

April 11, 2017

To: Susan Cochran, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Michael Shin, Chair  
Committee on Instruction and Technology

**Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) Draft Presidential Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Policy**

On behalf of the Committee on Instruction and Technology (CIT), I am writing to express faculty concerns regarding the proposed policy on unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or 'drones.' The following issues were raised after soliciting responses from CIT committee members as well as from colleagues whom I know are currently using drones for university-related research purposes.

The main issue with the proposed policy concerns the need to obtain approval from a 'designated authority' before using a drone. Who exactly said authority is, and their respective qualifications, will certainly impact overall approval. How can a single authority be qualified to assess research programs that range from climate change to vegetation succession to the deterioration of urban infrastructure to drone choreography? Moreover, one of the key advantages of using drones in research is flexibility and rapid response. How long will approval take? What is the procedure for evaluation and what are the standards for approval?

The requirement to seek university approval beyond what is already mandated by local and federal regulations (e.g., registration, no fly zones) seems unnecessarily onerous, and may, in fact, slow research efforts. It is requested that alternative methods indemnify the University be sought.

Respectfully,



Michael E. Shin, Ph.D.  
Committee on Instruction and Technology, Chair  
Associate Professor of Geography

cc: Susan Cochran, Chair, Academic Senate  
Leobardo F. Estrada, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate  
Sandra Graham, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate  
Linda Mohr, Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Senate