



June 15, 2022

Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility Annual Report 2021-2022

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

A complaint to CAFR in the Spring of 2021 (“resignation case”) was the focus of a great deal of attention, time (and frustration), for CAFR during the 2021-2022 academic year. Extended discussions with faculty leadership focused on appropriate actions to be followed upon the completion of the CAFR investigation and report recommendation that the faculty member be reinstated. The Faculty Hearing Committee came to the same conclusion. As of the time of this report, it is our understanding that the faculty member has not been reinstated. In all, the processes surrounding this case have challenged our understanding of shared governance at The Ohio State University. Policies and decisions surrounding the issues in this case should be given a great deal of attention in the coming year.



Complaints

At the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, CAFR received a formal complaint of improper evaluation in the tenure process from a junior faculty member hired as an interdisciplinary scholar. CAFR agreed that the review process (and outside review letters) should have reflected the interdisciplinary nature of the position. The faculty member was granted a 7th year review. We were happy to learn that the faculty received promotion and tenure in the Spring of 2022.

In the course of the 2021-2022 academic year, there were additional conversations with CAFR by other faculty members who were hired as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholars but no formal complaints were filed.

Recommendations

As The Ohio State University aspires to be truly interdisciplinary, there will need to be changes in expectations and evaluation processes to reflect the differences in career paths in the future as compared to past decades. It is the hope of CAFR that faculty and the administration understand and appreciate the unique nature and challenges of interdisciplinary scholarship and contributions.

There are many challenges to academic freedom and the pursuit of high-quality research, teaching, and service. We sincerely hope that The Ohio State University will serve as a role model for other institutions in the advocacy and protection of academic freedom in all areas of research, teaching, and service.

CAFR Membership 2021-2022

Member	College	Term Ends
Curtis P. Haugtvedt PhD, Chair	Business	2022
Esther Chipps, Ph.D.	Nursing	2023
Harold Fisk, Ph.D.	Molecular Genetics	2023
Suzanne Haring, PhD	Education and Human Ecology	2022
Sarah Hayford, PhD	Arts and Sciences	2022
Amy Connolly, Ph.D.	Physics	2024
Lane Rumreich, M.S.	CGS	2022
Mark Mccullough, Ph.D.	ROTC	2022

Dr. Connolly serve as the 2022-2023 Chair of CAFR.