FACULTY WELFARE

April 15, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
Riverside Division

From: Abhijit Ghosh, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare


At our meeting on April 9, 2024, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the proposed Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units. CFW members had the following mixed reactions/comments/questions with respect to the proposed policy.

- Some members agree with the proposed policy. These members assert that statements on an academic campus unit’s (“Unit”) homepage can misrepresent the diversity of opinions that exist within that Unit. Thus, some CFW members agree that such statements should not appear on the main homepage of a website of a Unit; and instead should be posted on a separate page identified for such statements. Consistent with the proposed policy, such statements could take the following forms, i.e. Units could: a) accompany all statements with a disclaimer that the statements do not necessarily reflect the views of every member of the Unit; b.) accompany all statements with a report that the statements reflect “unanimity,” “a supermajority,” or a “majority” of the Unit members; c.) issue all statements in the name of the dean or chair of the Unit; or d.) list the results of a Unit vote on whether to issue the statement.

- Other members oppose the proposed policy. These members echo some of the same concerns that were voiced during CFW’s review of the Proposed Regents Policy on Use of University Administrative Websites. The proposed policy oversteps various departments’ missions and pedagogy, while misunderstanding a number of disciplines. The existence and research of any number of departments does not exist in a political vacuum. This policy does not make sense for departments whose mission statements engage with the complexity of the political and humanistic experience. A “business only”/”just the facts” approach grossly misunderstands the existence of entire disciplines. Thus, some CFW members maintain that this proposed policy would promote censorship and infringe on academic freedom.

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