COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
MINUTES
OCTOBER 14, 2026

PRESENT: A. Ridgwell, Chair & UCAF Rep.; P. Homyak; A. Speer

ABSENT: L. Sales, Ex Officio, Chair of CFW

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 3 PM.

After introductions, the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) discussed the modality for meetings to be held in AY 26-27. The Committee supported meeting in person with the option to meet on Zoom if needed.

Members reviewed the Committee's bylaws.

The Committee reviewed the conflict of interest statement for the AY 26-27 and proposed changes to remove language regarding members testifying as the Committee is not an adjudicating body. The Chair will propose changes to the statement for the Committee's review.

The minutes of the June 4, 2026 meeting were approved as written.

The Committee reviewed the annual message that is sent to UCR faculty documenting the existence and functions of the Committee. The Committee discussed proposing changes to the message that clarifies the Committee does not adjudicate issues of Academic Freedom. The Chair will propose changes to the statement for the Committee's review.

The Committee reviewed the joint Senate-Administrative Council on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Instructional Guidance and noted concern that faculty are currently not engaged or consulted by ITS for actions to embed AI programs in instructional software platforms such as Canvas and that the campus has an opt in approach for AI platforms rather than opt out. The Committee found that the requirement to only use UCR sanctioned AI tools infringes on academic freedom as researchers and instructors should be able to select the most appropriate tool for their discipline while recognizing the restrictions are appropriate in situations where sensitive data is involved. The Chair will draft a response to the Senate Chair with the Committee's feedback and send it to members for final review.

The Committee reviewed the Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on Clinical Faculty Representation in Governance and recognized the concerns around the representation of clinical faculty and implications for shared governance. The Chair will draft a response to the Senate Chair with the Committee's feedback and send it to members for final review.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Approved: November 2, 2026

Prepared by: Beth Beatty