



General Counsel's Advisory Committee (GCAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 9/22/23

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Approved: 1/19/24

Present: Rogério Pinto (Chair), Nancy Allee, J. Sybil Biermann, Kirsten Herold, Silke-Maria Weineck, Alex Yasha Yi (SACUA Liaison), Graham Hardig, Londen Ward, Tim Lynch (VP and General Counsel)

Absent: Steven Chinn, Adam Matzger, Pamela Smock, Jamie Tappenden, Christopher J. Walker, Judith Walker

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

9:02am-9:09am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the April 2023 GCAC meeting were approved. Brief introductions were shared.

9:10am-9:35am: Brief discussion led by Counsel Lynch

Summary: The Chair provided a brief introduction of the committee. VP Lynch provided an overview of the General Counsel's Office including principles they adhere to, and how they view their role to the University, and the University community. Some of the policy changes that have been implemented over the past 10 years were shared. VP Lynch provided an overview of how his office fits in the University's organizational structure.

A discussion was held on the diversity of thought on the committee and the best way to disseminate those thoughts. Having candid conversations in this committee is important and can allow for a better conversation. A discussion on the level of candor is held.

The Chair of the committee discussed the charge of the committee and how the Charges are meant to work with the other Senate Assembly committees.

Tim provided an example of how the committee's discussions have been brought to the administration. The particular example centered on the importance of academic freedom.

Action: Discussion

9:37am-10:00am: Statement about Academic Freedom

Summary: The Statement on Academic Freedom: Adopted by the Senate Assembly on behalf of the Faculty Senate - January 25, 2010 was brought up to spark discussion on academic freedom in 2023. The student representatives provided their perspectives on if they can provide perceived unpopular opinions in class. Faculty have had a chance to talk about their discussions in class, and if they felt they were able to teach tough subjects without the fear of repercussions.



Examples were provided of situations in classrooms where sensitive subjects are discussed and how different opinions are perceived. Student course evaluations are discussed. Suggestion is made that more research should be done related to the intersection of diversity and academic freedom. A point is made that academic freedom is not distributed equally among faculty. Discussion occurs regarding students desires to be challenged in many cases, and the benefits that can come from this.

Action: Discussion

10:00am: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office