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Office of the Academic Senate
SANTA CRUZ DIVISION
125 CLARK KERR HALL
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March 21, 2022

Robert Horwitz, Chair
Academic Council

RE: Systemwide Review of Recommendations for Department Political Statements

Dear Robert,

The Santa Cruz Division has reviewed the recommendations from the University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF) addressing the freedom of campus academic departments to issue or endorse statements on political issues in the name of the department. Our Committees on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), Academic Personnel (CAP), Faculty Welfare (CFW), Graduate Council (GC), Research (COR), and Privilege and Tenure (P&T) have responded. The Santa Cruz Division appreciates the thoughtfulness and care with which UCAF has approached this delicate issue. Although responding committees noted that the proposed recommendations seem reasonable, their responses raised several questions and concerns, and highlighted the need for further clarification with the understanding that there are no easy answers in how to navigate the complexity of public statements and debate within intellectual environments.

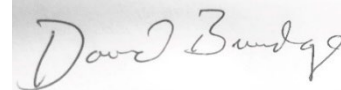
The Santa Cruz Division appreciates both the intent to ensure the academic freedom and free speech of academic departments as long as they make clear that they are not speaking for the University as a whole, and UCAF's rejection of policing the content of departmental speech. Our responding committees questioned why these recommendations would be limited to academic departments and not apply to other groups affiliated with the University such as non-departmental programs, research centers, and labs. Further, there were many questions surrounding what constitutes a "political statement" in Recommendation #1, and what the distinction is between a statement of shared values, which expresses an ethical or moral stance, and a political statement for the purposes of these recommendations. Our committees additionally noted that statements and silences are equally powerful in the messages that they communicate, and questioned the circumstances under which an institution (department, division, campus, university) expresses a position, does not express a position, or expresses neutrality. Clarification is also needed with regards to framing. Why are these proposed recommendations as opposed to a proposed policy? If adopted, how would the recommendations be implemented, monitored, and/or enforced? What would the consequences be for not following the recommendations? The interpretation, implementation, and consequences of

these proposed recommendations could vary greatly. We are not suggesting that an enforcement mechanism be put in place, but note that the lack of reference to one and additional guiding principles makes it unclear as to how much autonomy individual campuses and departments would have in putting these recommendations into practice.

Recommendation #2 suggests the explicit identification of those whose views are represented by departmental or group statements, and seeks to protect minority viewpoints by ensuring that they are given proportionate space to be expressed on the same platform. Although the Santa Cruz Division appreciates the efforts to create guidelines for allowing departments to express views without binding all members to those views, concerns were raised that these measures may expose faculty who hold dissenting or minority views, and reveal fractures within a department. As such, there may be a need to remove the explicit recommendation that the names of members who sign on to the statement be listed, as well as a need for additional strategies and guiding principles to protect all members of a department equally. Concerns were additionally raised that ensuring that all viewpoints have the ability to express their views on the same platform could potentially be problematic as historically, the rationale of giving equal access to a minority view has been used to amplify morally abhorrent positions that directly conflict with the University's stated values (e.g. racist, sexist, etc.).

Overall, the Santa Cruz Division appreciates UCAF's careful attention to these issues and agrees that caution needs to be exercised in defining what constitutes a political statement, the mechanisms by which statements are expressed, and the ways in which a multiplicity of views can best be expressed and safeguarded for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Brundage". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

David Brundage, Chair
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

cc: Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Chair, Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity
Stefano Profumo, Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel
Nico Orlandi, Chair Committee on Faculty Welfare
Melissa Caldwell, Chair, Graduate Council
Jarmila Pittermann, Chair, Committee on Research
Julie Guthman, Chair, Committee on Privilege and Tenure
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate