



**Committee on Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA)
Minutes**

November 19, 2021

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Present: Bawardi, Hani; Braun, Tom (Chair); Burak, Adam; Likosky, Donald; Pasquale, John; Xi, Chuanwu

Absent: Binnie, Naomi; Clark-Foos, Arlo; Finlayson, Caitlin (SACUA Liaison), Hristova, Gabriela; Mutumba, Massy; Staller, Karen

10:36 Chair Braun called the meeting to order.

Update on Work Connections (WC) Ad-Hoc Committee/COVID Council Meeting with WC: Chair Braun gave an update about the Work Connections meeting that took place with the provost and with representatives from Work Connections and Finance earlier in the day.

Chair Braun posed the question, what can COAA do for Work Connections relative to the faculty senate motion?

Chair Braun described what Work Connections has told faculty, and he shared the [Work Connections slides](#) that were shared with the group that met.

Chair Braun described Work Connections as a go-between between a unit supervisor and an employee. Work Connections makes recommendations on restrictions, an ADA coordinator decides what accommodations are recommended, and then the unit decides how to implement the recommendations. There is a disconnect and confusion between accommodations and restrictions.

10:40 to 10:50 – There was a brief disruption to the meeting due to technical difficulties. Chair Braun left the meeting at 10:40 and returned at 10:50.

Chair Braun noted that there is a lack of communication, and the Work Connections process is difficult to navigate. He noted that SACUA Chair Allen Liu suggested that COAA could develop a survey. There isn't a lot of information about user satisfaction. COAA could develop a survey to send to faculty. Such a survey would not include staff.

Chair Braun gave an update about WC's visit to the COVID Council on November 12. WC came and shared information. He also described the WC Ad Hoc group that was formed by SACUA. That group was put together to have a discussion with the provost. However, a WC Working Group is also being put together to continue the work with WC. One request the Working Group may look at is whether an appeals process should be available. It was noted that WC authorizes restrictions, whereas the ADA recommends accommodations. It was asked whether there is an appeals process for ADA recommendations.

It was noted that WC was developed under finance and risk management. It was noted that



this creates an appearance of prioritizing saving money. A member noted that an interest in saving money presents a conflict of interest. It was stated that WC makes recommendations and not decisions.

A member noted that a request to receive records under FOIA from WC would cost \$1,800, so efforts to request records have stalled.

The committee touched on items that could be a focus for the committee, including making the AEC survey more useable and purposeful, responding to academic freedom issues brought about by the Bright Sheng incident in SMTD, including encouraging SACUA to take a stronger position, or considering the grievance process, which does not allow grievances to be made against administrators at a higher level than a dean, such as the provost.

The committee discussed further what COAA's role could be with WC. It was suggested that COAA could spread the word about WC to increase faculty awareness, COAA could consider how WC could best interface with faculty, how communication could be improved, and how WC could be more user friendly.

Concerning the AEC survey, the committee discussed how the group could work with AEC survey data, such as looking at trends in summary data, and facilitating the possibility of someone being able to see the confidential qualitative data for purposes of identifying issues.

Member Bawardi suggested clarifying what campuses can do about COVID policy on their respective campuses, and a mechanism to bring issues forward. He suggested that guests could be invited from Flint and Dearborn to discuss these processes.

Chair Braun will prepare a survey for the committee so that committee members may prioritize topics of interest for the year. The results of the survey will be discussed at the next meeting scheduled for December 16.

Respectfully submitted by,

MaryJo Banasik
Faculty Senate Office