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December 10, 2008

Mary Croughan
Chair of the Academic Council
University of California Academic Senate

In Re: Required Sexual Harassment Training for Faculty

Dear Mary,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and opine upon the letter from Interim Provost Robert Grey (October 20, 2008, "Required Sexual Harassment Training for Faculty"). Due to the prompt turn-around time, I was unable to distribute it to the various committees of the UCLA Senate Division, as is our custom. However, the Executive Board was able to review the document. This letter encapsulates the Board's view; the Board is authorized to speak for the Division on such matters.

The Board recognizes that sexual harassment is a serious problem in the University of California and applauds the administration's goal of eliminating it from our campuses. The Board raised a serious question, however, with regard to the severity of actions for noncompliance with the training as opposed to the severity of sanctions for instances of actual sexual harassment. The Board would like for me to use this opportunity to express its strong view that a systemic review of sanctions of perpetrators of sexual harassment be conducted and made available to the faculty. It appears that the proposed sanctions for training noncompliance are greater than the sanctions that are imposed, in practice, on those who were found to have actually committed harassment. If this is indeed the case, the promulgation of these proposed sanctions for noncompliance with training would lead to a heightened sense of cynicism and disrespect among faculty.

The Board strongly recommends that only two of the actions proposed by Interim Provost Grey be considered as options by the administration. The first is the removal of all supervisory responsibilities (with amended language to include staff and students). It would be a perverse outcome if a faculty member who is considered unqualified to have RAs and TAs was allowed to have responsibilities over staff and students. The second is reporting the names of non-compliant faculty to the Chancellors, EVCs, Deans, and the Regents. The remaining actions are not germane to the problem of sexual harassment, and should therefore be removed from consideration.

Finally, the Board stressed its dismay at the inadequacy of the online training. The online training may well be the easiest way to comply with public policy, but it surely is not the most effective means of curtailing instances of sexual harassment. Although most concur that some helpful information can be gleaned from the training, all agree that a two hour training that one successfully completes regardless of the correctness of responses is an affront to an educational institution such as UC. Moreover, there are highly competent campus-based trainings (UCLA's sexual harassment officer offers one) that are well received. The Board would like the UC to consider making podcasts of those trainings available, and to allow viewing them to count toward the training requirement. Any such mandatory training should not be required every two years, but every five.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Goldstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michael Goldstein
UCLA Academic Senate Chair

Cc: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Systemwide Senate Executive Director
Jaime R. Balboa, UCLA Academic Senate CAO