

January 14, 2022

To: Jody Kreiman, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: **Systemwide Review: Recommendations for Department Political Statements**

Dear Chair Kreiman,

The Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) reviewed the Systemwide Review: Recommendations for Department Political Statements proposal at its meeting on December 10, 2021. CAF members unanimously approved a motion to endorse the proposal. Here are members' perspectives that were voiced in the meeting:

All members agreed as to the importance of a clearly articulated public process.

Members variously suggested that the proposal seemed vague; that it should require department members who endorse or oppose a particular political statement to be listed by name; that the opposition should be given the opportunity to provide a rejoinder; and that the oppositional minority should have an opportunity equal to that of the majority to present their perspective.

Some members noted that values are important, and individuals should be allowed to share those values and not just facts.

Other members suggested that functional units (e.g. department, clinical area, student group) should not represent themselves as the university. A member asked whether there would be an option to discourage the posting of political statements by departments.

Student representatives endorsed the proposal. They agreed that departments should be allowed to make statements, and they further agreed that departments should avoid presenting the departmental positions as the university position. They raised concerns that representing opposing viewpoints can inflict harm on marginalized communities. As such, they suggested that opposing viewpoint may not need equal footing.

Sincerely,

Susanne Lohmann, Chair
Committee on Academic Freedom

Cc: Jessica Cattelino, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Shane White, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Members of the Committee on Academic Freedom