

University Faculty Senate Minutes

August 25, 2025

Online Zoom meeting

Please note that a complete audio recording of this senate meeting is available at [UNI Scholarworks](#). The timestamps noted throughout these minutes refer to that recording.

Faculty Senate meetings are open, and any faculty member may attend. If you wish to attend, email a member of Senate leadership for the Zoom link.

The summary below was generated using Microsoft Copilot and reviewed for accuracy.

Senators in attendance:

Alexa Clements (Chair), Timothy Dooley (Vice-Chair), Kenneth Elgersma (Faculty Chair, Past Senate Chair), Shelley Price-Williams (Parliamentarian), Ana Kogl, Andrea Johnson, Andrew Berns, Barbara Cutter, Cathi Bowler, Erika Bass, Eva Chen, Evette Edmister, Hilal Ergül, Jeff Morgan, John Preston, Julie Kang, Karen Breitbach, Mark Hecimovic, Mason Kuhn, Melanie Hill, Nick Bailey, Rebecca Diskinson, Reza Lahroodi, Ronnie Chen, Scott Giese, Syed Kirmani, Tom Hall

(Fifty percent quorum met, with 26/31 voting senators present. The Faculty Chair is non-voting, as provided in the Faculty Constitution, and the Senate Chair votes only in case of a tie.)

Call to Order at 3:30 PM

Call for Press Identification

None Present

Introduction of Guests

Regular Guests: Mark Nook, José Herrera, Alli Webster, Chris Martin,

Other Guests: Amy Nielsen, Brenda Bass, Colleen Mullholand, Fernando Calderon, Julianne Gassman, Deirdre Heistad, Scott Peters

Courtesy Announcements

Comments from President Nook

00:01:02 – Welcome & Acknowledgment

President Nook welcomed attendees to UNI's 150th year and thanked faculty for their commitment to shared governance.

00:01:46 – Cybersecurity Update

- Dual authentication was implemented campus-wide due to a phishing attempt.
- Rollout was accelerated and successful, with positive feedback on ease of use.

00:02:52 – Enrollment Outlook

- Preliminary data suggests enrollment will be slightly below last year (~100 students).

- Increases in freshman, transfer, and graduate student numbers.
- Decline due to expiration of grant-funded graduate certificate programs.
- FTE enrollment may remain stable or increase.

00:04:09 – Graduation Rates

- 3-year graduation rate: 13.5%
- 4-year graduation rate: 55.9%
- Significant improvement attributed to faculty and staff efforts.

00:05:30 – Strategic Planning

- Focus on 5- and 10-year planning beyond the "Our Tomorrow" campaign.
- Anticipated decline in state funding due to tax code changes.
- Need to diversify revenue streams beyond tuition and appropriations.

00:06:24 – Program Growth & Revenue Initiatives

- UNI at Iowa Community Colleges enrollment up 9% (546 students).
- Growth in nursing and health sciences programs.
- Exploring new markets, academic offerings, and public-private partnerships.

00:07:51 – Budget & Resource Planning

- Budget Advisory Committee will begin early review of revenue opportunities.
- Evaluation of fiscal resources, personnel needs, compensation, and benefits.
- Review of academic, student life, and athletic programs for growth potential.
- Facilities planning included as part of long-term strategy.
- Organizational structure for planning efforts still in development.

00:09:56 – Closing

President Nook invited questions and discussion as UNI begins its 150th year.

Comments from Provost Herrera

00:10:33 – Welcome & Acknowledgments

- Provost Herrera welcomed faculty back and expressed appreciation for their leadership and dedication.
- Special thanks extended to faculty leaders including Alexa Clements, Kenneth Elgersma, Tim Dooley, Chris Martin, and Fernando Calderon.

00:11:29 – Enrollment Update

- Echoed President Nook's comments on enrollment.
- UNI is still aiming to close a ~100-student gap from last year.
- Early indicators for 2026 show promise with increased applications.

- More concrete data expected by November.

00:12:16 – Policy Alignment & Compliance

- Internal discussions underway regarding new Board of Regents policies 310 and 320.
- Faculty leaders are being consulted to anticipate concerns in a complex political climate.
- Efforts are focused on ensuring institutional compliance while maintaining internal integrity.

00:13:06 – Governance & Communication

- Mention of a “WAR council” led by Dierdre Heistad, Stephanie Huffman, and Kristen Moser to help navigate policy changes.
- Ongoing meetings held over the summer to stay informed and proactive.
- DeeDee was invited to share additional insights.

00:13:40 – Welcome & Context

- Deirdre Heistad welcomed faculty and provided updates on the Workforce Alignment Review Council’s summer activities.
- The council continued meeting to prepare a report due October 15 for the November Board of Regents meeting.

00:14:10 – Review Scope & Objectives

- The Board of Regents is reviewing all academic programs (undergraduate, graduate, professional) for alignment with current and future workforce needs.
- The report will also identify low-enrollment programs and offer recommendations.

00:15:03 – Graduate ROI One-Pagers

- One-pagers have been developed to assess graduate return on investment (ROI).
- These include data on earnings, graduate degree attainment, job openings, salaries, and employment distribution.
- Final drafts will be shared with deans and departments in the coming weeks.

00:16:10 – Enrollment Data & Observations

- Fall 2024 census data is being used for the final report.
- UNI has many strong programs with high graduate success and ROI.
- Low-enrollment programs are defined as:
 - Undergraduate: fewer than 25 students
 - Graduate: fewer than 10 students

00:18:09 – Next Steps & Evaluation Criteria

- Future evaluation will consider additional criteria beyond ROI and enrollment, including:
 - Institutional service

- Grant generation
- Student credit hours
- Faculty-student ratios
- Job satisfaction and well-being

00:19:17 – Invitation for Engagement

- Associate Provost Heistad offered to return for future meetings or Q&A sessions to continue the conversation and keep faculty informed.

Comments from Faculty Chair Elgersma

00:19:34 – Transition & Introduction

- Chair Clements thanked Jose Herrera and Deirdre Heistad for their updates and invited Faculty Chair Kenneth Elgersma to speak.

00:19:59 – Welcome & Shared Governance

- Faculty Chair Elgersma welcomed new and returning senators.
- Emphasized the importance of shared governance, particularly faculty's primary responsibility over curriculum decisions.
- Noted the increasing relevance of this role amid national challenges to academic freedom.

00:21:18 – Curriculum Review & LeepFrog Training

- Acknowledged challenges in evaluating curricular proposals due to the LeepFrog system's complexity.
- Announced LeepFrog training session recommended by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee:
 - **Date:** Monday, September 8
 - **Time:** 3:30 PM
 - **Location:** Sabin 102
 - **Facilitator:** Rachelle Kidwell, Registrar's Office
- Encouraged attendance to improve understanding and participation in curriculum processes.

Comments from United Faculty President Martin

00:22:47 – LeepFrog Training Update

- Senate Chair Clements announced a change to the LeepFrog training format.
- The session will now be held via Zoom instead of in-person at Sabin Hall to increase accessibility.
- Invitations will be sent to senators later in the week.

00:23:47 – United Faculty Update

- UF President Christopher Martin reported on United Faculty's summer activities, primarily focused on responding to the proposed Board of Regents policy targeting DEI and critical race theory.
- Initial proposals included restrictions on 13 topics in classrooms.

00:24:33 – Coalition Building

- United Faculty helped form the **Iowa Higher Education Coalition**, which includes:
 - UNI United Faculty
 - Iowa State & University of Iowa AAUP chapters
 - COGS (graduate student union at UI)
 - Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
- The coalition advocates for academic freedom and public education in Iowa.

00:25:25 – Final Policy & Faculty Involvement

- The final Board of Regents policy encourages fair and careful treatment of controversial topics.
- United Faculty appreciates the Provost's invitation to help align UNI policies with the new guidelines.
- Faculty are encouraged to report any concerns or issues with policy implementation.

00:26:24 – Petition & Legislative Concerns

- A petition opposing the policy is available at ufaculty.uni.edu.
- The coalition remains vigilant about potential legislative actions in the spring that may revisit these issues.

Comments from NISG President Webster

00:27:17 – Introduction

- Senate Chair Clements welcomed NISG President Alli Webster to address the Senate.

00:27:28 – Student Government Remarks

- President Webster thanked the Senate and apologized for joining via phone due to work.
- Promoted two upcoming student events:
 - **Snow Cones at Sunset** – Thursday at 7 p.m. outside Maucker Union.
 - **Multicultural Fest** – September 3, 3–6 p.m., celebrating UNI's five major multicultural student organizations:
 - Black Student Union
 - African Union
 - Asian Student Union
 - Unidos
 - UNI Proud
- Emphasized the importance of supporting these groups, especially in light of recent DEI-related challenges.

00:28:34 – Closing

- Chair Clements thanked President Webster and opened the floor for questions.

Comments from Senate Chair Clements

00:28:42 – Welcome & Senate Updates

- Chair Clements welcomed returning and new senators, including alternates and those filling in for year-long absences.
- Noted successful establishment of Senate representation from new College of Education departments.

00:29:27 – Curriculum Emphasis

- Reinforced the importance of Faculty Senate's role in curriculum review.
- Curriculum packets will be presented in September, October, and possibly December.
- LeapFrog training is recommended for navigating curriculum systems.

00:30:32 – Shared Governance & Participation

- Encouraged senators to actively engage in shared governance and utilize opportunities to interact with administration and faculty leadership.
- Emphasized UNI's commitment to shared governance and the value of diverse faculty representation.

Minutes for Approval

00:32:09 – Approval of Previous Minutes

- Motion made to approve minutes from April 28, 2025.
- Motion by Senator Andrew Berns, seconded by Senator Shelly Price-Williams.
- Final vote: 21 yes, 2 abstentions, no objections. Motion passed.

Docketed Items

Consultations:

1651 [Consultation: Move of Philanthropy and Non-Profit M.A. program to Political Science Department](#)

00:34:15 – Agenda Item Introduction

- Chair Clements introduced the first docketed item: consultation on moving the Philanthropy and Nonprofit MA program to the Political Science department.
- Professor Scott Peters was unavailable but provided context via email; other decision-makers were present to discuss.

00:35:01 – Program Overview & Rationale

- Dr. Julianne Gassman, program coordinator, explained the rationale for the move:
 - Her expertise aligns with nonprofit leadership.
 - Political Science faculty already contribute to the program.
 - The move would create synergies and better alignment with public policy.
- Dean Brenda Bass added that both programs face enrollment and teaching capacity challenges, and the move could strengthen both.

00:38:00 – Faculty Questions & Discussion

- Chair Kenneth Elgersma asked about potential challenges.
 - Gassman responded optimistically, noting minimal disruption and potential for growth.
 - The program will remain connected to the undergraduate track and benefit from stronger faculty alignment.

00:39:29 – Enrollment Strategy

- Senator Timothy Dooley asked about strategies to improve enrollment.
 - Gassman noted that the program is currently taught entirely on faculty overload.
 - Housing the program in Political Science could increase visibility and leverage faculty networks.
 - The overlap between nonprofit and public policy career paths supports the move.
- Dean Bass agreed, citing expanded market reach and stronger recruitment potential.

00:41:31 – Closing

- Chair Clements invited any final questions or comments from the Senate.

00:41:41 – Acknowledgment & Next Steps

- Chair Clements thanked the presenters and acknowledged Scott Peters' contribution via email.
- She noted the consultation was timely and appreciated the effort to include it in the first meeting's agenda.

00:42:14 – Confirmation of Action

- Dean Bass confirmed that, with Senate input and no objections, the program move can proceed.
- The next step is submitting the formal request to the Board of Regents.

00:42:46 – Final Remarks

- Alexa Clements expressed support for the move and wished the team success.
- Julianne Gassman thanked the Senate.

Items for Senate to Receive:

1652 [End of Year Report: Nominating Committee](#)

00:43:27 – Motion to Receive Report

- Chair Clements introduced the end-of-year report from the nominating committee and requested a motion to receive it.
- Motion by Senator Moore, seconded by Senator Berns.

00:44:01 – Amendments to the Report

- Senator Karen Breitbach proposed amendments to include two newly appointed senators:
 - Senator Eva Chen (Department of Educational Foundations and Professional Experience)
 - Senator Mason Kuhn (Department of Elementary and Middle Level Education)
- Noted the complexity of transitioning to department-based representation and thanked Senator Chen for her efforts during the College of Education's reorganization.

00:45:18 – Motion to Amend

- Motion to amend the report made by Senator Price-Williams, seconded by Senator Moore.
- Chair Clements and Senator Breitbach acknowledged the extensive work involved in compiling the report, which includes Senate and university-wide committee memberships.

00:46:28 – Acknowledgments

- Senator Breitbach thanked Melissa Dobosh for her significant contributions to the committee's work.
- Chair Clements echoed the praise, highlighting Dr. Dobosh's leadership and organizational impact on Faculty Senate operations.

00:47:46 – Vote on Amended Report

- Chair Clements initiated the vote to accept the amended report.
- Final vote: 21 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.
- Motion passed.

Emeritus Requests:

1648 [Emeritus Request Francis Degnin](#)

00:48:40 – Introduction & Motion

- Chair Clements introduced the first of three emeritus requests, for Professor Francis Degnin.
- Motion to approve by Senator John Preston, seconded by Senator Ana Kogel.

00:49:25 – Reflections & Discussion

- Senator Preston shared personal reflections on Professor Degnin’s mentorship, generosity, and community involvement, including his work in ethics and connections with local hospitals.
- Senator Breitbach praised Degnin’s long-standing leadership in faculty governance and his role in strengthening faculty-administration relationships.
- Chair Elgersma highlighted Degnin’s impact on students and faculty leadership, noting his mentorship and support.
- Chair Clements added her appreciation, citing Degnin’s guidance in navigating university systems and his influence as a mentor and instructor. She shared student feedback describing his class as both demanding and deeply fulfilling.

00:53:42 – Vote

- Chair Clements initiated the vote to approve the emeritus request.
- Final vote: 23 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.
- Motion passed.

1649 [Emeritus Request Carolyn Hildebrandt](#)

00:54:16 – Introduction & Motion

- Chair Clements introduced the second emeritus request for Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt.
- Motion to approve by Senator Ana Kogel, seconded by Senator Andrew Berns.

00:54:59 – Reflections & Discussion

- Chair Elgersma praised Dr. Hildebrandt’s course on Psychology of Science and Pseudoscience, especially its study abroad component in London.
- Alexa highlighted Dr. Hildebrandt’s 31 years of service, her foundational role in the Regents Center for Early Developmental Education, and her leadership as college senate chair and department head.
- Student feedback emphasized her energy, creativity, and student-centered teaching.

00:56:42 – Vote

- Chair Clements initiated the vote to approve the emeritus request.
- Final vote: 23 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.
- Motion passed.

1650 [Emeritus Request Lisa Riedle](#)

00:57:14 – Introduction & Motion

- Chair Clements introduced the third emeritus request, for Dr. Lisa Riedle.

- Motion to approve by Senator Susan Moore, seconded by Senator Ana Kogel.

00:58:07 – Reflections & Discussion

- Senator Moore praised Dr. Riedle’s leadership in establishing the Applied Engineering Building, noting its excellence and her collaborative efforts.
- Chair Clements highlighted Dr. Riedle’s passion for STEM education, especially for women and girls.
 - Recalled her support for Girl Scouts and her role as a mentor and trailblazer in engineering and construction management.
 - Emphasized her mining background and advocacy for women in traditionally male-dominated fields.

01:00:34 – Vote

- Chair Clements initiated the vote to approve the emeritus request.
- Final vote: 24 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.
- Motion passed.

New Business

01:01:06 – Introduction of New Business

- Chair Clements introduced a motion to discharge the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, noting its inactivity and lack of current plans.
- Motion to open discussion by Senator Karen Breitbach, seconded by Senator Ana Kogel.

01:02:32 – Committee Review

- Vice Chair Timothy Dooley, a former committee member, shared that the group met and recommended:
 - LeepFrog training (already scheduled)
 - A searchable curriculum document (not implemented)
- Concluded that further meetings would likely not yield additional insights.

01:03:47 – Vote to Discharge Committee

- Chair Clements moved the vote to discharge the committee.
- Final vote: 23 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.
- Motion passed.

01:04:26 – Reflection on Committee Structure

- Senator Breitbach commended the Senate for critically evaluating committee relevance.
- Encouraged ongoing review of committee roles, similar to how the Board of Regents evaluates academic programs.

Adjournment

01:05:13 – Motion to Adjourn

- Chair Clements called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
- Motion by Senator John Preston, seconded by Senator Ergel.


01:05:31 – Adjournment

- Meeting officially adjourned.
- Chair Clements thanked attendees and acknowledged the beautiful first day of classes.

Minutes were prepared and submitted by Vice-Chair Timothy Dooley.

Summaries of comments were generated using Microsoft Copilot and reviewed for errors.

Appended Zoom Chat

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| 00:29:21 | Scott Peters: | Scott Peters, Department of Political Science |
| 00:29:40 | Deirdre Heistad: | Deedee Heistad, Provost's Office |
| 00:29:47 | Julianne Gassman: | Julianne Gassman - Community Engagement and Coordinator of the online MA program in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Development. |
| 00:55:22 | Alexa Clements: | ufaculty.uni.edu |
| 00:55:29 | Hilal Hilal Ergül: | Reacted to "ufaculty.uni.edu" with  |
| 01:02:46 | Timothy Dooley: | yes |