

MINUTES

UFO Executive Board

9 November 2020

Via Zoom

4:30 p.m.

Executive Board Members Present:

Jeff O'Connell

Rob Smedfjeld

Emmanuel Garcia

Heather McCarty

Isabel Reichert

Andrea Brown

Jeffrey S. Dean

Janice Jones

Teresa Massimo

The first item brought up by O'Connell was to approve minutes for both the draft minutes of 14 October 2020 and 26 October 2020, which had been sent to the Executive Board in advance of the meeting. Garcia moved to accept the minutes and Smedfjeld seconded. Approval was unanimous by those present.

O'Connell next raised the issue of individual faculty grievances, specifically the issue of faculty members bringing their grievances and having those grievances "handled" by someone other than the UFO president, which is, according to our by-laws, the process that should be followed unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

There are a couple of cases right now that are being handled by Executive Board members and not the president and this is a concern, since those board members are not being compensated for handling grievances. Smedfjeld gave background about why it makes sense for the president to be the one to handle grievance cases (outside of extraordinary circumstances).

Because of the complexity of the issue McCarty is currently working on and the hours that has been spent on it, there is a request that there be compensation (in the form of time) for this work, which is beyond the scope of the duties expected by the full-time representative. There was general agreement for this among the Executive Board.

O'Connell requested a specific count of hours that McCarty has spent and spent with the UFO's counsel to get a sense of the compensation that will be needed.

Smedfjeld's background information, O'Connell noted, would guide the Executive Board from now on, but the case that McCarty is working on is more immediate and requires action.

Jones voiced her agreement that those whose regular responsibilities do not include the handling of grievances should receive compensation in some form.

Reichert interjected that no matter what UFO Executive Board a faculty member approaches with a grievance, it is essential for that faculty member with a grievance to feel supported by the Board. So far, this appears to be happening.

O'Connell noted that a conversation to assess the UFO's position as it relates to reassigned time needs to take place and Smedfjeld suggested that this be done in a conversation with Shairon Zingsheim.

Continuing the conversation about grievance cases not currently being handled by the president, Brown asked about a case being currently handled by Massimo. Specifically, Brown's question related to compensation as "time" (release from a course) as opposed to money (a stipend).

Garcia moved that the Executive Board authorize O'Connell to discuss with the District the subject of purchasing time (a course) from the District for grievance-handling currently done by McCarty. Smedfjeld seconded the motion. McCarty abstained, but there was otherwise unanimous approval.

Giving an update on the current grievance issue that McCarty is working on, the cease-and-desist letter has gone out but no response has been received so far. O'Connell indicated that he would share the letter to the members of the UFO Executive Board.

Massimo expressed the feeling that the grievance issue that was brought to Massimo will be continuing, so the Executive Board should have an action plan for dealing with grievances that are brought to Executive Board members other than the president.

An issue new to the UFO Executive Board was raised by McCarty and relates to concerns about an academic dean referencing anonymous reviews from the website

<https://ratemyprofessors.com>. This has happened on multiple occasions with one dean in particular and this is a significant concern on the part of the UFO, since this is clearly outside of the established evaluation protocol. Bringing up anonymous reviews from people who may or may not be students falls outside the scope of the evaluation process for faculty. McCarty indicated that there have been more than just one or two instances of this happening and it sends the message to faculty members that they are being held accountable to unknown standards from individuals from unknown time-frames. Dean noted his experience in hearing about this as well and found it troubling. Brown noted a concern especially in this area, since adjunct instructors face existing job insecurity and so the mention of reviews/standards that are completely outside of the set evaluative framework sets a dangerous precedent. So far, it appears that no dean has actually put references to ratemyprofessor.com in any written evaluation, but it is the feeling of the Executive Board that to even mention this anonymous website, with its feature to write unlimited and wildly inaccurate information about an instructor is a dangerous step. It was agreed that a dean mentioning ratemyprofessor to an instructor is very problematic. McCarty and Brown will send out a message to faculty to gather information on how many faculty have been affected by this.

Another subject which came up related to delays in evaluations due to Covid. This has the potential in creating delays/confusion as it relates to rehire rights for adjunct faculty. O'Connell indicated that he would follow up with VPAA DiSalvo and VPHRT Zingsheim. Brown indicated a desire to know specifically who is being harmed by these delays. McCarty referred to the Appendix of the current UFO Contract for further information on the timeline.

In summary, O'Connell would

- find out more about the reception of the cease and desist letter
- email Shairon Zinsheim regarding buying class time to use as compensation for Executive Board members other than the president handling grievance issues
- bring up the use of ratemyprofessors by deans in their evaluations

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted by 11 November 2020 by Jeffrey S. Dean, Secretary of the UFO