

1 Sept. 2022 Welfare Council Minutes

Attendees: Sarah Lynne (SL), Laura Thomas (LT), Stephanie Bogart (SB), Amanda Phalin (AP), Sean Trainor (ST), H  l  ne Huet (HH), Lisa King (LK), Raymond Issa (RI), and Amelia Dempere (AD).

SL calls the meeting to order at 2:32

SL asks for motion to approve minutes: SB moves; ST seconds. Approved unanimously at 2:33.

SL moves to introductions. Introduction concludes at 2:36.

SL notes that none of the administrative liaisons are present. **Note of clarification: All liaisons provided a notice of absence prior to the meeting.*

SL starts chair report at 2:37. Notes decision to cancel Apr 2022 Welfare Council meeting. BOG recommends that various faculty Senates approve an State University System (SUS) Free Expression Statement. Welfare Council will provide feedback on this statement. Various schools have different attitudes toward this resolution. Task force has been convened by Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS). Task force is investigating what it would mean to approve this resolution and is preparing clarifying questions for BOG. We will see this report when done.

AP provides some additional context on this portion of SL's report: ACFS is trying develop a unified response and/or set of questions about this statement for the BOG; at UF, we're trying to see if our concerns align with other institutions. There seems to be a great deal of eagerness from the BOG to get schools on board with this statement. They want swift action. AP wants this statement to follow FacSen's standard deliberative process, just like any other resolution. Statement was written in 2018 or 2019.

SL resumes chair report. Questions that have come up at other schools about this statement:

- Is the statement intended to apply in full to instructional contexts? If speech cannot be managed or restricted in the classroom, various disciplines and subjects essentially become unteachable. Do faculty need to provide equal time to discredited views?
- Are faculty included within the freedom of expression statement? Doesn't this statement contradict recent legislation like HB7?
- If faculty do fall within the scope of the resolution, how do we reconcile this fact with legal restrictions on faculty speech?

SL's chair report ends at 2:46.

RI provides feedback on FacSen ad hoc committee on academic freedom. Committee is trying to set up a way to anonymously report violations of academic freedom. Unfortunately, this system seems to be impossible given sunshine laws, etc. No way to ensure that an email can be confidential. This issue renders the system virtually impossible. Committee is now considering a phone reporting system, waiting for advice.

AP replies: she is getting advice from emeritus law professor / FacSen parliamentarian with expertise in sunshine law. Looking into ways of making this system confidential AND compliant with sunshine law.

RI resumes: agrees with the questions that Sarah brought up re: Free Expression Statement. "Guaranteeing free expression to everyone but ourselves is no way to guarantee free expression."

ST reports on presenting the rolling three-year contract titles to FacSen. Says that the committee's agenda for the year will be seeking the full implementation of titles change.

AP says that Chriss Hass has reported that regulatory changes re: faculty titles are in draft. Proposes that Chris or someone in HR present on the state of these regulation drafts and establish a timeline.

SL then reports on an issue related to family medical leave. Issue with a faculty member being prevented from taking leave or using paid leave to care for a family member outside a very narrow family circle. Welfare Council wants to look into revising benefits / leave policy to ensure that people can access leave for a wider range of family members.

LK explains specific examples relating to this issue.

SL emphasizes the importance of accountability, making sure that our resolutions, suggestions, etc., actually translate into real results.

HH says that the goal, in the union bargaining process re: paid medical leave, was never to limit the scope of the paid leave. Also suggests that one of the goals for Welfare Council for the coming year should be to expand paid medical / family leave from 8 to 12 weeks.

LK proposes referring to this policy as "compassionate care" instead of family leave to get away from any complications associated with legal / FMLA definitions of "family."

ST asks if it's appropriate to provide feedback on Free Expression Statement in this setting. SL says yes. ST says our commitment to free speech shouldn't be in question; attacks on free speech are coming from the state and state should therefore affirm its commitment to free speech. Also asks if this resolution would permit speakers on campus who seek to incite violence.

SL asks if the BOG has ever asked FacSen to affirm statements before. No one present could recall a situation like this one. SL says that this situation might set a dangerous precedent, whereby we'd be asked to affirm all manner of statements in the future.

SL then turns to Danaya Wright's resolution. Says that we should check in with Danaya and see if there are any updates that impact the wording of the resolution. SB reminds us that, in March, we voted to advance this resolution to steering. Now we're all wondering what happened. Regardless, we should revisit this resolution in light of recent events.

Next item: faculty involvement in leadership searches. Biggest question seems to be whether faculty are officially involved in any capacity with various leadership searches. Have to get clarification from provost liaisons.

Next item: IDEA document. Sarah is having a very difficult time getting a response from people campus wide re: the status of items contained in the document. As always, accountability is key. Sarah wants to represent advancements appropriately. Sarah proposes a liaison with the CDO office.

External review panel: previously said that we were going to create a recommendation for a panel of experts to investigate academic freedom at UF. ST emphasizes the importance of recommending panelists who have experience looking at units split between CBA faculty and non-CBA faculty.

State legislation is criminalizing or complicating access to gender affirming care for young people. Would impact faculty who have trans children as well as CoM faculty who provide gender-affirming care. Sarah suggests that we take the statement that has been circulating as a petition and transform it into a resolution.

HB7: ST says that we should be paying attention to how the university seeks to mitigate risk around this legislation. In other words, UF is going above and beyond what the legislation prohibits in order to prevent risk. SL would like to check in with leadership to see about the kind of guidance that various colleges are providing. UF is creating a process for reporting HB7 violations that largely parallels the model for reporting title IX violations. UF seems to be trying to create a process for resolving potential violations before they become public / official.

Dobbs: faculty provide reproductive care. Abortion restrictions can deter pregnant faculty from visiting states where abortion is banned. These restrictions impact travel, opportunities, etc. Proposes creating parallel provisions for pregnant people, to get them out of dangerous environments, that we have for getting students out of dangerous institutions internationally. ST raises the possibility of proposing a new benefit whereby UF would pay for faculty to access reproductive care out of state. HH raises the possible surveillance implications of these kinds of policies.

Meeting adjourns at 3:58.

*Minutes Submitted by Welfare Council Member/Contributing Chair (Compensation & Equity Committee)
Sean Trainor.*