



Student Affairs Policy Committee

**FACULTY CENTER**

1216 East Mabel Street  
PO Box 210456

Tucson, AZ 85721

Ofc: 520-621-1342

Fax: 520-621-8844

[facultygovernance.arizona.edu](http://facultygovernance.arizona.edu)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®  
**STUDENT AFFAIRS POLICY COMMITTEE**

Faculty Center  
1216 East Mabel Street - PO Box 210456  
621-1342 (Fax: 621-8844)  
[facultycenter@email.arizona.edu](mailto:facultycenter@email.arizona.edu)

**Student Affairs Policy Committee  
Annual Report 2019-2020**

**SAPC Members:**

Diane Ohala, **CHAIR**, Linguistics

Gomez Ambriz, ASUA

Sonia Batsheva Kaufman, GPSC

Cheryl Cuillier, University Libraries-Research & Learning

Yijun Ding, College of Optical Sciences

Leila Hudson, Middle Eastern & North African Studies

Lauri Macmillan Johnson, Landscape Architecture & Planning

Kimberly Marchesseault, Management and Organizations

Matthew Mugmon, Fred Fox School of Music

Jeff Stone, Psychology

Kendal Washington White, Dean of Students, *ex-officio* (8/09- )

---

During the academic year 2019-2020, the committee met September 11, 2019; October 09, 2019; November 6, 2019; December 11, 2019; February 12, 2020; March 18, 2020; April 8, 2020; and May 6, 2020. Details and highlights are provided below.

**Highlights for September 11, 2019 included:**

Update on Costs of Course Materials: According to information provided by UA Bookstore, the average cost of course materials at UA remains below the national average. The committee discussed possible reasons behind this savings including ownership of the bookstore by UA. Committee member Cuillier suggested a mismatch between what students are assigned to buy and what they purchase. Cuillier also raised concerns regarding the impact of the expansion of students utilizing Inclusive Access, which may not be a positive experience for students unless a significant discount is negotiated with the publisher and faculty understand that associated courseware is optional (in some cases, adding additional courseware can raise costs to the student. The committee suggested an update to the Best Practices for Course Materials document to include this information.

Campus Pantry Update: Food insecurity is still an issue on campus and Campus Pantry has expanded hours and a new refrigerator donated by President Robbins. Graduate and international students are particularly in need in summer months, though, when hours are more restricted. Melanie Hingle, Chair of APPC, will initiate a campus-wide food insecurity survey in collaboration with other universities to gather more data about student needs in this area. The committee suggested asking Campus Pantry for another visit to SAPC.

Update on full-time status for graduate students: Issues regarding full-time status for graduate students were discussed by the committee, including the differing amounts of credits necessary for fulltime status across colleges and accrediting bodies encouraging the pairing of retention to time in degree. Chair Ohala discussed this issue with the Dean Carnie of the Graduate College and was told that the lower number of credit hours to achieve full-time status for TAs and RAs is federally mandated and not subject to change at UArizona.

Course Attendance & Absence Policies: Course attendance and absence policies were reviewed by the committee including issues raised by ASUA Diversity Director regarding excused and unexcused absences and their potential to disproportionately affect students of color and other minority populations. The committee discussed different varieties of absences and attendance policies as well as the campus mandate that disallows instructors from asking for documentation of an unexcused absences. ASUA plans to bring this issue forward in collaboration with the Dean of Students and other relevant constituents. The committee expressed support for this initiative but also advised consultation with teaching faculty.

#### **Highlights for October 09, 2019 included:**

Campus Pantry Presentation: Bridget Nobbe, Coordinator of Campus Pantry, presented updated information to the committee, including data from the 2016 UA Campus Climate survey that indicated 29% of undergraduates and 12% of graduate students always or often skipped meals or ate less due to financial constraints and those most affected are from the following populations: Latinx, LGBTQIA+, Students with disabilities, Pell grant recipients. The impacts of food insecurity (lower GPA, higher risk of not graduating, more likely to move) were also explained alongside coping strategies students who are food-insecure utilize. Nobbe also noted that due to cutbacks in housing services on campus, insecurity is not limited to food but also things like toiletries and toilet paper. Chair Ohala and other committee members agreed to follow-up with other campus bodies to coordinate efforts and raise awareness of these issues. *Nb. Chair Ohala and committee member Cullier brought these concerns to the attention of Regent DuVal, among others, during the ABOR breakfast in Fall 2019. Chair Ohala also met with Melanie Hingle, Chair of APPC, which group had also received a visit from Campus Pantry.*

Nobbe introduced a Basic Needs Statement that could be included with syllabi. The statement would include a link to a website that provides a searchable directory of resources available to students. *Nb. These [links](#) and associated statements for course syllabi were subsequently approved by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils during the Fall 2019 semester. The [texts](#) to include on syllabi for Campus Pantry and other support services were sent to various campus constituents on 4/1/20 and can be readily adopted by any instructor.*

#### **Highlights for November 6, 2019 included:**

LGBTQ+ Affairs Presentation. Director Jen Hoefle Olson presented to the committee on the operations and work of the LGBTQ+ resource center. The center offers a safe space for LGBTQ+ students and has a varied user base from the estimated 5-10% of the student body. The center also supports 5 affiliated student groups: Pride Alliance, DLP, oSTEM, ArospACE, MedPRIDE, and Pride Law. One-on-one and dedicated support groups are offered to students as well as referrals to CAPS; the center can cover the cost of a referral. In addition, financial aid peer advisors (trained by UArizona Financial Aid) are available to students

Committee members asked questions regarding current challenges, which included: the need to clearly communicate to students the location of all-gender restrooms on first day of class; the lack of consistent use of preferred names and pronouns in UAccess resulting in incorrect information on class rosters and in D2L. Committee member Cuillier will follow up on this topic. *Nb. Committee member Cuillier subsequently worked with Mark Felix (Director, Student and Academic Technologies) on this issue. The preferred-name field in UAccess should now share data with class rosters and D2L. However, there may be an extra step in the workflow that students do not know about when entering their preferred name information.*

### **Highlights for December 11, 2019 included:**

Postdoctoral Concerns: Chair Ohala and committee member Ding reported on their recent meeting with the Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, Jeannette Hoit. Topics discussed included increasing awareness of resources available to postdoctoral students on campus, the lack of an official postdoctoral organization, and complications with postdoctoral student titles. Committee members discussed SAPC reviewing postdoc models and best practices from other institutions. Director, Postdoctoral Affairs, Jeannette Hoit was discussed as a future guest of the committee.

Club Sports: Committee members discussed the issue of students pressured to play club sports while injured. The club sports handbook was reviewed by committee member Stone and the evaluation process for students participating in these sports was discussed as was a future visit from those who oversee Club Sports.

Presentation by Bruce Grissom, Director UA VETS Center. Grissom presented to the committee about the UA Vets Center, which provides services to anyone who is military-connected (student veterans, currently serving, dependents, spouses, and family members). Grissom provided details on the unique challenges student veterans experience when transitioning from service to the classroom environment and explained the education benefits available to these students including GI Bill, tuition assistance for active duty, and vocational rehabilitation. He also provided information on the partnership between VETS Center and new student orientation, which covers registration and certification (through the Registrar's office).

Resources made available to students through the center included: VETS Peer Advocacy Liaisons (PALS), VETS Faculty Fellows, Veterans Services office "translation", Student veterans of America, UA Chapter, and a partner organization, Student Veterans of America (SVA), which provides benefits including fundraising, resume workshops, and career assistance.

Committee members discussed the allies training offered by the UA VETS Center which is offered twice a semester in-person over three consecutive Fridays (2-hours each). Committee members suggested an online option that could reach a wider audience as the sessions often fill-up quickly and many interested individuals are unable to participate. The committee referred Grissom to Director Hoefle Olson of LGBTQ+ for a successful online training model that relies heavily on

sharing student views and experiences, which is an important component of the VETS Ally training. The committee also suggested that Grissom visit Faculty Senate to provide other faculty with the information provided to SAPC. *Nb. Chair Ohala proposed this visit to the Chair of Faculty, who scheduled a visit for Spring 2020. This visit was subsequently postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis.*

### **Highlights for February 12, 2020 included:**

Presentation by Dr. Jenny Hoit, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs. Hoit updated the committee on the structure, personnel, and services offered by University of Arizona Postdoctoral Affairs. Support of Postdoctoral Affairs is split between Research, Innovation, and Impact (RII) and the Graduate College. The University is also part of the National Postdoc Association (NPA) and anyone with UA login credentials may utilize the NPA resources via their website. Hoit noted that there are approximately 500 post-doctoral scholars on the UA campus with the majority working in the Colleges of Science and Medicine-Tucson. There are an additional 25 in Phoenix.

Hoit provided an overview of the services Postdoctoral Affairs offers: workshops geared toward non-academic jobs (a career counselor is in the works), an all postdoctoral scholars' listserv, postdoctoral orientations (three times a year), writing groups and social gatherings, and Postdoctoral Research Development Grants (PRDG; offered annually).

Members asked Hoit about the grievance pathways offered to postdoctoral scholars and expressed concerns with the relationship of supervisor as funder of postdoctoral scholars. Hoit described issues with disparities and issues between different postdoctoral scholars on campus including: onboarding of postdocs under different titles results in disparities in access to benefits, although some have access to training-related expenses that can include insurance, and some are able to enroll as non-degree seeking and utilize UA student health insurance. Also, DCCs cannot use the QTR benefit.

Hoit discussed the need for awareness of the postdoc population. Committee members suggested the drafting of a best practices document to be sent via the all faculty listserv. This document would highlight resources for postdoctoral scholars, may be drafted by SAPC, and sent in January, May, and September to faculty. *Nb. Due to the COVID-19 crisis the best-practices document remains a pending action item. Chair Ohala raised the grievance pathway issue in a subsequent Senate Executive committee and received further information for the committee's consideration. Additional communications with Director Hoit focused on the access to benefits of issue.*

### **Highlights for March 18, 2020 included:**

Pass/Fail & Communication Issues: Student committee members shared their feelings of stress in connection to the transition to online learning and the possibility of a pass/fail grading scheme. Student committee members reported not knowing UA was fully online through the end of the semester and raised the issue of stress on students when they are not fully informed. Chair Ohala agreed to bring up issues related to this topic at the next Senate Executive Committee (*and did so and also followed up with Provost Folks, specifically about access to WiFi for native students*).

Student Access to Technology. Members discussed the importance of surveying students to identify and address technology issues while courses have shifted to online instruction (per recent

email from Provost Folks). Chair Ohala agreed to share a survey she conducted of her students in regard to technology and issues that have arisen (*and did so*).

Presentation by W. Patrick Bryan, Assistant Director, Mentoring and Cultural Programs. Bryan presented to the committee about the First Cats programming for first-generation students. Bryan shared the definition of first-generation students and noted the definition takes various forms including: a student who comes from a home where neither parent/legal guardian has completed a four-year bachelor's degree, a student whose parent with primary custody or with whom the student lives with a majority of the time does not have a bachelor's degree, a student whose parent(s)/legal guardian(s) completed a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a country outside of the United States, a student who was/is a homeless youth, in the foster care system, or a ward of the state. Bryan informed the committee there are attempts at generating a University-wide definition of first-generation students that would include financial aid aspects and acknowledged there are limitations specific to grants that may supersede First Cats' definitions.

Bryan shared information about First Cats' mentoring efforts, including: cohort approach, 1:1 meeting, and workshops on navigating the University experience, which meets Arizona Assurance requirements and is connected with New Start Summer Program.

Bryan outlined major challenges, including refinement of the definition of first-generation students and ensuring the institution has a common understanding of the term. Bryan also shared ideas from meeting with first-generation students and First Cats staff. Items included suggestions to refine syllabus structure to explain things like office hours, expectations, and opportunities for 1:1 interaction with faculty member and encouragement of faculty to complete First Cats training. Chair Ohala agreed to raise the syllabi suggestions with relevant campus constituents (*and did so*).

#### **Highlights for April 8, 2020 included:**

Pass/Fail Grading/Withdrawals: All students have the opportunity for pass/fail grading in courses. Members discussed faculty member and student confusions on the logistics of pass/fail grading and the impending deadline for student withdrawal and how to increase student awareness.

Student Success and Retention Innovation (SSRI) Memo: Committee members reviewed and discussed items from a memo sent 04-08-2020 by SSRI. Of particular concern was support for mental health issues, which comprised the largest proportion of students' reported stressors as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

D2L Announcement Addressing Above Concerns: Members proposed an announcement text that could be added to D2L announcements and voluntarily to all D2L course homepages by instructors. The text would include information about pass/fail grading, withdrawal deadlines, and access to support for mental health and other resources. Chair Ohala will follow-up with Lisa Elfring to see if it is possible to include a message on all D2L pages with pertinent information for students. *Nb. Chair Ohala subsequently worked with Lisa Elfring from OIA and Mark Felix from UITS to create this announcement, which was immediately distributed via D2L announcements and updated through the end of term.*

Students Taskforce: The committee discussed the recently formed students taskforce and the mobilization of resources for faculty and students. Members expressed the desire to connect with the taskforce to better understand its remit and whether that remit connected with concerns from

SAPC. *Nb. Chair Ohala subsequently met with members of this taskforce (Barry Brummond, Melanie Hingle, and Sidney Hess). The critical connection between loss of tuition dollars for next AY and poor communication to students and faculty about UArizona was discussed. Each agreed to forward these concerns to various constituents and all subsequently did so.*

**Highlights for May 6, 2020 included:**

Graduate Student Teaching Opt-out and Leases: Committee members Hudson and Kaufman discussed the likelihood of a teaching opt-out for graduate students in response to President Robbins' announcement about at-risk faculty not being present in classrooms but assisted by in-person graduate student proctors. Committee members Hudson and Kaufman also expressed increasing concern for all students with impending lease decisions. Members expressed concerns there may *not* be an opt-out for graduate students with teaching assignments and reiterated the importance of involving graduate students in campus re-entry teaching plans. Member Kaufman informed that the committee that as GPSC is transitioning to new leadership, a separate coalition is pursuing these and other issues related to potential effects of the proposed re-entry plan on graduate students. Chair Ohala and committee member Hudson agreed to raise these issues with relevant administrators. *Nb. Chair Ohala subsequently met with Dean Carnie of the Graduate College, who advised that graduate students should work with departments regarding options for Fall teaching as this depends on specific curricular details. Dean Carnie also advised that international students who have returned to their home country may face particular challenges, such as an inability to return to campus and lack of access to wages if they cannot return (both issues are dictated by policies at the federal level). Committee member Hudson raised these and other graduate student issues at a subsequent Senate Executive Committee meeting and highlighted the need for administrators to respond to all graduate student bodies.*

Campus Re-entry: Members expressed the idea that messaging regarding campus re-entry needs to highlight UA as an institution even if it only meets via online instruction. Members also voiced concern with the messaging that students will be welcomed back to campus, but the administration is nevertheless expecting a portion of the population to become ill, who will then need to be quarantined. The need for consistent and honest messaging to students was again raised. Chair Ohala agreed to raise these concerns at the next Senate Executive meeting (*and did so, noting in particular that campus will not be safe but rather "as safe as they can make it" and that messaging should not promise something that cannot be delivered*).

Summer Meetings: The committee plans to continue meeting over the summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Ohala, Ph.D.  
Chair, SAPC