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**MINUTES of AAUP Executive Board meeting**

**3 August 2021, 1:30 pm to 3 pm**

Three priorities in the current AAUP strategic plan:

1.     the escalating division of insecure academic labor

2.     reductions and restructuring of public funding and budgeting processes

3.     the increasingly hostile environment affecting students and faculty

Our mantra is “refuse austerity.”

#### https://washington.zoom.us/j/93610086550 or One tap mobile +12063379723,,93610086550# (Seattle)

#### Board member attendance: Eva Cherniavsky (president), Abraham Flaxman (VP), Amy Hagopian (Secretary), Ann Mescher, Aaron Katz, Nora Kenworthy, Diane Morrison (treasurer), Louisa Mackenzie (dialing in from Scotland), Jay Johnson, Duane Storti

#### Absent: Charlie Collins, Annie Nguyen (membership secretary) Jim Gregory, Rachel Chapman,Rob Wood (doing a dissertation defense)

#### Invited guest: Malori Musselman (AAUP national)

**Our next meeting is Sept 7 at 1:30 pm**

**AGENDA**

#### Announcements/updates & Quick reports as needed: Treasurer, list server, website, membership

1. NEXT STEPS regarding fall re-opening:  our response to leadership's (non-) response?  How do we report this out to our list?  What do we call for now?  Should we try for an ST op-ed?
2. We have agreed we want to circle back to the call we endorsed for abolishing UWPD and do some work on our list laying out what that means (why it is not a wild and utopian proposition; why it serves rather than endangers public safety, etc).  Rachel has shared some excellent resources (which I'm attaching again, below).  I'm hoping we can discuss substance and timing of a post on this topic.

#### Case work

1. Report from UWFF
2. Looking ahead to Fall:  next meetings

**MINUTES**

We are in receipt of President Ana Mari Cauce’s response to our letter of concern about back-to-school requirements.

It was condescending, paternalistic, and unresponsive.

Eva has drafted a strong response (see appendix), where she noted the best practices from other universities. Everyone liked it.

As we noted in our original letter to Ana Mari Cauce, the UW’s back to school planning committees contain scant faculty. Aaron noted these funcions need the expertise of faculty, but not just technical public health content expertise. Faculty (from any unit) are experts in terms of what happens in the classroom.

Diane suggested a Faculty Town Hall to create/respond to a list of things that must be in place before returning to class. If these aren’t in place, how can we return? Perhaps some will refuse to teach in person, in which case, will they face consequences?

Amy noted the Health Sciences classroom matrix lists “social distancing” limits of classroom assignments,

<https://hsasf.hsa.washington.edu/instructional-support/crs/matrix/>. Despite the numbers, class assignments are being made well in excess of those numbers.

Eva reported an emergency meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has been announced, time uncertain. Louisa is an incoming member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and has received no invitation to such a meeting (perhaps because she’s not formally on the list until September). She has also received no information about back-to-school arrangements, despite President Cauce’s claim, “Administrative and Faculty Senate leadership are tracking developments closely and in concert as we have throughout this crisis, guided by…”

Duane noted the lack of specificity in Cauce’s response. Decisions about whether to meet in person or not are clearly vague—does that mean it’s up to us? That could be discussed at Town Hall.

IHME leadership are some of those people that faculty at other universities are contacting. Nora noted, Perhaps an angle for the blog post might be: UW has more infectious disease expertise than many states / countries, and yet we haven’t been told how they’ve been involved in planning for the return to fall… (should we ask Ali Mokdad whether he’s involved? )

What will happen in Seattle public schools? What is safest or faculty (or students) with kids who aren’t vaccinated (too young, disabilities)? Is Cauce in touch with SPD? She hasn’t said.

Jay—Plan A is in-person teaching, the baseline expectation. What permission do you need to get to teach online in lieu of in-person?

Nora—Columbia University President Bollinger was [caught](https://academeblog.org/2021/08/02/a-smoking-gun-at-columbia-university/) saying in an email, “…the instructional faculty for the Core is largely composed of non-tenure-track individuals, which means we should have greater leeway to expect in-person instruction, if that’s what we deem best.“

Concern: Would low attendance in a summer town hall make it seem there wasn’t much interest?

Abie noted lots of people are signing up for our mailing list—people are craving information and discussion.

Should we get a petition going? AAUP has noted a number of schools have had a vote of no confidence in their leadership. How would a non-unionized university stage such a vote? Perhaps through Faculty Senate, but they’re out to lunch for the Summer. 10% of voting faculty would have to sign on to a call for a meeting of the faculty as a whole (per Code)

Should there be a media outreach? That seemed like a good idea to some. The hook: All is not well at UW. Seattle Times [editorialized](https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/colleges-universities-should-require-full-vaccination-for-fall/) on May 3 that vaccines should be required.

UW unions have views and strength—we should work with them. Staff have a policy to request accommodation, because of course they have a union.

Should we do a live inspection of classrooms? Perhaps with Paula Lukaszek with Local 1488 President, and Dept of Environmental Health and Safety.

Duane’s department is holding an in-person back to school retreat. Others?

**Decisions:**

Yes, to Town Hall, invite UAW 4121 (David Parsons, president) to co-sponsor (and invite GPSS, Senate-FCTL)

Invite UW union participation (Paula Lukaszek-Local 1488 President, Rhonda Johnson (SEIU 925-classified staff) & Mark Janko (SEIU 925-Pro Staff)

Contact Seattle Times (reporter [Jenn Smith](http://jennsmith@seattletimes.com)) or other media outreach; perhaps an op-ed

**Purpose** of Town Hall is to hear what faculty need to go back to the classroom safely in the fall, and what we can collectively do if the administration’s proposed circumstances are not acceptable.

**Date**: Wednesday, Aug 11, noon?

<https://washington.zoom.us/j/96488123735>

**Agenda**: Lay out three or four key safety issues (slides). Invite comment. Options proposed and considered: petition on the 3-4 issues, Seattle Times, emergency meeting of the Faculty Senate (or its exec committee).

Present information about what other universities and businesses are doing with regard to proof of vaccination. [Microsoft is doing this for its employees](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/microsoft/microsoft-requires-vaccination-pushes-back-office-opening-date-to-october/?utm_source=marketingcloud&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=BNA_080321163440+Microsoft+will+require+COVID+vaccination_8_3_2021&utm_term=Registered%20User), could they help UW? Could Bill Lyne report what’s happening at other universities? AAUP national?

**Demands:**

1. Actual proof of vaccination before people are allowed in classrooms with only exceptions for medical reasons.
2. Clear, centralized and uniform mechanism for faculty pathway to decide they will teach remotely
3. Classroom environments need to include social distancing, UW supplied masks, air quality treatments
4. Faculty not expected to teach two ways (remote and in person) simultaneously unless class was designed for that or unless extra resources are mad available

**Appendices**

On Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 6:06 PM Ana Mari Cauce <[cauce@uw.edu](mailto:cauce@uw.edu)> wrote:

Dear AAUP and Faculty Senate Colleagues,

Over these last few weeks, in large part thanks to the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines, many of us have experienced the joys of spending in-person time with family and friends, often for the first time in over a year. We are spending more time in our offices or labs, having on-campus meetings with colleagues or students, and looking forward to the time when campus is once again vibrant and full of life. Surveys of students across the country clearly indicate that most strongly desire to return to campus, and the need for such a return is especially clear to the many who have suffered – often deeply inequitably – from the last year’s isolation.

We are also well aware that there is understandably growing anxiety about the direction of the pandemic, as case rates in our region have reversed their earlier declines and more contagious variants are circulating. Administrative and Faculty Senate leadership are tracking developments closely and in concert as we have throughout this crisis, guided by some of the world’s top experts in virology and epidemiology, who are members of our faculty, as we plan together for a return to largely in-person work and in-person teaching this fall.

We remain quite positive that a return to a largely in-person environment will be possible this autumn. Vaccination rates in our region are amongst the highest in the nation and we have every reason to believe they will be even higher within our campus communities; among our student-athletes who have started practice, for example, the vaccination rate is over 90%. And while no vaccine is completely effective, evidence clearly supports that those who are fully vaccinated continue to have strong protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant, with extremely high protection against serious illness or hospitalization even in rare breakthrough cases. Vaccination remains our strongest weapon against the novel coronavirus, and we have instituted a vaccine mandate that now covers our entire community, including students and personnel – and unlike other vaccines, we are requiring it of both matriculated and non-matriculated students.

Our policy for tracking those COVID-19 vaccinations within our community is in line with other vaccination policies, but these rules vary by vaccine, based on expert advice, and take into account the specifics of each vaccine and how they were administered. COVID-19 vaccines, for example, do not have full FDA approval, and unlike MMR vaccines where one shot, or round of shots, generally offers lifetime protection, mRNA vaccines will likely require boosters, so that verification will need to be ongoing. In addition, most individuals are not receiving their vaccines from their primary care providers, but at vaccination clinics, so that truly independent and fully reliable verification of vaccination status by health care professionals is not available to us at this time.

For COVID-19 vaccinations, students, faculty and staff are required to complete an “attestation plus” form in which they not only assert that they are fully vaccinated, but also report the type of vaccine they received and the dates on which they received doses. This offers us the same possibility of verification against a state or national/international database as does a copy of a vaccine card, if and when such a database becomes available for this purpose. We have made it clear to all our students that if at any point we find out that they have not been honest in their attestation that they are subject to disciplinary action. Faculty and staff are also subject to disciplinary action if they share false information.

The health, safety and well-being of our entire community remains, as it has always been, our North Star in decision-making as it pertains to return to work and school. We fully understand the anxiety and fear that can accompany the thought of returning to campus given the uncertain and unpredictable nature of the progress of this pandemic. We want all members of our community – students, staff, faculty, academic personnel and all who call the UW home – to know that we are monitoring conditions on an almost daily basis as we plan for the fall, and are ready to adapt and evolve our strategies as needed. At the moment we are actively preparing for a safe in-person start in the fall – addressing concerns with ventilation systems, developing data tracking systems, and collecting the expert advice and information we need to make final decisions about testing protocols, masking policies and community support mechanisms. As that information and advice evolves in the coming days and weeks, we in Administrative and Faculty Senate leadership will continue to work collaboratively and determinedly to navigate this tumultuous landscape, and plan to communicate our full set of COVID-19 related policies in a general announcement no later than late August, a full month before classes start.

Thank you for your care and support for each other and for our entire community as this continues to unfold. We are all in this together and together we are stronger.

Sincerely,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ana Mari Cauce  President  Professor of Psychology | Chris Laws  Faculty Senate Chair  Teaching Professor of Astronomy |

Dear President Cauce and Faculty Senate Chair Laws,

Our thanks for this reply to our letter. With all due respect, it appears to us that your reply devotes considerable space to addressing concerns we did not raise – and leaves largely unanswered the many concerns we did. The faculty do not need to be persuaded about the value and, indeed, the urgency of returning to campus this fall and resuming largely in-person instruction. The point of our original letter to you was to ask for the conditions that would ensure a ***safe and supported return*** to campus***, not*** to advocate for postponing the return. Indeed, one of our primary concerns with the current plan of vaccine attestations, undocumented exemptions, and optional masking is that it substantially raises the chances of large-scale outbreaks that might require us, once again, to pivot to remote in the middle of the term. Our concern is precisely to avoid that scenario, which would be devastating for students and faculty both.

**The circumstance that vaccinations cannot yet be checked against a national database does not alter the fact that submission of proof sets a higher bar than mere attestation.**  Quite simply, falsifying a vaccination card requires a notably larger tolerance for risk than submitting a false attestation. **If we are putting in a place a vaccine requirement, why not put in place the most robust requirement we can? This is certainly what our peers (University of California; University of Oregon – and many more) have done*.*** Why are we *not* doing so?

Your reply also does not address **why faculty, students, and staff claiming medical, religious, and “philosophical” exemptions for the Covid-19 vaccine are not required to provide documentation**. **If one can claim and receive an exemption simply by clicking on a box, as is currently the case, than there is, in effect, no real vaccination requirement in place.** According to the UW website, students claiming exemption from other required vaccinations must submit documentation that is assessed by a “trained healthcare professional.” Why is there no such standard for Covid-19 exemptions *in the midst of a pandemic*?

Other issues raised in our letter are likewise not addressed in this reply, including concerns about faculty accommodations and expectations for multi-modal teaching. As we have already laid these out, we will not belabor them again here.

Instead, the burden of your reply, is simply to reassure us that UW leadership is tracking shifting conditions, consulting with all the relevant experts and will notify the faculty in a timely manner of policy decisions regarding our return to campus*.* It seems to us, however, that in a university, **the experts are the faculty. Hence our continuing concern over the virtual absence of faculty on the back-to-work and back-to-school task forces. Why are there no faculty from Public Health serving on those bodies? Why no faculty from IMHE? Why is there only a single representative from UW Medicine?** **There is room on both task forces for a representative from UW Advancement, as well as UW Finance and University Marketing and Communications, but no room, it would seem, for more than a single Faculty Senate representative, to speak from the perspective of those of us actually headed back to the classroom in September.**

As an instructive comparison, at UCLA, The Covid Response and Recovery Task Force is co-chaired by the Administrative Vice Chancellor and the 2019-2020 Chair of the Faculty Senate (a Professor of History). In addition to faculty and administrators, among them a Professor of Epidemiology, this taskforce also includes a representative of the Staff Assembly and the Presidents of both the Graduate and Undergraduate student associations). At UC Berkeley, the Recovery Management Team consists of a series of subgroups: the Public Health and Testing Advisory Committee is chaired by a Professor of Biostatistics and staffed by infectious disease experts, public health epidemiologists, and physicians. **At both institutions, it is precisely through the mechanisms of shared governance that faculty expertise is activated.** Our call for a joint AAUP-Faculty Senate Task Force was to create a mechanism (albeit belatedly) for a comparable level of faculty input in decision-making here at UW. It is disappointing to see this call dismissed out of hand.

Respectfully, the UW-AAUP Executive Board

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