

MINUTES

UFO Executive Board Meeting
12 April 2021
Held via Zoom
4:30 p.m.

Executive Board Members present:

Jeff O'Connell
Jeffrey S. Dean
Emmanuel Garcia
Rob Smedfjeld
Andrea Brown
Heather McCarty
Teresa Massimo

Other:

Jeremy Penaflor

Executive Board Member absent:

Janice Jones

The meeting began at 4:32 p.m. with O'Connell providing quick updates on two related issues. The first item was a follow-up to the recent forum sponsored by the UFO and the Faculty Senate on the subject of the post-COVID-19 return to campus. O'Connell noted that there was positive feedback from both faculty and the administrators who were involved. O'Connell reported that the administration is in the process of having a similar forum with staff members. O'Connell speculated that perhaps there will be a need to have an additional forum of this type after the Fall 2021 schedule is posted and as restrictions related to the virus continue to change.

The second item O'Connell updated the Executive Board on was also related to COVID-19. Movement to on-campus events is underway, with a gathering related to the premiere of an production from the Theatre and Dance Department given as an example. Some in-person classes will be in the Fall 2021 schedule.

The next item was the approval of the minutes from the March 8, 2021, meeting, which had been sent out to the Executive Board in advance. The minutes were adopted without revision.

After the approval of the minutes, the next subject discussed by the Executive Board related to revisions to the by-laws and website—specifically about the compensation received by part-time faculty members who are involved with negotiations. Brown presented draft language which sought to make the descriptions in the by-laws and website consistent and to better account for and distinguish between preparation time and time spent in negotiations meetings with the District. In response to a question about the amount of time recently spent preparing for and attending negotiations sessions, Brown shared a spreadsheet, which tracked both preparation time and time at the negotiations table. Garcia brought up the use of the word “stipend” in the language and how that word might be seen as conflicting with other language which is measured hourly rather than being flat sum. McCarty proposed the more general term “compensation” and Brown made adjustments to the draft language. Massimo proposed language which would set an initial limit on the hours, but that the language used give the option for further hours being approved by the Executive Board if needed. McCarty noted that we were currently in a more intense cycle of negotiations, since more is up for discussion. O’Connell asked a question about distinction within the category of preparation time and whether it covered time spent with others on the negotiations team and/or time spent individually preparing. Brown made the point that it is in the Executive Board and UFO’s interest to incentivize the participation of part-time faculty in the negotiations process. On the topic of getting approval for hours beyond the hours referenced in the draft language, Garcia indicated that it makes sense to have a process for seeking approval for those hours and Massimo requested clarification about the cap on hours for preparatory work and suggested a baseline or minimum number of hours. McCarty emphasized the distinction between the lab rate and lecture rate. Brown made revisions to the document being shared during the discussion.

At this point in the drafting, Smedfjeld provided background information on the references in the by-laws to adjunct compensation and asked whether or not the compensation should or shouldn’t be codified in the by-laws or referenced in another location. Garcia also asked about where this information might best be kept, with McCarty adding that it is critical to have a known location where this information is documented. Massimo agreed about documenting the information and added that it might be good to consult Jones about what records exist about previous payments to adjunct faculty who participated in negotiations. There was general agreement that the information about compensation should be retained for future boards as well as for any UFO member, so it is known what the compensation is, with Brown adding that finding the information easily is important. That the UFO have a repository of historical information was emphasized by O’Connell, who noted that tracking changes to the by-laws over time would be helpful.

O'Connell indicated that other changes to the by-laws should be considered, including information about when agendas for future meetings are posted as well as clarifying the language related to how MOUs are approved.

Smedfjeld shared information from a draft of the constitution and how best to distinguish what belongs in the constitution and what belongs in the by-laws. Brown asked a clarification question about something McCarty had mentioned previously about contractually-related matters and where those items are best documented.

Regarding the changes that were mentioned about MOUs and the posting of agendas, O'Connell indicated that he would send out a shared document so that the board could review this information in advance of the May meeting. Additionally, Brown said that revisions done during the meeting would be sent out via email.

The final topic of the meeting was an update from Smedfjeld on the activities of CEER. It was noted that CEER continued discussion of "mindful communication" and that the work related to this will become an undertaking that will move beyond faculty and include all employee groups. The group will be a resource for employees and seek to facilitate positive interactions and aligns somewhat with work done by the "brave spaces" group. The mindful communication project, which Dr. Bishop has been briefed on and whose office may be the "home" of the group, will focus on the creation of a positive environment in which difficult conversations can take place rather than focus on the creation of specific rules. Important principles for the group will be to move away from having it be an HR-related group and to avoid being complicated by power dynamics which might be encountered if this were solely an administration-led initiative.

The Executive Board went into closed session at 5:27 p.m. to get an update on the status of negotiations from Garcia and to get updates on matters related to grievances.

The meeting concluded at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Dean, 2nd Marquess of Fernbank,
and Secretary of the United Faculty of Ohlone on 19 April 2021.