

January 31, 2025

ED REISKIN
Vice Chancellor Finance, Operations, and Administration

RE: VOLUNTEER SERVICE: FOA-0017

Dear Ed,

The Academic Senate has reviewed your request for consultation on the Volunteer Service Policy: FOA-0017 and the Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections (CRJE) has responded.

The Senate wishes to first highlight the importance of community building that can result from volunteer opportunities on campus. In the absence of a clear, compelling, and documented need, the Senate questions the basic motivation behind this policy. What pattern of incidents with volunteering justifies this new level of control and micromanagement on community engagement with our campus? Without information of this kind, or any supplementary information regarding the total number of volunteers now active on campus, and in what capacities they are engaged, it is very difficult to assess what the actual impact of this policy would (or is intended) to be. For example, are most volunteers concentrated in only a few areas (for example, Seymour center or the arboretum or other places), such that in practice any impacts would disproportionately impact only a few units?

Second, the Senate is generally concerned current policy language is not specific enough, such that it might lead to variable implementation and an unintended chilling of community engagement on campus. It is also not fully clear to what degree “volunteer” activities apply to members of our compass community who volunteer in other aspects of campus life. One example of this is student volunteers in labs or research projects, versus say an OPERS summer camp. We also assume that the policy does not apply in any way to UCSC members who volunteer withing UCSC, however limits of the policy should be more clearly articulated up front.

Some possible activities flagged by CRJE that might potentially be misinterpreted based only on the current document include:

- faculty members volunteering in the community or on campus: a faculty member who stepped in to substitute teach a class for example in case of emergency medical leave, or one who serves the community by informally coaching students in an athletic activity (not in the context of a registered class).
- students who volunteer on campus in any capacity, for example in a lab or research project, for OPERS or a summer camp, in any other capacity that does not bear credit - simply to list the experience on their CV. Further, in such situations would Grad. vs. Undergrad status matter, or would the specifics of the activity matter? (e.g. in a rec or extension course, vs. in an OPERS facility, vs. with a faculty member assisting in research?)

Third, the Senate flagged an apparent conflict regarding the Policy reference to “critical positions” as a justification for its requirements (see footnote 2). In reviewing the system wide policy on critical positions ([PPSM-21: Selection and Appointment, Section V.A](#)), the Senate finds that it diverges from requirements set out in the UCSC document for definition of Tier 2 and Tier 3 volunteers. Specifically, aspects in the UCSC proposed policy of a) working more than 40 hours, b) having a Google account access, and c) receiving training on the use of tools or equipment do not appear to make a position “critical” as per PPSM-21 definitions. The Senate raises this discrepancy because if the Volunteer Policy applied the systemwide definition of critical position, the effect would be to exclude nearly all “volunteers” from belonging to a critical position designation. Thus, only a few exceptional volunteers would be mandated to fulfill the extensive review process currently called for by the Volunteer Policy. This might in fact be a preferable approach.

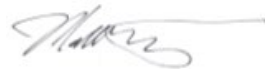
Finally, the senate also flagged several additional specific questions:

- 1) why is AP810 is listed as a key resource under the Policy, when AP810 refers to hiring practices. It would seem that by definition the volunteer cannot replace a paid position, and thus they do not appear to be hired. Are there specific key relationships to this hiring policy that are not detailed?
- 2) what entity or office will be in charge of enforcing the policy? How will they be tracking possible infractions and registrations on the volunteer portal? To whom will they report? What appeal process will be in place?

Overall, while one might imagine that such a policy is desired mainly to backstop campus risk, beyond this very general (and potentially universal) motivation, the Senate is concerned that no real need or justification for a new policy and structure has been expressed, and again no specifics of our current volunteer portfolio provided, so there is no way to assess likely campus impacts. In particular at times of major budget cuts and intense efforts to streamline our processes and bureaucratic structures, standing up a new program without any clearly expressed motivation or assessment of its impacts seems very difficult to justify. Finally, the potential for the Policy to undermine engagement between our community and faculty, staff, and students has the potential for negative impacts to our campus that in the long term are likely critical to many aspects of our long-term growth and development plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Volunteer Policy - Policy FOA0017.

Sincerely,



Matthew McCarthy, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

cc: Roger Schoenman, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz, Chair, Committee on Development and Fundraising

Jeffery Erbig, Chair, Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget
Nirvikar Singh, Chair, Committee on Research
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections
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