



## Approved Minutes, E-Board & Rep Council May 12, 2021—Zoom virtual meeting

- I. Quorum—Call to Order, 3:03 pm
- II. Agenda: On motions duly made and carried (Pashaie/Peterson), the agenda was approved with one amendment.
- III. Minutes: On motions duly made and carried (Pashaie/Badal), draft minutes were approved.
- IV. Introduction of Representatives: Markus Burger (FC, Fine Arts), Liz Putman (CC, Health Science/Kinesiology), and Cindy Zarsky (FC, Math/Computer Science).
- V. Presentation by the FC Sustainability Committee, given by Kristen Shedd and Josh Ashenmiller. A preliminary agreement of interest was approved.
- VI. President's Committee Appointments: On motions duly made and carried (Peterson/Badal), the following appointments were approved with a block vote:
  - A. Negotiating team
    - Mohammad Abdel Haq, Lead negotiator
    - Nicole Ledesma
    - Jeremy Peters
    - Liz Putman
    - Steven Estrada
  - B. Elections
    - Jane Walker, Chair
    - Katie King
    - Nick Armand
  - C. Insurance & Benefits Committee (IBC)
    - Fola Odebunmi
    - Jen Oo
    - Jeremy Peters
    - Katie King
    - Linda Borla (as alternate)
  - D. Racial Justice & Equity Committee (RJEC): Fola Odebunmi, Chair
  - E. Membership Committee: Jen Oo, Chair
  - F. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Fola Odebunmi, Director
  - G. Parliamentarian: Archie Delshad
  - H. Communications: Brandy Young, Chair
  - I. PAC: Gloria Badal, Chair



- VII. Statement on Academic Freedom: Josh House (CC, Comm Studies) read a statement in support of academic freedom and of the part-time instructor who was recently removed as the instructor of record by Cypress College in response to a viral video incident. On motions duly made and carried (Pashaie/Estrada), supporting the “Statement on Academic Freedom” read by Professor House and presenting it through UF outlets was approved. The statement is attached to the end of this document.
- VIII. Treasurer’s Report: On motions duly made and carried (Peters/Dahi), the proposed UF budget for 2021-2022 was approved. Per CTA, UF does not post its budgets online, but current members may request a copy of the budget if they wish.
- IX. Negotiations Report: Mohammad Abdel Haq, Robin Devitt:
- A. MOU
1. Reimbursement of ongoing costs for faculty: The district doesn’t seem to understand why this is necessary for faculty.
  2. 75<sup>th</sup> percentile workgroup: We are very much behind the neighboring districts. One last meeting for the semester with the district before releasing the findings.
  3. Lab/lecture parity group: There seems to be general consensus that this needs to happen since neighboring districts do so.

Adjournment (Delshad/King), 4:50pm

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## Statement on Academic Freedom

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My name is Josh House, and I am a full-time faculty member in the Communication Studies department at Cypress College. I have taken over classes for the professor who was removed following the viral video incident. I would like to share with folks the understanding of these circumstances I have gained since then. I have gained this understanding by talking to the other students in the class in question, by watching the full video of class from that day, and by evaluating other course materials presented to the students in that class. I believe this is an issue of academic freedom that affects us all, and that more action is required to protect our colleague.

First, there is ample evidence that the seemingly contentious back-and-forth in the video was actually a planned part of an assignment designed to give the students the skills to deal with combative or time-monopolizing questioners. The instructor was role-playing a part in order to teach students difficult but valuable skills. This was first brought to my attention by the other students in the class, almost as soon as our first session together started. They were able to articulate several strategies they had learned in class to deal with this situation and highlighted that the student in question had failed to use any of these techniques. They also claimed, and materials from previous assignments confirm, that they had been formally quizzed on this material, and that they had been given a chance to practice in a previous speech. Watching the whole video, it is clear that everyone received the same treatment, regardless of their political leanings. This student was not singled out. Other students were also cut short to make sure there was time for everyone to speak, something she explained to each student, including the one in question. Also, at the end of class that student was given time to say anything that he felt he hadn't been allowed to say. He declined and thanked the instructor for remembering to give him his time as she said she would. If anything, he got more of an opportunity to speak than other students.

The way this professor taught this lesson to her students might not be the way that you would choose to teach it, but that is the very heart of academic freedom. She, as an expert in the field, designed a lesson to teach her students skills as she saw fit, in a way that doesn't violate any codes of conduct and that was well understood by the students in her class. Those students, the people with the most context in this situation, immediately supported her. In a statement today the President said "... Cypress College has supported and will continue to support the academic freedoms we know are essential for a free exchange of ideas in the classroom. Equally important is our mission to serve our students in a safe learning environment. These things converged in a dramatic way this week ..." but with all due respect to the President, it appears that those things did not converge in a dramatic way. They converged in a very average way, where a safe learning environment led to the exercise of academic freedom and a free exchange of ideas.

Many of her Comm studies colleagues, including myself, have expressed our support for this professor. So, I am asking that you join us in support of her and that the college and district take concrete actions to protect our academic freedom. Supporting academic freedom generally by supporting this professor specifically means telling the truth about what happened. After all, so far, the media and the public just have the word of one student and the statements from the college to get information from, so what we say or don't say publicly makes all the difference. Finally, I will close by asking you to consider the ramifications of not offering our support in this moment. This could happen to anyone. This is about a 3-minute video, stripped of context and distributed to bad faith "news" sources that didn't even bother doing cursory research into the situation before spreading the video far and wide. If we don't come to the defense of this professor, who will? Her life is being ruined because of this. She is receiving non-stop harassment and threats and lives in constant fear for herself and her family. The campus said that after reviewing all of the details they would address the situation fully. I sincerely hope that they do, so that we can come together as a college. But coming together doesn't mean compromising with the people making threats against the college, it means respectfully searching for and *speaking* the truth.