February 21, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
    Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed Regents Policy on Use of University Administrative Websites

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its February 6, 2024 meeting, The Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) discussed the Proposed Regents policy on the Use of University Administrative Websites. Members offered the following comments and recommendations.

The FWC discussed the proposed Regents policy of requiring the main landing page of a Unit’s administrative webpage to be limited only to the official business of the Unit. Any opinions of members of the Unit will be relegated to an internal page, with a disclaimer that this is the opinion of authors and not the institution. The FWC is moderately in favor of this policy, with some members recognizing the benefit of the 1967 Kalven Report from the University of Chicago, which insists on institutional neutrality on political and social issues. Members reflected on how divisive departmental statements can be, especially in the current climate. Other members expressed concern about the need for yet more bureaucracy and rules.

The FWC had the following requests for clarification about the policy:

1. “Unit” is defined as “campuses, schools, departments, centers, units, and other entities.” The policy needs to be more explicit and specifically define all the entities that will be affected. Does “an entity” include faculty members and their associated groups?

2. Who owns university-related websites? In particular, who owns faculty websites hosted on a UCLA server? The faculty member or the university? The FWC strongly supports individual faculty members’ First Amendment rights to express their views freely.

3. How will this policy be enforced? What are the consequences if a Unit insists on placing an opinion statement on their landing page?

Thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at butlersj@ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,
Samantha Butler, Chair
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Faculty Welfare Committee
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee