

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RIGHTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

AY2014-15 Membership

Mao Chen

Patricia Hilleren (Chair)

Sara Lagalwar

Feryaz Ocakli

Saleema Waraich

Andrew Lowy (SGA appointed student rep)

Orr Ganesh (SGA appointed student rep)

CAFR serves as guardian of academic freedom and rights for all members of this academic community. The committee met formally twice during the academic year.

In the Fall semester we met to finalize changes in the language to the operating code, initiated by CAFR in AY2013-14 and subsequently vetted by the FEC. The changes in CAFR operating code language included the following:

- Clarification regarding CAFR's role in grade disputes was inserted. (*"CAFR does not have the authority to change a grade, but in cases of violation of academic freedom and rights with respect to grades, can make a recommendation that the grade be changed. CAFR does not hear grade dispute cases from students that should be resolved within the department. If, after consultation with the instructor and the department chairperson, the student has evidence that the grade reflects a bias on the part of the instructor, the student may present that evidence to CAFR regarding potential violations of academic freedom and rights related to grades."*)
- Language regarding the waiving of confidentiality for cases that are brought to both CAFR and TRB simultaneously was inserted. (*"In the event that a faculty member brings a complaint to CAFR and the Tenure Review Board (TRB) simultaneously, the complainant may waive his/her right to confidentiality to allow CAFR to communicate directly with the TRB to best serve the complainant's interests."*)

CAFR met in the Spring semester to consider a request by the FEC to reduce the faculty membership on CAFR. We recommended that CAFR faculty membership be reduced from 5 to 4 with the following considerations:

1. At the time of election, at least two faculty members are tenured and at least one faculty member is untenured.
2. That at CAFR's request, FEC will appoint temporary replacement or additional CAFR members for the following situations:
 - In the event that no tenured members with at least one year of experience on CAFR is available to serve as Chair- and no untenured faculty member is able/willing to take on the leadership role.

- In the event that a current member recuses him/herself from a case owing to a conflict of interest;
- In the event that a current member is on leave or sabbatical;
- In the event that multiple, simultaneous cases are brought to CAFR for investigation/hearing.

3. That the committee quorum language be maintained (see below).

“For student complainants, a quorum for formal proceedings shall be 3 faculty and at least one student. A quorum for formal proceedings for all other cases shall be 4 faculty members or 3 faculty members during terms when a committee member on leave is not replaced or a committee member is recused. A quorum is necessary to formally discuss a case.”

4. We also recommend a reduction in student membership from *no more than 6 selected by SGA* to *no more than 5 selected by SGA*-

A motion, presented by the FEC, to reduce the membership of CAFR (from 5 faculty to 4) was approved by faculty vote during the April 24th faculty meeting. The change in membership will presumably go into effect with the AY2015-16 elections.

Informal Cases: Members of CAFR met with two different parties on an informal basis to discuss possible violations of academic freedom and rights- the first concerning a possible violation of rights of a student and the second concerning a possible violation of rights of a faculty member. In each case, two members of CAFR were present to hear the informal cases. No further action was pursued with the first, student-based case. An attempt to *informally* mediate of the second, faculty-based case failed to resolve the issue in a timely manner.

Formal Cases: No formal cases were presented to CAFR during the AY14-15.

Other Business: The chair of CAFR met with the Board of Trustees during the Fall (by phone) and Spring (in person) Trustee meeting to offer a brief report on the activities of CAFR. A member of CAFR also participated in the Committee of Committee meeting, hosted by the FEC, during the Fall and Spring semester.

AY2015-16 Membership

Mao Chen, Foreign Language and Literatures (Chair)

Sara Lagalwar, Neuroscience (1-yr sabbatical)

Jennifer Delton, History (1-yr replacement for Lagalwar)

Josh Ness, Biology & Env. Studies (Fall- sabbatical)

Regina Janes, English (Fall replacement for Ness)

Feryaz Ocakli Government (1-yr sabbatical)

Flagg Taylor, Government (1-yr replacement for Ocaki)

Saleema Waraich, Art History

*Student Reps to be determined