

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE
Report on Childcare, Retirement, and Online Education

To: The Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

As the 2013-14 academic year comes to an end, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) would like to report on three important topics that will affect the future welfare of the faculty: Childcare, Retirement Benefits, and Online Education.

Childcare

As a significant indication of support, in 2012, EVC Alison Galloway allocated \$150,000 a year of central campus funds for up to five years, retroactive to 2010-11, to develop childcare services for faculty and staff. In the event that these funds are not utilized by 2015-16, CFW urges that the existing pool of funds remain intact and that they continue to be augmented through and following 2016.

Various members of the campus community have been active during this time period to make faculty and staff childcare a concrete reality. For example, in 2011-2012, a campus group investigated the option recommended by the Childcare Task Force Report (2011) of an arrangement with a third party vendor at an off-site facility. The particular facility under review was deemed unsuitable for a number of reasons. Although the third-party option has continued to be investigated, a recent survey of other UC childcare facilities indicated that such arrangements can have drawbacks, particularly in terms of affordability for faculty and staff. Most significantly, in 2013-14, a committee operating under a charge from Business and Administration Services developed a feasibility study and sustainable business model for faculty and staff childcare. This committee worked through the summer and fall to develop a fiscally responsible, academically sound, and closely vetted proposal for a pre-K program for faculty and staff children. Committee members included a range of figures from UCSC and the Santa Cruz community, who contributed their expertise on early education, facility renovation, licensing, budgeting, and other key issues. Their collaboration produced a detailed proposal to CP/EVC Galloway that CFW urges be given serious consideration.

Childcare for faculty and staff has long been acknowledged to be a pressing need at UCSC. Campus childcare is all the more critical at present with the increase in faculty hires, given the important role it could play in the recruitment and retention of both faculty and staff.

Retirement Benefits

The status of our retirement funds is perhaps best described as no longer in crisis, but very vulnerable to future political and economic shocks. The faculty group that closely monitors these funds is the University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW) Task Force on Investment and

Retirement (TFIR). The University of California Retirement Plan (UCRP) fund has approximately 80% of the money needed to pay current and future retirees. The deficit is currently twelve billion dollars. On July 1, 2014, the employee contribution to UCRP will rise to 8% of salary, and the UC contribution as employer will be 14%. If UCRP were fully funded the total contribution (employee + employer) would only be 17%. “Extra” money is being put into UCRP to help pay down the deficit. Unfortunately, 8% + 14% is not sufficient to shrink the twelve billion dollar deficit, and it will continue to grow.

TFIR has two major concerns about the status of UCRP. First, a future decline in the economy could cause another significant drop in UCRP funds and this in turn could lead to a significant reduction in retirement benefits. Second, the fact that the deficit continues to grow means that the university and employees will continue to pay extra dollars for decades into the future.

TFIR is proposing to partially shrink the UCRP deficit by borrowing money from the UC’s own short-term investment funds. One scenario is to borrow \$1.9 billion over two years, and then pay back the university, with interest, over the next 10 years. A detailed proposal was presented to the UC Academic Senate Council on April 30, 2014. Further information will be provided in an oral report at the May 21, 2014 UCSC Senate meeting.

Online Education

Last year, CFW raised several questions regarding online education including the effectiveness of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and the administration’s goals for online education.¹ Interest was triggered by the campus agreement with Coursera that was signed during the 2012-13 academic year, and the growing faculty interest for adding components of online education to course curriculum. This year, CFW held several consultations with administrators and faculty creators of online courses to discuss hybrid courses, UCOP-initiated online courses (Innovative Learning Technology Initiative), and Coursera courses. The goal of these consultations was to assess how courses are likely to change in the next few years due to new technologies and to anticipate changes in pedagogy that may transform the nature of our work as professors.

Hybrid courses combine online technologies with traditional modes of teaching. Online tools may be used as a textbook, and/or lectures may be offered online in order to open up class time for active learning activities and discussions. Using these tools is purely voluntary and may make pedagogical sense for one class but not for another. Hybrid courses may cater to a variety of student modes of learning. Several faculty are already effectively using online technology in the classroom. Resources for faculty interested in utilizing some of these tools may be made available in the future (see campus ILTI allocation below).

Last year, UC Santa Cruz signed a contract with Coursera to develop several Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). To date, UCSC has offered two Coursera courses and a third is in production (<https://www.coursera.org/ucsc>). This year, there has been some reassessment of the efficacy of

¹ Committee on Faculty Welfare, Report on Retirement and Online Education, May 17, 2013

MOOCs. Coursera may be an avenue to make courses more available and may yet prove to be a good recruiting tool for the campus. However, in consultation with VPAA Herbie Lee on April 17, 2014, CFW learned that MOOCs are not a focus for core education and are not a central component to campus strategy in the immediate future.

UCSC courses in Calculus (Math 19A, B) are currently being offered, and other courses are in development through the UC Office of the President’s Innovative Learning Technology Initiative (ILTI). ILTI courses are meant to facilitate cross campus enrollments. The agreements for the courses are usually made between the Office of the President and the offering department. The goal was to have 1,000 cross-campus enrollments. In winter 2014, there were roughly 20 off-campus enrollments in UCSC courses. Some campuses have had more cross campus enrollments than others.

To further address the issue of pedagogy, CFW was charged by Senate Chair Konopelski to host a Senate Summit on Pedagogy and Inline Education (“inline” being “tools that are used in the classroom”). Chairs and representatives from the committees on Faculty Welfare (CFW), Teaching (COT), Educational Policy (CEP), and Computing and Telecommunications (CCT), met on January 31, 2014, to discuss how pedagogy is changing due to the new tools that faculty are able to utilize in the classroom. Attendees determined that new methods of teaching may require that the following issues be addressed:

1. Intellectual property – Who “owns” a course?
2. Workload – How are new types of courses “counted”?
3. Compensation for additional teaching – What is the definition of additional teaching?
4. Financing, both for course creation and incoming profits from multiple online course programs – What agreements has the administration made with departments and programs with respect to sharing any profits resulting from online and hybrid courses?
5. Privacy Issue for Students – Data collection concerns.

CFW has since found that steps to address some of these issues are already being made. For instance, a draft campus Online Education Course Agreement for ILTI courses, which aims to address questions of intellectual property, was recently circulated to both the Senate and the Faculty Association for comment. Further, ILTI plans to allocate \$100K per campus to support the development of online courses. These funds could be used to assist faculty with online course design, and perhaps provide resources and staff FTE for faculty who are interested in using online education tools in the classroom. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Herbie Lee, has been charged with leading online education on our campus and is currently working on a plan for the use of these funds.

Overall, online education and new technologies are opening up a new world of teaching tools for faculty. CFW looks to the faculty and administration to keep pedagogical integrity, faculty livelihood, and quality education at the forefront as online education continues to develop.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

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