

January 31, 2005

Chair Alison Galloway
Academic Senate Office

Re: CPB's Review of Restrictions on Research Funding

Dear Alison,

We recognize and appreciate the rationale behind the Academic Council Resolution on Restrictions on Research Funding Sources. The university already has a substantial set of policies and review mechanisms to determine whether the requirements and restrictions associated with any research grant are unacceptable. While these, from time to time, require revision, a policy allowing groups within the university to ban all of their faculty from accepting research funding from a particular source, based on a majority vote, infringes on the academic freedom of individual faculty members. To this extent, we support the resolution.

A minority of the members of CPB feel that the Academic Council resolution is satisfactory and should be retained. These members believe that any process that might be created to allow for source-based funding bans under appropriate circumstances would be open to politicization and misuse, and would do more harm than good.

On the other hand, a majority of the members of CPB are troubled by a system that entirely precludes source-based prohibitions of funding. There may be instances where past or present activities of a funding source make it desirable or even necessary for the university (or some segment of the university) to refuse all association with the source as a matter of policy, even if there are no explicit restrictions or requirements that would be applied by the individual grant review process. Faculty, or a group of faculty, should have a mechanism to persuade their colleagues that such a prohibition should be imposed, even if unanimity cannot be achieved.

Therefore, the majority believes that the Academic Council resolution is incomplete and needs modification. This group of CPB members recommends that an attempt should be made to develop a process that would allow groups to recommend a funding ban to the Academic Senate for approval, articulating the reasons behind the recommendation. In formulating this process, some of the issues to be discussed will be whether a source could be banned for a particular unit of the university but not others, whether a majority or a supermajority vote would be needed to approve such a ban, and perhaps the most important question, what type of activities would ever merit consideration for funding restriction.

For the interim, while this process is being developed, the majority is approximately evenly divided between two possible options. The first is to retain the Academic Council resolution, with a provision that it should expire in two years. This is based on the belief that nobody should be prevented from pursuing research opportunities except by a proper process, and individual faculty should be unhindered until such a process is in place. The

second is to table or defeat the resolution in its present form, with the suggestion that appropriate voting procedures be developed to safeguard the process of restricting research funding sources. This alternative view is based on the belief that the proposed resolution is a distortion of the currently accepted concept of academic freedom, and its emphasis on individualism over academic responsibility would be harmful even as an interim measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Koch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Paul Koch, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: Senate Committee Chairs