



May 31, 2021

Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility Annual Report 2019-2020

CAFR Responsibilities

The Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (CAFR) has the general responsibility under University Rule 3335-5-48.9, section (B) to:

- (1) Study all conditions which may affect the academic freedom or responsibility of the faculty of the university, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) the review of proposed changes in Chapter 3335-6 of the Administrative Code Rules of the University Faculty Concerning Faculty Appointment, Reappointments, Promotion and Tenure; and
 - (b) such changes in the Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Volume 3 Promotion and Tenure as may impinge upon academic freedom, responsibility, or tenure. If the committee finds that any such condition or proposed change adversely affects academic freedom, responsibility, or tenure, it shall report that finding promptly to the senate for its review.
- (2) Hear and investigate complaints by individual faculty members concerning alleged infringements upon academic freedom or responsibility in the university; report findings and recommendations to the parties involved with the hope of mediating a dispute and report to the senate if further action by the senate is appropriate.
- (3) Hear and investigate complaints by individual faculty members concerning alleged improper evaluation under the procedures of rule 3335-5-05 of the Administrative Code. An additional CAFR responsibility by university policy is that a member of CAFR sit on Committees of Initial Inquiry investigating allegations of research misconduct in order to determine whether or not the allegation has substance. CAFR members are currently fulfilling that responsibility.

Policy Review

Revisions to Rule 3335-5-04. The Faculty Council Ad Hoc Committee on the 04 Rule released a report on proposed revisions to faculty rule 3335-5-04. In the Fall of 2021, CAFR provided questions for the revision of the report to the committee chaired by Jared Garder. The following questions were raised by the CAFR committee.

1. We understand that the 04 process covers administrators in their roles as faculty members, but what processes/policies/rules are in place for administrators in their roles as administrators?
2. It was noted that the issue of violation of multiple areas of misconduct is not addressed. For example, sexual misconduct and research misconduct happening simultaneously. Would each committee review the incident/complaint individually and then it would filter up through one single review process as outlined?



3. With regard to professional schools (e.g., Medical School) and interactions with patients, how (or would) the 04 process be different? Persons associated with the Medical School often have multiple roles (teaching, research, and practice).

Complaint of Improper Resignation/infringement on Academic Freedom

The CAFR committee received a complaint from an Associate Professor with unique circumstances related to mental health and the response (or lack of response) by relevant administrators. In this case, an email was sent by a tenured associate professor to a Dept. Chairperson. The note was very brief and contained profanity. Based on the assessment of the committee and relevant experts, it indicated duress on the part of faculty member. Without further communication with the faculty member, the note was considered a resignation by the Dept. Chairperson. The CAFR committee deliberated extensively on this case and also solicited advice from senior university administrators and experts. Administrators directly involved in the case (the Dept. Chair and Dean) declined the invitation of the CAFR committee to mediate the dispute. Based on the information available to the committee, CAFR recommended that the faculty member be reinstated to their previously tenured position. Per the rules, CAFR then submitted its final report to the relevant parties and to the University Senate. This is a unique and complex case that raised many issues the CAFR committee feels need to be addressed by the University Senate and the University Administration. Specifically: 1. Exactly what constitutes a resignation from the University? 2. To whom is the CAFR report submitted for further action? The rules simply state “the senate.” The CAFR committee assumed that rule referred to the entire body of the University Senate.

Complaints of Improper Evaluation/Assessment/Infringement on Academic Freedom

There are three additional recent cases pending action by the CAFR committee. These will be addressed during the summer of 2021. Two of the cases involve initial concerns raised by students and administrators that appeared to be cleared and resolved, only to re-emerge in different forms under different rules by different parties. The CAFR committee members have expressed concern about the escalation of the cases and the processes followed in the research and evaluation of the cases.

A very recent case submitted to CAFR deals with a negative tenure decision for a faculty member who was hired as an interdisciplinary scholar but who appears to have been evaluated in only one discipline.

More details are being collected in the recent active cases noted above and recommendations should be available by mid-summer.



CAFR Membership 2020-2021

Member	College	Term Ends
Curtis Haugtvedt, PhD, Chair	Business	2022
Kevin Cullen, Colonel, USAF	ROTC	2022
Esther Chipps, PhD	Nursing	2023
Suzanne Haring, PhD	Education and Human Ecology	2022
Harold Fisk, PhD.	Molecular Genetics	2022
Sarah Hayford, PhD	Arts and Sciences	2022
Yvonne Efebera, MD	Medicine	2023
Laine Rumreich	CGS	2021

As of this report, additions and replacements on committee have not been formally named. Dr. Efebera left OSU in April, 2021. She was replaced by Dr. Beth Christian. Dr. Haugtvedt will (tentatively) continue to serve as Chair for 2021-2022.