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Office of the Academic Senate  
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION  
125 CLARK KERR HALL  
(831) 459 - 2086

October 18, 2023

JAMES STEINTRAGER  
Chair, Academic Council

**Re: Proposed Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations**

Dear James,

The Santa Cruz Academic Senate has reviewed your request for review of the Presidential Policy on Affiliations with Certain Healthcare Organizations. The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) has responded. In this second review, our Division continues to be concerned about the impact the proposed policy might have on UC employee access to healthcare, especially UCSC employee access to Dignity Health, a healthcare provider that runs the only hospital in Santa Cruz and has policy-based restrictions. Any reduction in access to Dignity Health would be catastrophic to UCSC enrollees in UC health care plans, as such, it is imperative that the language in this policy explicitly state that it does not apply to UC employee healthcare.

In principle, the Santa Cruz Division continues to support the intention of the policy to protect and advance the University's values and its commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability. Our Division also understands that the policy is aimed to address situations where UC medical providers or trainees practice in affiliated hospitals. UCSC does not have a medical school. However, the policy is still pertinent to our campus as the definition of "Affiliate" and "Affiliation" in the draft policy is broad enough that it can, and at some point may, be interpreted as being applicable to an external healthcare plan, administrator, or provider with policy-based restrictions (e.g., Dignity Health), even if no UC medical providers practice within the affiliate's facilities. UCSC and the greater Santa Cruz community are already experiencing a severe crisis with regard to access to health services. Losing one of the two major providers in the area will leave a large fraction of our community without viable medical care. Our campus cannot endure any loss, partial restriction, or interruption of services provided by Dignity Health, or any other healthcare organization, to UCSC employees.

Our Division recognizes that there is little to no representation of the four campuses without medical centers (UCSC, UCM, UCSB, UCB) at the systemwide level where and when large-scale healthcare and insurance decisions are being made. Further, there is no guarantee that there will be representation or first-hand knowledge of UCSC's unique struggles with limited healthcare providers and services

in our area. If a UCSC representative is not at the table, this unique situation and associated needs will likely not be taken into consideration when important healthcare decisions are being made. As such, it is absolutely essential that policies such as these explicitly protect UCSC employee access to healthcare.

It is hard to tell what the long-term impact of this new policy would be for all UC campuses. Our Division questions what impact such a policy might have in situations where the closest or only available hospital changes its political view or is bought out by an organization that has policy-based restrictions that would prevent affiliation, creating a similar situation as currently exists in Santa Cruz. The total effect of this policy on individual campus and systemwide healthcare accessibility is unknown and extremely worrisome.

During the initial review of this proposed policy, the Santa Cruz Division “strongly” recommended that explicit language be added to differentiate and guarantee that employee healthcare does not apply. Such text has not been included in the proposed draft of this second review. As such, and based on the above concerns, the Santa Cruz Division opposes the proposed policy without an explicit statement that protects UC employee access to healthcare facilities and services, including those provided by organizations that may have policy-based restrictions on care like Dominican Hospital and Dignity Health services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Gallagher" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Patty Gallagher, Chair

Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

cc: Alexander Sher, Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare  
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate