Understandably, the first meeting of the AF&E Committee was dedicated to reviewing the two charges submitted by Senate Chair Rhonda Montgomery and devising a plan to fulfill those charges.

We agreed to form two subcommittees, each handling one of the charges and related issues. David Fott, Ph.D., is chairing the subcommittee regarding internal bylaws (charge 1) and I am chairing the subcommittee reviewing contemporary standards of academic freedom (charge 2). Both subcommittees have met individually, have been in email contact as well, and are proceeding apace. The subcommittees will prepare reports to be reviewed by the Committee as a whole and then Committee recommendations will be forwarded to the Senate via the Senate Executive Committee, likely early Spring 2016 semester.

Specifically, Dr. Fott's subcommittee is drafting internal bylaws to handle complaints, inquiries and other matters that occasionally are brought before the AF&E Committee for review. As an adjunct to that assignment, the full Committee discussed that often its business is meager. In the spirit of efficiency and effectiveness, Dr. Fott's subcommittee is inquiring whether it would be wise to leave the present Committee definition in the Senate Bylaws intact, or to amend the overall definition of the Committee, or to fold the Committee into another Senate committee, or to dissolve the Committee entirely.

My subcommittee has identified several sub-issues regarding whether contemporary understandings of "academic freedom" have supplanted or amended older ones and, if so, should the newer viewpoints prevail at UNLV. Some of the subcommittee members are reviewing traditional AAUP and similar organizations’ explications of academic freedom with an eye to whether they have changed in recent years.

I am culling arguments regarding the definition and functions of universities within a system of higher education. Others are specifically researching whether almost unprecedented advances in communications and technology have affected the meaning and impact of academic freedom. We are considering as well whether concerns of "inclusiveness," diversity and "welcoming community" have and should affect extant understanding of academic freedom. Yet another topic is academic freedom as protecting administrators and whether such is inconsistent with teachers' academic freedom.

A few faculty members from outside the Committee have submitted specific questions that are germane to our inquiry.

As noted, we plan to review the two subcommittees' work, come to resolutions as one Committee and report to the Senate in early or mid-Spring, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Prof. Peter B. Bayer, Chair, Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee