

University Faculty Senate Minutes

December 2, 2024, 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.

Meetings are open and any faculty member may attend.

If you wish to attend, email a member of Senate leadership for the Zoom link.

Senators in attendance:

Kenneth Elgersma (Chair), Alexa Clements (Vice-Chair), Melissa Dobosh (Faculty Chair, Past Senate Chair), Randall Harlow (Parliamentarian), Nick Bailey, Megan Balong, Erika Bass, Andy Berns, Cathi Bowler, Karen Breitbach, Rebecca Dickinson, Tim Dooley, Evette Edmister, Scott Giese, Melanie Hill, Rob Hitlan, Mark Hecimovich, Charles Holcombe, Wu-Ying Hsieh, Julie Kang, Syed Kirmani, Reza Lahroodi, Matthew Makarios, Dayna Miller, Susan Moore, John Preston, Shelley Price-Williams, Jimmy Reyes, Karla Steege Justice, Ali Tabei

(Fifty percent quorum met, with 28/31 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 [timestamp 00:00:00]

Call for Press Identification: *None Present*

Introduction of Guests:

Regular Guests: Mark Nook, Chris Martin, Lizbeth Montalvo (NISG President).

Other Guests: Deidre Heistad (Provost's Office), Nathan Taylor, Susan Hill (), Amy Nielsen (Provost's Office), Becky Hawbaker, Atul Mitra, Fernando Calderon (Vice President United Faculty), Theresa Westbrook, Joseph Ugrin, Kristin Moser, Oksana Grybovych Hafermann

Courtesy Announcements

Comments from President Nook [timestamp 00:00:53]

President Nook reflected on being thankful for working with students, faculty and staff at UNI. He commented on his experience traveling with the Women's Basketball team during the Thanksgiving break. He stated that information about strategic planning will be brought up at the end of the meeting as new business.

Comments from Faculty Chair Dobosh [timestamp 00:03:32]

Chair Dobosh updated the Senate on the Construction Management Placement Committee. She reported that many nominations were received and that the committee's final membership will be announced later this week. Membership will consist of faculty members, administration, advisory boards, and include a student representative and a staff member.

Comments from United Faculty President Martin [timestamp 00:04:52]

President Martin updated the Senate on a meeting that faculty leaders had with the Regents including Board Members President Sherry Bates and President Pro Tem Greta Rouse and Executive Director Mark Braun. He reported that it was a positive interaction.

Comments from NISG President Montalvo [timestamp 00:06:00]

President Montalvo updated the Senate on a winter clothing drive being organized by NISG. They are accepting donations until after winter break. This will be open to students, and leftover clothing will be donated to the International Office, which is also coordinating a winter clothing drive.

Comments from Senate Chair Elgersma [timestamp 00:07:03]

Senate Chair Elgersma commented that he hoped everyone had a good fall break and wished everyone well in the remaining hours of the semester.

Minutes for Approval [timestamp 00:07:25]

Minutes from October 28, 2024

Minutes amended to add Jimmy Reyes to the attendance record for the Faculty Senate meeting.

Motion to approve amended minutes

MOTION: Berns, Kirmani (21 yes, 0 no) *motion to approve corrected minutes passes*

Consultations:

1622 [Consultation: Faculty Handbook Committee](#) [timestamp 00:08:54]

Becky Hawbaker and Susan Hill updated the senate on activities of the Faculty Handbook Committee. Becky Hawbaker reminded the Senate that the committee is composed of 6 faculty and 6 administrators. She stated that the committee has made changes to improve transparency. The committee meeting minutes and agendas are now posted to the Faculty Handbook Committee's website. A working plan has also been posted to the website. During the fall semester, two major priorities were identified by the committee: 1) Evaluation timeline and streamlining the evaluation process and 2) Developing a survey to gather input to evaluate the handbook overall. This input to identify items to focus on in the future. Today's consultation covers the 1 priority. The website also contains a place where anyone on campus can submit a form to the committee about issues with the Faculty Handbook and proposed solutions. The committee has been separated into two subcommittees to address the two identified priorities. Dr. Hawbaker encouraged feedback and emphasized that this is an early consultation, and there is time to incorporate feedback.

Susan Hill reviewed the proposal. She stated that the Council of Academic Department Heads asked to only conduct one evaluation per year for probationary faculty. UNI currently does two, one in February and one in June. They also wanted a timeline that allowed heads to complete letters with enough time to assign the merit numbers assigned to faculty members. Currently, merit numbers are due in May, but letters are due in June. This means that heads may have to assign numbers before writing faculty evaluation letters. Dr. Hill stated that there are certain HR and Board of Regents deadlines that must be met. Renewable Term and Term Faculty evaluations were folded in with Probationary Faculty because they are also evaluated in the first two years. They created a system that every faculty member who receives merit receives one letter with merit scores per year, but these letters may be received at different times of the year. The evaluation calendar now aligns with a calendar year. Annual Goals and Reflection Reports would match the calendar year, with materials due in February of the following year. Although only one letter per year is required, a head could write more than one letter per year if needed. The evaluation timeline divides faculty into three categories: 1. Probationary, Term, Renewable Term, and Tenured faculty Action Cases. 2. Non

Action Cases: Tenured Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Post Tenure Review (summary). 3. First Year Probationary, Term, and Renewable Term faculty.

Dr. Hill shared the new proposed calendars for the three categories. The new calendar proposes that the goals meeting would happen in August to September for new faculty only. On October 15, for first year faculty only, PACs would review teaching and librarianship only. Submission of all additional materials would occur in February of the first year. For second year faculty and any action cases, materials from January 1- October 15 and their Annual Goals and Reflection would be due on October 15. There would be no October submission for any non action cases. PAC reports are due on December 15. From November- February heads will have goals meetings with the remaining faculty. Department head evaluation letters with merit scores would be due for probationary faculty cases on February 1. Remaining letters would be due for everyone except probationary faculty, who receive letters in February, would be due between May 10-15.

Discussion [timestamp 00:24:29]

Senator Harlow asked how category 1 individuals would account for the gap between the October 15 deadline and the end of the calendar year for the previous year. Dr. Hill responded that anything additional materials could be submitted by the end of the first week of classes during the spring semester. Senator Harlow followed up asking for clarification for the previous year. Dr. Hill responded that by the third year, this will probably no longer be an issue.

Senator Dooley asked what would happen for individuals who did have something exceptional that happened in research. Would they be able to submit it to the PAC? Dr. Hill responded that those materials would go in their February materials. In subsequent years, they would be able to include it in their PAC materials. This question has not been addressed by the committee, and Dr. Hill will bring it to the subcommittee's attention.

President Nook asked if the non teaching materials would still be considered in the February review. Dr. Hill responded that the PAC could talk about these materials in the next year's letter. She continued by stating the committee felt it was best for first year faculty to focus on teaching in their first weeks on campus. President Nook responded that he likes this plan because it is consistent with the high standards for teaching required for tenure at this institution. He stated that this plan is consistent with UNI's commitment to teaching.

Faculty Chair Dobosh commented that the subcommittee welcomes feedback. She is a member of this committee and encouraged feedback. She stated that the committee's membership includes Robin Dada, Theresa Westbrook and Chris Martin.

United Faculty President Chris Martin commented that he appreciated President Nook's support.

Senate Chair Elgersma stated that Amy Nielsen posted a link in the chat.

Amy Nielsen commented that the link provides an opportunity to provide feedback through a Google Form. She encouraged participation in the survey.

Items Requiring Senate Votes:

1624 [Curriculum Proposals: College of Education & Interdisciplinary AY2024-25](#)
[timestamp 00:33:27]

Motion to approve agenda item 1624

MOTION: Clements, Holcombe (25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain), motion passes

President Elgersma invited members from the UCC and GCC to comment.

Deirdre Heistad provided an update on the UCC. She stated that the UCC began this cycle with changes to educator preparation, because these changes would have an impact throughout this process.

1625 [Curriculum Proposals – Previously tabled proposals](#) [timestamp 00:37:34]

Motion to approve agenda item 1625

MOTION: Clements, Holcombe (25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain) motion passes

1623 [Faculty Senate bylaws revision](#) [timestamp 00:39:00]

Vote to approve agenda item 1623: (23 yes, 0 nos, 1 abstention) motion passes

Chair Elgersma read the revision to introduce the topic for discussion

Discussion

Senator Makarios stated that this revision to the bylaws is in response to the issue of moving to the departmental model for senate membership. At large positions were created for adjuncts, but there was no mechanism for compensation for these senate representatives.

Chair Elgersma commented that last year there was difficulty in filling adjunct senate positions because many adjunct faculty do not have service as an expectation for their position. Asking for service without compensation is not fair. This proposal is an effort to represent faculty who do not have contractual service expectations in the faculty senate. UNI Faculty Senate has some funds for operation that will be used to support this. Because this is a revision of the bylaws, it requires a two thirds majority.

Emeritus Requests:

1626 [Emeritus request: Kirk Manfredi](#) [timestamp 00:43:09]

Motion to approve request

MOTION: Moore, Bass (27 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain) motion passes

Discussion

President Elgersma provided highlights from the letters of support. Dr. Manfredi has been at UNI for 34 years, which in itself is a major contribution to the university. He continued by stating that Dr. Manfredi's commitment to his courses, including Organic Chemistry, is notable. His students used advanced equipment that provided students with an excellent educational experience.

1627 [Emeritus request: Kim Miller](#) [timestamp 00:46:08]

Motion to approve request

MOTION: Balong, Bass (27 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions) motion passes.

Discussion

Senator Balong stated that Kim Miller's service to UNI is excellent and she has been a fantastic colleague and teacher. Senator Balong shared that as a colleague, Kim Miller both supported and challenged her in a way that promoted growth.

Amy Nielsen shared that Dr. Miller was her daughter's elementary teacher, and she continues to show care to her years later.

New Business [00:50:23]

President Nook presented an update on the changes to DEI made in response to new legislation. The strategic plans at the regent institutions must be updated to reflect these changes. The current strategic plan contains DEI language and objectives. The Board of Regents has asked UNI to revise the strategic plan by the end of January to be aligned with state law. President Nook asked the co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee, Kristin Moser and Oksana Grybovych Hafermann, to work on the changes by working off of the materials used to create the 2023-2028 strategic plan. He stated that the DEI work on campus has been focused on making sure that every student, regardless of background, has access to the resources needed for their success. This will not change, but some language and processes will change. Student success will remain the focus of the strategic plan.

Kristin Moser stated that USPCC meets regularly and has already met and discussed these issues. A subgroup has been established to make some edits to ensure full compliance with the law. She encouraged questions.

President Elgersma asked how we can reach out to students who are not yet here who may not look like, and may have different needs from our students of the past.

President Nook responded that we have students who have commented that they selected UNI because certain services were labeled and identifiable. We need to find a way to make sure that students know these are here. Prospective students rely heavily on what current students tell them about their experiences at UNI. He also commented that the next Faculty Senate Meeting is on January 27, and it may not be possible to bring it before the senate before it is submitted to the Board of Regents. He stated that faculty leadership will be kept informed and provided with the updated plan. He stated that if there is a need, he would welcome a special session of the senate.

United Faculty Vice President Calderon stated that there is a lot of self censoring that has taken place, but we should take care not to give too much if more changes are requested in the future.

Senator Tabei asked about management of how information surrounding this issue is shared with the press. President Nook stated that the press has understood the processes and reported on it

fairly. UNI has not taken a negative impact on this issue. The Board of Regents will have its own reporting structure. The strategy will include being open, honest, and straightforward about the process, the changes being made, and how they align UNI with state law.

Vice Chair Clements asked how UNI is making sure that student voices are being heard in the revision process. She commented that NISG has taken many actions to take on some of the ga Kristin Moser responded that there is an NISG representative on the coordinating committee. They have been asked to take this back to their group for feedback. President Nook also highlighted the work of NISG and student organizations.

Motion to Adjourn [timestamp 01:09:40]

Moore, Bass

Adjournment by 5:00 PM