

August 7, 2020

Professor Sharmila Majumdar, PhD  
Chair, UCSF Academic Senate

RE: Scribes

Dear Chair Majumdar,

The Committee on Clinical Affairs writes to express concern about the decision to shift UCSF Health's scribe workforce to a fully remote workforce. Scribes are a valuable tool for clinicians. They reduce the administrative burden on clinicians, allow clinicians to focus more on personal interaction with patients, and improve clinician well-being. Additionally, clinicians develop close working relationships with the scribes they train and use. UCSF Health's decision to terminate its contract with Scribe America and replace the in-person scribes that clinicians have trained diminishes shared governance between UCSF Health and the UCSF campus.

The Committee on Clinical Affairs acknowledges that the decision to renew, modify, or terminate a contract between UCSF Health and a health care service provider rests with the administration and not with the Academic Senate. However, the Senate is meant to play an active advisory role in all matters of governance at the University.

The UCSF Health administration could have sought the advice of the Academic Senate before terminating UCSF Health's contract with Scribe America. The Clinical Affairs Committee would have readily provided advice. That advice may not have changed the UCSF Health administration's decision, but raising concerns, having them heard, and giving them due consideration leads to better decisions and better governance. The Clinical Affairs Committee would like to be a stronger partner with the operations team at UCSF Health and would like to dispel the perception that faculty are a hurdle to decision-making. The faculty are an important resource, not a barrier.

The Committee on Clinical Affairs asks that you invite the administration to consult with the Senate on any issue related to clinical affairs and refer those matters to this Committee for comment. The Committee can and will respond quickly any requests from the Division and stands ready to strengthen the partnership between the Senate and administration going forward.

With respect to the scribe issue, the Clinical Affairs Committee understands that concerned faculty who were directly impacted by the decision organized and wrote a letter to UCSF Health leadership. The Clinical Affairs Committee commends those faculty members and the UCSF Health administration for being receptive to their concerns and engaging in a dialogue. The Clinical Affairs Committee hopes that this experience will lead to more dialogue with faculty before decisions are made. The committee is ready to be a part of that dialogue.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Gerri Collins-Bride*

Geraldine Collins-Bride, RN, MS, ANP-C, FAAN  
Chair, Clinical Affairs Committee  
UCSF Academic Senate  
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