

University Relations Committee
Monday, February 1, 2021
Virtual Teams Meeting

Committee Members Present: Ann Raddant, Tom Luljak, Kevin O'Connor, Shana Ponelis (**Chair**), Angela Kowalski, Christine Roberson, Ginny Stoffel, Rebecca Neumann, Elana Levine, Glendalys Gonzalez, Dev Misra

Regrets: Julianna Alitto Kwapil, Michelle Putz, Jie Chen, Gary Williams

Guests Present: Michelle Johnson, Joan Prince, Joely Urdan

Minutes Recorder: Laura Bandemer-Purifoy

Minutes

- 1) Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m.
- 2) Minutes from November 4, 2020 meeting approved unanimously.
- 3) Freedom of Speech and Censorship (Joan Prince, Joely Urdan)

Guest *Joely Urdan, UWM Chief Legal Counsel*, spoke about the law and how it relates to freedom of speech and how it affects UWM faculty and staff:

- The audience needs to be clear on whether you are speaking as representative of UWM or not, that is, public or private speech.
- Private speech, unrelated to UWM: You can cite that you work at UWM, but you must make it clear to the reader that you are not writing in the capacity of a UWM employee.
- Directly related to your position at UWM in that you are an “expert” in a particular area. It is suggested that you reach out to University Relations & Communications to determine if you can speak as a UWM representative.
- Private speech related to UWM that affects your area of expertise. If political or controversial check with University Relations & Communications before speaking to reporters.
- Purely private speech is not regulated.
- Consider if what you said/wrote shows up on the front page of the Journal Sentinel do you want to be identified with it? Be thoughtful and aware.
- Where we have created a public forum, we get objections from both sides, regardless of the speaker. The first amendment does not allow us to choose, and the message is that UWM does not necessarily endorse the speaker.

Guest Vice Chancellor Joan Prince spoke about freedom of speech, giving a UWM historical point of view. She spoke about the symposium panel as a teaching and learning moment (<https://uwm.edu/freedom-expression/>). She indicated that UWM should be “Switzerland,” that is, neutral, and should be open to discussion and cross discussion.

The initial task force has now broken down into committees, including the Care, Respect and Expression Implementation Group which reports to the Chancellor with a goal of enhancing discourse that is not offensive. A website is in the process of being built. Tom Luljak, Joan Prince, and Kelly Haag are sponsors.

Guest Michelle Johnson spoke about building a process to quickly escalate responses, with a goal of getting a response out within four hours of an incident. She indicated that it will be a collaborative process with thoughtful and consistent messages.

4) Next meeting: Monday, April 19, 2021 3:00-4:00 – Budget Update

5) Meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m.