



MEMORANDUM

TO: Renata Moon

FROM: Jeff Haney, Chair, Department of Medical Education and Clinical Sciences
James R. Record, Interim Dean, Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine

DATE: March 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Your Public Engagement on Dec. 7th, 2022

Dr. Moon, It was brought to our attention that you participated in an event entitled: "Covid-19 Vaccines: What They Are, How They Work, and Possible Causes of Injuries". The event was described using the following phrases, "Senator Ron Johnson Hosts Expert Forum on Covid Vaccines" and "World-renowned experts in Public Health, Science, Medicine, Law, and Journalism, in a public forum". Based on review, the event took place in the U.S. Senate's Hart Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. at 12:00 pm EST on Dec. 7th, 2022. Considering this information and review of the recording of the session, there are several concerns related to your responsibilities as a faculty member:

- Failure to request and report absence – In review of our systems, you did not request or report the absences for the days you were scheduled for teaching responsibilities. Further, in this circumstance, your activity impacted a cohort of learners and workload for faculty and staff that had to account for your absence, thereby possibly violation Sec. II.B.2 of the Faculty Manual.
- Possible inappropriate representation of Faculty Role and College/University: The Faculty Manual protects our academic freedoms and reminds us of our responsibilities when identifying as faculty - "When they (faculty) speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and *should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.*" (Faculty Manual, Section IIA) – In your participation, it was not clear that you were not speaking on behalf of the institution, which may implicate Sec. IIA of the Faculty Manual.
- Possible ethics policy breach – "The Ethics in Public Service Law, RCW 42.52, establishes a single code of ethics applicable to all state officers and state employees. Washington State University faculty members are state employees and are subject to the ethics law and rules, as well as Washington State University ethics policies." (Faculty Manual, IID). RCW 42.52.020 dictates that state employees cannot engage in activities that are incompatible with public duties. By attending the forum without taking proper leave, you may have violated this statute. This matter will be forwarded to the WSU Office of Internal Audit for additional review.

- Physician Professionalism – the Washington Medical Commission (WMC) supports the position taken by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) regarding COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, “Spreading inaccurate COVID-19 vaccine information contradicts that responsibility, threatens to further erode public trust in the medical profession and puts all patients at risk”. The WMC has asked the public and practitioners to report possible spread of misinformation. There are components of your presentation that could be interpreted as a possible spread, as such we are ethically obligated to make a report to the WMC to investigate possible breach of this expectation.
- Expectations of Medical Education – There were components of the roundtable that were inconsistent with expectations of the evidence based medical education expected in developing a future generation of physicians. The expressed views will require us to review your teaching assignments in the frame of the education our students.

We will be working with you, the appropriate leaders in the University system, and possibly the Washington State Executive Ethics Board to determine appropriate next steps for each item listed.

cc: Laura Hill, Senior Vice Provost