; numbers are lower now than when the Delta wave spiked.
 - Chair Lynne received feedback for resolution verbiage from faculty colleagues.
 - Council discussed that, on the Senate floor, the resolution can be updated by an amendment to substitute 'present' tense language with 'past' tense language, i.e. 'had' rather than 'has' and apply this verbiage throughout the document. However, council instead decided to emphasize that the resolution is a time-stamped document and would therefore be the best path to clarity.
 - A resolution being endorsed versus agreeing to move a resolution forward was discussed.
- **May 6, 2021: [Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility \(IDEA\) Resolution & Action Items: A Living Document](#)**
 - Council would like to hear from coordinators who are able to address specific points of the IDEA resolution at an upcoming meeting(s).
 - The Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) search is ongoing and a candidate visited campus this week. Faculty will have an opportunity to provide feedback and comments during the search.

6. New Business

Academic Freedom Resolution

- [AAPF Academic Freedom Documents](#)
- The Florida legislature is reviewing preliminary legislation which may eliminate diversity training and is not dissimilar to the Trump [Executive Order 13950 on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping](#) enacted in September 2020 (which was overturned by the Biden administration this spring).
- [Erin Ryan](#), an FSU legal scholar has shared discussion in the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) about academic freedom. The effectiveness and appropriateness of drafting statutes in advance of legislation is being discussed by ACFS members and faculty. The contradictions between HB 232 and HB 233

were noted, including that the latter seems to indicate that individuals can't be shielded from sharing ideas.

- Classroom censorship and critical race theory issues were discussed. A resolution will be established defining academic freedom and expressions and elements of protection that faculty endorse.
- Stronger language about not just direct, but indirect, interference in academics will be utilized.
- The AAUP and AAU have academic freedom guidelines which can be consulted.
- Faculty have a broader definition than the legal definition of academic freedom.
- Chair Bloom is convening a panel discussion with two legal scholars at UF and they will discuss how they define academic freedom and what scope. Council may extend an invitation to them to visit council as well.
- Council discussed if the template resolutions fit well with what UF is doing or would like to do. Could be broader statement to preserve academic freedom to convey Faculty Senate endorses a statement of academic freedom and why?
- Awareness of the language of state officials, as well as language which speaks to UF's Top 5 initiatives and which emphasizes the value the university community brings to the state, are helpful in crafting a resolution.
- Campus experts on critical race work can be asked to assist.
- A working group to game out a potential strategy to speak in a unified voice moving forward would be helpful.
- The effectiveness of traditional reliance on academics and reason and which levers of power/mechanisms to utilize to craft a resolution was discussed.
- Increasing communication with faculty so that they are informed about what is occurring on campus and feel empowered to participate in shared governance is essential. Increasing Faculty Senate participation.
- The Faculty Senate Chair's Report is an opportunity to provide such information.
- Using examples in historical context can strengthen a resolution.
- A resolution in support of faculty performing such scholarly work, and emphasis on its meaningfulness, particularly on controversial topics, may help provide a sense of security and support for faculty.
- A resolution framework as an affirmative statement of value of faculty work would be helpful.

7.

- *Review [Welfare Council](#) Responsibilities as listed in the [University Constitution](#): This council's area encompasses matters that support encourage, define, and evaluate the quality of the faculty and retention of faculty members, including faculty rights and academic freedom; faculty support programs, **such as fringe benefit packages*; faculty diversity; and programs that improve the quality of faculty life.
- Due to other council priorities, this item will be re-visited on a future council agenda.

- **Other New Business/Open Floor**

- A faculty member has asked council about how best to address a Human Resources issue with central HR versus the college or unit level HR, particularly if there may be a different reporting process between the two based on different conditions of employment, such as the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Council discussed that scenarios and CBA conditions vary widely, making it is difficult to provide general advice to faculty. However, it is incumbent upon each faculty member to familiarize themselves with the CBA. An Ombud, who is an unaffiliated and unbiased consultant, is available and may perhaps be a first step in addressing a violation on an HR-related issue. Council discussed the importance of cognizance of how well such processes are working and how aware faculty are of relevant procedures, policies, and how to navigate such issues. Some faculty options include contacting the Department Chair, the CBA, and the Provost's Office.

8. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.