

University Faculty Council Meeting (held remotely)

February 23, 2023, 9:30am

Zoom link: <https://pepperdine.zoom.us/j/84007505153>

### MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening prayer.
2. Very brief introductions (or, for the most part, reintroductions): Name and school or position.
3. Item from PGBS regarding processes for awarding academic rank and tenure for incoming deans and for mid to senior level new faculty hires.
  - a. Concern about standing of tenure review moving forward.
  - b. PGBS Faculty held meetings with Full Time faculty to review this issue. In Spring- there was also review amongst faculty- discussion amongst tenure faculty about this concern. Currently holding a vote to decide whether to send a letter to UFC and University Tenure Committee about this concern.
  - c. Per PGBS, there are two issues moving forward:
    - i. Establishing process of awarding academic rank
    - ii. How to award tenure
    - iii. PGBS wants to have a healthy discussion about how to discuss and establish these processes for incoming deans.
    - iv. This is an important conversation and issue- process of clarifying and codifying bringing in a dean is an important conversation.
  - d. There were discussions by the President and the Provost during the UFC committee meeting that are considered confidential. All UFC members agreed not to share confidential information discussed during the UFC meeting on this particular issue. Therefore, there is no note taking during these discussions.
4. Update on status of Academic Freedom document that was submitted to the faculties and approved by the faculties of each school except GSEP. On a tie vote of 20 in favor, 20 opposed, and 5 abstentions, the GSEP faculty failed to approve the document. Dr. Natasha Thapar-Olmos, president of the GSEP faculty association, reports that the faculty association has decided to let that vote stand – not to take another vote – and not to vote separately on each of the three parts of the document.
  - a. The UFC cover memorandum sent to the schools along with the Academic Freedom document provided that:
    - i. The UFC will present the document to the President and Provost for their consideration (and ultimately the consideration of the Board of Regents) only if the faculties of all five schools approve the document.
    - ii. If the document ultimately fails to receive the approval of the faculties of all five schools, then the UFC’s role will be at an end. The matter would

be in the hands of the President and Provost, who would decide whether to move forward and how that might be done.

- b. The UFC's role with regard to the Academic Freedom document is therefore at an end. Faculty members are free to express their views to the President and Provost, but not on behalf of the UFC.
  - c. Caution at the level of the board, when the board of regents makes comments about the governance of the institution- we must step into that carefully and thoughtfully.
  - d. What may transpire in that meeting: the discussion of whether the board is voting is voting on policy or a statement that clarifies existing policy.
    - i. No vote will take place. Earliest "action" would be July" – they will not be voting on this at the next meeting.
  - e. It is off the full board agenda since not all five faculty schools have approved. This will continue to more through the Academic Council- and what will be shared is that four school approved, and that one school neither approved nor disapproved.
  - f. Discussion of FA's comments to UFC regarding the decision to have the tie vote stand
    - i. Meaning that GSEP neither approved nor disapproved the document
  - g. Discussion of the document as a whole, and intention for each parts of the document (all parts)
  - h. Chris moves to let this stand at this point and to schedule another meeting if we would need to continue this conversation and dialogue.
5. Discussion (a) of how academic integrity may be threatened here by artificial intelligence systems and (b) of any plans to address the issue.
- a. Discussions have emerged as schools and many folks about AI and it might be useful to have a dialogue on what Pepperdine's policy
  - b. Seaver faculty are concerned about what to do and how to manage this.
    - i. Starting to map out ways to work with the Dean's office but perhaps this discussion of integrating the Provost's office.
  - c. Faculty are asking questions about the policy on this concern. A healthy discussion about how we are moving forward and guidelines to share with faculty about this.
  - d. Technology and Learning team (TechLearn), in collaboration with members from the Educational Technology User Group (ETUG), will host a workshop on Wednesday, March 8 at 2 PM (PST) to highlight several of the options that faculty may choose in relation to AI writing tools.
  - e. What would be the most beneficial way to integrate Provost and schools in this process?

