

University Faculty Affairs Committee (UFAC) Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 31, 3:00 p.m

041 Farmer Hall & Zoom

Attendance: Amrita Dhar, Smita Jain Oxford, Bradley Lamphere, Miriam Liss, Kyle Schultz (secretary), Jessica Zeitz (chair)

Meeting Scheduling: The committee scheduled meeting dates for this semester, coordinating with the UFC calendar: September 28, October 26, and November 30. Each meeting will occur at 2:30 pm in Farmer 041 with the option of connecting through Zoom.

Continuing Business

Equity Study: UFAC reviewed the status of this study and the possible next steps generated at the conclusion of the previous academic year. Although Gallagher found no systemic inequities, just outliers to be addressed, UFAC expressed little confidence in the reported results given the flaws in methodology identified and described in prior UFAC minutes. UFAC ruled against further review of the data, given the burden it would place on faculty to conduct an independent analysis and the administration's past lack of action on faculty-led analyses. One question that did arise from the Gallagher analysis was how UMW faculty salaries compare with those at other institutions. UFAC concluded the next step would be to consider a market-based study, but determined the timing may not be optimal given upcoming restructuring.

Faculty Morale and Burnout Survey: One UFAC member performed an analysis on the data, conducting comparisons with respect to gender and race. It was noted that the data was unsuitable for analyzing differences with respect to race due to the lack of robust numbers in non-White groups. With respect to gender, in all cases, faculty members identifying as women were less satisfied in service, compensation, and workload. UFAC resolved to continue analysis of survey:

- Follow up with Debra Schleef to determine her progress in analyzing the data.
- Prepare a final report of findings to date.

UFAC noted that upcoming plans for university restructuring will likely impact faculty morale. These data, collected during spring 2023, could provide a baseline for measuring whether any upcoming changes are effective in addressing faculty concerns.

New Business

Day of Democracy and Laboratory Courses: UFAC was made aware of an initiative to cancel all classes, including labs, on Day of Democracy to better enable student voting and support the vision of a robust day of programming celebrating democracy. UFAC supports the Day of Democracy initiative, discussed the practice of scheduling lab classes, and considered potential solutions. UFAC resolved to acquire more information about the rationale underlying the action of canceling labs. Specifically UFAC will contact David Stalman and Sarah DeWees to seek clarification of purpose (e.g., to facilitate voting, to promote the celebratory nature of the day) One potential solution brainstormed is for personnel associated with Day of Democracy to visit sections of Tuesday lab courses early in the fall semester to educate those students about voting options (e.g., absentee voting, registering to vote locally).

Faculty Salary Negotiations: UFAC discussed recent faculty concerns about university procedures regarding raises in the context of a faculty member securing a counter-offer from another institution. UFAC identified the need for more information with respect to these questions:

- What is the historical practice?
- Was there a shift in policy with respect to not negotiating with the recently departed faculty member? If so, why?
- Was the equity study used as a basis for this decision? If yes, is that rationale justified?

Immigration Process: UFAC discussed recent concerns raised about the university's support for faculty requiring immigration assistance, specifically continuing availability and contact issues with university counsel. Delayed responses and delays in this process overall extend the time before affected faculty can apply for more permanent status, as well as create additional work and stress. In Spring 2023 Drs. Shorter, O'Donnell, and Mellinger met with international faculty. UFAC identified the need for more information with respect to the outcomes of this meeting. As one way to support new international faculty members, an experienced faculty member wrote a letter recommending changes to the visa and immigration process, including creating a mentor system pairing newer faculty with experienced faculty.

In light of the need for more information related to the three issues listed as new business, the committee resolved to invite Provost O'Donnell to a future UFAC meeting for discussion.

The meeting concluded at 4:10 pm.