April 9, 2024

To: Andrea Kasko, Chair
UCLA Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units

At its meeting on April 9, 2024, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussed the proposed Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units.

Members identified that the policy as written could be divisive and would be difficult to implement and monitor. There was mention of worry when discussing how the implementation of this policy would be accepted by colleagues. More specifically, there was concerns regarding the identification of how many faculty members were in favor and against certain statements, and how holding a vote could have a negative impact on faculty within an academic unit as well as the climate of academic units around campus.

Some members also brought up how this policy could disproportionately affect academic units whose work is focused on social reform. The Committee felt that the Regents should further consider and ensure that these groups would not be ostracized and disproportionately affected.

Committee members also identified that there were various instances that are not clearly addressed in the current policy. For example, if faculty members develop their own website but identify themselves as UCLA faculty, would there need to be a discretionary statement or a disclaimer on this site even though it is not a statement made by the full academic unit?

Members also felt that the policy’s current terminology was vague, and the policy would benefit from further attention to detail.

Some members also mentioned that the timing of this policy could cause some concerns among campus groups. Though members agreed with the purpose of the policy, they found that now might not be the best time to implement new standards.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (thall@mednet.ucla.edu) or Academic Senate Policy Analyst, Lilia Valdez (lvaldez@senate.ucla.edu).

Sincerely,

Theodore Hall, Chair
Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
cc: Kathy Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
     Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
     April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
     Lilia Valdez, Senior Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
     Members of the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion