

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®
General Faculty Standing Committee
Faculty Center
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Committee of Eleven Annual Report 2023-2024

Members:

Dr. Wolfgang Fink, Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering (6/18-5/25)
Dr. Laura Hollengreen, Vice Chair, School of Architecture (6/19-5/24)

Dr. Matthews Abraham, English (6/22-5/24)
Dr. Theodore Downing, Research Innovation & Impact (6/22-5/25)
Dr. Ravi Goyal, Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences (6/22-5/24)
Dr. Leila Hudson, Chair of the Faculty, School of Middle Eastern Studies (6/21-5/26)
Dr. Barbara Kosta, German Studies (6/21-5/25)
Dr. Steve Schwartz, Chemistry/Biochemistry (6/23-5/25)
Dr. Caleb Simmons, Religious Studies and Classics (6/20-5/26)
Dr. Shufang Su, Physics (6/21-5/25)
Dr. Marlys Witte, Surgery (6/20-5/26)

Alex Acuña, GPSC Senator for SBS (6/23-5/24)
Paulina Garcia, ASUA Senator for SBS (6/23-5/24)

The Committee of Eleven (C11) was established in 1947 by President James Byron McCormick to obtain advice from the faculty. When the Faculty Senate and Constitution were established in 1948, the Committee of Eleven was defined constitutionally and membership determined by faculty-wide election. C11 is unique in higher education governance structures and is independent of other faculty or administrative committees or organizations. The Committee of Eleven is University-wide and does not have a prescribed agenda.

Faculty Constitution Article V, Section 3 provides:

The Committee of Eleven shall:

- a. Initiate, promote, and stimulate study and action dealing with and looking toward solution of situations and problems of interest and concern to the faculty and to the University.
- b. Make reports to the General Faculty or the Faculty Senate.
- c. Speak for the General Faculty as and when authorized by the General Faculty.

C11 met regularly throughout the Academic Year 2023-2024 via Zoom only and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The 2023-2024 Academic Year was an extremely busy year for C11, in no small part due to the ongoing integration of embattled UAGC (University of Arizona Global Campus) into the University of Arizona, continued push toward finalization of UHAP 5.2 revisions as proposed by C11, and continued discussion of the definition and implementation of shared governance and faculty governance, as well as academic freedom of research and speech. These activities were overshadowed by the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict since October 7, 2023 and the announcement in November 2023 of a UArizona financial crisis due to a

“miscalculation” of days-cash-on-hand to the tune of \$250 million (later corrected to \$177 million). The latter resulted in significant adjustments to the senior leadership of the University (e.g., resignation of CFO Rulney, firing of Athletics Dept. Director Heeke, etc.).

The most significant projects undertaken this academic year by C11 were (in no particular order):

- (1) Investigation of the UArizona financial/management crisis, originally announced to ABOR in November 2023 by President Robbins and CFO Rulney.
- (2) Investigation of UAGC integration including employee integration into UArizona, and \$72 million loan forgiveness for Ashford by the Dept. of Education with potential for holding UArizona responsible for it, i.e., recouping of the \$72 million from UArizona. To that effect, Q&A sessions were conducted with HR (VP Helena Rodrigues et al.) as well as with UAGC leadership (Dr. Packard et al.).
- (3) Discussion of UITS IT centralization efforts.
- (4) Finalization of revisions to UHAP 5.2. Negotiations are still ongoing with Dr. Helena Rodriguez (Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer), Dr. Celina Ramirez (VP University Initiatives, former UA Chief Compliance Officer), and interim Provost Dr. Ron Marx to facilitate final acceptance and implementation of the recommended revisions to UHAP 5.2 (“Annual Performance Reviews Of Administrative Personnel”) drafted 5 years ago by C11 which were presented last year to the Faculty Senate with subsequent adoption by overwhelming majority vote.

In addition, C11 focused during AY 2023-2024 on persistent challenges and threats to shared governance. Several statements/letters were issued regarding these and other matters. Here is an unranked, non-exhaustive list of additional topics (not listed above) that were investigated, discussed, and acted upon by C11 throughout AY 2023-2024 (for more details, refer to the relevant documents on the C11 webpage and the C11 meeting minutes, available upon request):

- Alignment of university research to outside expectations and related cherry-picking of nationwide rankings and a flawed faculty reward system
- Academic freedom and freedom of speech
- Deliberation about external threats to academic freedom in research and teaching:
 - Recent College of Nursing incident
 - Alleged donor influence at the Freedom Center
 - Turning Point USA incident at ASU and the bigger national/international picture
- IP issues in light of intramural proposal reviews, inter-laboratory transfers of students, etc.
- UAlert revamp after poor campus-wide performance, leading to significant improvement because of C11 intervention
- Search for Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost:
 - Discussion of composition of 19-person committee (5 deans, 5 (A)VPs, 4 Regents, 2 DHs)
 - C11 interviews with all three finalists
 - C11 feedback letter to President Robbins and ABOR Chair Mata to urge whoever the successful candidate might be to fully engage with the statutorily mandated role of elected faculty in shared university governance, per ARS 15-1601B, and to focus significant attention on repairing the deeply fractured sense of trust and collegiality on campus in particular with regard to the interactions of faculty and administrators
- Q&A with President Robbins regarding UArizona financial “crisis” and proposed solutions
- Follow-up on situation and accommodation status of the Department of Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences in the aftermath of the murder of Dr. Thomas Meixner
- C11 letter to President Robbins to request a waiver of Student Union charges to Campus Pantry and Campus Closet for their space in the Student Union and to ensure continued

- proper funding for the well-being of the campus community
- Deliberation about UArizona Centers and Institutes: their justification, vetting, and funding models
- Deliberation about HB 2735 in the context of danger to elected shared faculty governance: proposed amendments to ARS 15-1601B would modify *“the relationship between ABOR, university presidents, and faculty members. Instead of sharing responsibility, ABOR and university presidents are required to consult with faculty members through their elected representatives on academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters.”*
- Deliberation about HB 1304 in the context of danger to academic freedom in teaching: *“introduces new obligations for Arizona postsecondary institutions to post detailed course information online before the start of each term, including syllabi and instructor qualifications.”*
- Delivery of 7 critical questions to President Robbins intended to clarify/confirm that shared faculty governance, through its elected faculty representatives, was either unaware of or opposed to decisions that led to the financial shortcomings/a.k.a. “crisis”; his stand on HB2735; the Governor's concerns regarding the Conflict of Interest of an ABOR-imposed interim CFO; elimination of administrative positions; leadership, etc.
Note: these questions remained unanswered by President Robbins.
- Deliberation about the new University Advisory Council (UAC), which resulted in a C11 letter to President Robbins stating that the University Advisory Council (UAC) does not represent an elected shared faculty governance body, recognized by ARS 15-1601B and University policies dating back to 1947. The letter was copied to Governor Katie Hobbs, ABOR Chair Mata, Faculty Senate of UArizona, and The General Faculty of the University of Arizona.
- C11 letter to OGC regarding legal representation for elected faculty representatives.

It is customary for C11 to invite guests to its regular meetings to engage in discussion of pertinent issues with committee members. During the 2023-2024 Academic Year the list of guests included (in no particular order):

- Dr. Mark Stegeman, Parliamentarian;
- Dr. Celina Ramirez, VP University Initiatives, former UA Chief Compliance Officer;
- Dr. Helena Rodrigues, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer;
- Chanté Martin, Associate Vice President Human Resources;
- President Robbins;
- Interim Provost Marx;
- Dr. Christopher Castro, Interim Department Head, Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences;
- John Arnold, ABOR Executive Director and UArizona Interim CFO;
- Dr. Johann Rafelski, Professor of Physics;
- Dr. Gary Packard, Interim Senior Vice Provost, Online Initiatives, Arizona Online, University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC), and UAGC leadership team.

It is our hope and expectation that in the Academic Year 2024-2025 the committee, comprised of new and continuing members, will continue its work guided by the enthusiasm, openness, and dedication to faculty and university issues demonstrated this year.

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Wolfgang Fink and Dr. Laura Hollengreen
Chair and Vice Chair, Committee of Eleven (C11)