

University Senate Advisory Committee on Academic Policy (SACAP)

Committee Annual Report to the Senate

April 2024

Committee function

The Committee is authorized to consider any matter relating to academic policy, broadly defined, including matters relating to academic activities of teaching and research, the University Libraries, and salaries and benefits of faculty and other academic personnel. It may consider any relevant matter which may be suggested by members of the Committee, members of the faculty, administrative officers, or students.

The Senate Executive Committee, or the Senate, may refer to this Committee any question or consideration of any proposal regarding academic policy which is not otherwise assigned to another committee of the Senate, or which may be benefit from study by this Committee as well as another committee. Upon its selection of a subject for study, the Committee shall notify all interested agencies within the University, including standing committees, and invite their cooperation. For matters related to the University Libraries, consultation shall include the Libraries administrators, and for matters related to academic personnel salaries and benefits consultation shall include human resources administrators. At least once each academic year, the Committee shall submit a written report of its studies and recommendations, if any, to the Senate¹.

Policy Issues During 2023 – 2024 Academic Year

1. Ongoing topics

a. University Retirement Plans and Benefits

SACAP continued its work with HR to address concerns raised regarding the activities of the Retirement Plans Committee. SACAP allied, Dr. Gabriel Lozada, is functioning as co-chair on this committee now, meeting more frequently up to once a month. Dr. Lozada and Wendy Poppleton, HR Director, take turns chairing the meetings, and it is less occupied by the consulting firm. During Summer 2023, there were presentations on the investment perspectives based on academic and personal experiences. Staff voices have also been added to the RP committee, and they have shared the perspective that the outside firm (HUB) and the faculty reps seem to be speaking at cross purposes. Dr. Lozada is planning on potentially having the IPS reviewed by RP committee members, worked on by a subcommittee and then ratifying the statement. Potential changes to the retirement plan would need to be presented to the RP committee. The RP committee is currently reviewing the contract of the outside party.

¹ University Policy 6-002.III.E.1.f

Work will continue to achieve more transparency needed to support faculty and staff governance and input in this important area.

- b. Thesis Office Process and Deadlines
Building on previous SACAP Committee work, this effort continued. Changes have been made in the Thesis Office processes and deadlines to better meet the needs of students and faculty expectations. SACAP committee is scheduled to receive a final update by Caren Frost, AVP for Research Integrity & Compliance during the April 2024 meeting.
- c. Challenges Facing Jointly Appointed Faculty
Claudia Geist raised the question regarding the need for more University wide policy to provide guidelines for faculty with joint appointments (and possibly shared appointments). Dr. Geist is currently on a fellowship in the Office for Faculty and is working on policy clarifications.
- d. Selecting Distinguished Professors
A review of the policy and the actual process used for selecting Distinguished Professorships was undertaken during the 2022-2023 academic year. A disconnect was identified between how the selection process is communicated to the potential DP and how it actually happens. Changes were suggested to the written policies to ensure clarity in the process.

2. New topics brought to committee

- a. Conflict of Interest
A task force was set by Jason Snyder specifically to address issues related to the conflict of interest and policy regarding faculty investment in student companies. Members include: Montello Hobley, Emily Ostrander, Matt Higgins, and Jason Snyder. No further assistance from SACAP committee was needed.
- b. Definition of Academic Freedom
SACAP committee was approached regarding an inquiry presented to the Academic Senate Leadership Team by faculty members at the U. The query revolves around the clarity of the University's definition of "Academic Freedom" and the specific policy where this definition is articulated.

A review was conducted of all the policies that deal with Academic Freedom and a document was created by the Committee that included references to University policies, external references, as well as relevant laws and regulations. It was determined that while references to academic freedom did appear in University policies, there was not a definition from the University of Utah; instead, outside documents were cited. The committee agreed that a definition should be clearly stated (with references) in one central location; perhaps the Academic Senate site. Furthermore, it was pointed out that USHE references academic freedom in policy (USHE R481), but that we are not

strictly in compliance with their demands for definition due to lack of acknowledgement of freedom of learning. The SACAP committee also noted that many references of Academic Freedom are located along references of Freedom of Speech; there are, however, some difference between Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech that should be mentioned.

The document with the references, along with some definitions, were shared with the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights (SCAFFR) who discussed the issue at their meeting. SACAP and SCAFFR will continue to work together and come up with recommendations regarding this important issue.

3. SACAP Consultation

a. Faculty Leave Policy

Trina Rich from the Office of Faculty presented changes proposed to the Faculty Leave Policy. They have had issues figuring out what types of 'leaves' faculty are eligible for, mostly because they were catalogued in different policy areas with some inconsistencies. The plan is for re-organization of the policies including some clarifications. Policy 6-314 would be a repository for all the relevant types of leaves available for different people (admin, sick leave, etc.). Several leaves are being removed – not because they are substantively being revoked (librarian/administrator), but because they are being folded into the existing language about tenure leave, etc.

b. Portfolio-based Assessment of Credit

Karen Paisley, AVP for Academic Affairs and Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, provided a summary of the portfolio-based assessment of credit project and proposed changes to policy.

USHE requires its members to have a policy for portfolio-based assessment of credit and the U is currently not in compliance. This comes from pressure from the legislature actively encouraging institutions to account for life experiences in an attempt to improve completion rates. While the U is the largest grantor of exam-based credit (AP, IB, etc.), it currently does not have a policy of granting portfolio-based credit. Provost Montoya charged the CPRB (curriculum policy review board) with drafting a proposal which was subsequently approved by UGC.

The substantive policy changes are:

- A "Portfolio-based Assessment of Prior Learning" definition was added to Policy 6-101.
- The maximum credit obtained by special examinations went from 25 to 32, with a maximum of 16 from a foreign language. This change is a reflection in credits from the switch from the quarter system to semesters many years ago.
- Up to 12 credit hours can be awarded from portfolio-based assessment with a maximum of 6 upper division credit hours.

- It is up to the faculty or departments to decided what is acceptable.
- The credit needs to be articulated to a specific course.

Committee Membership for 2023 – 2024

<u>Name</u>	<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Affiliation/College</u>
Pedro Romero-Zambrana	Faculty, Chair	Engineering
Youjeong Kang	Faculty	Nursing
Claudia Geist	Faculty	Social and Behavioral Science
Julie Barkmeier-Kraemer	Faculty	Medicine
Maggie Peo	Student	ASUU
Isabella Nibley	Student	ASUU
Naomi Brown	Student	ASUU
Valerie Flattes	Faculty	Nursing
Haven Redd	Student	ASUU
Anneke Enquist	Student	ASUU
Shanti Deemyad	Senate, Ex Officio	Science
ShawnaKim Lowey-Ball	Faculty	Humanities
Timothy Schmidt	Faculty	Medicine
Matthew Cecil	Faculty	Science
Jennifer Lehmbeck	Faculty	Health
Pamela Phares	Faculty	Nursing
Allyson Mower	Senate, Ex Officio	Libraries
Mike Braak	Staff Support	