

University Faculty Senate Minutes

March 24, 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.

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, Ronnie Chen, Rebecca Dickinson, Noah Doely (alternate), Evette Edmister, Scott Giese, Mark Hecimovich, Melanie Hill, Rob Hitlan, Charles Holcombe, Wu-Ying Hsieh, Julie Kang, Syed Kirmani, Alexandra (Ana) Kogl, Reza Lahroodi, Matthew Makarios, Dayna Miller, Susan Moore, John Preston, Shelley Price-Williams, Ali Tabei

(Fifty percent quorum met, with 29/31 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 0:00:00]

Call for Press Identification: *None Present*

Introduction of Guests:

Regular Guests: Mark Nook, José Herrera, Robert Earle (UF Vice President), Lizbeth Montalvo (NISG President)

Other Guests: Kristin Moser (Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Scott Peters (Department of Political Science)

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

Courtesy Announcements

Comments from President Nook

[00:00:56]

President Nook shared updates on UNI Athletics, National History Day, and changes in education policy.

Athletics: *The university's wrestling team had an outstanding season, including a 13-1 record in dual meets, three Big 12 champions, and finishing second in the Big 12. All ten wrestlers qualified for the national tournament, with impressive individual placements. Doug Schwab was recognized as the National Wrestling Coaches NCAA Division I Coach of the Year, praised for his leadership and building a strong team culture. He underscored the admirable behavior and*

reputation of UNI's student athletes, which reflects well on the university. He expressed gratitude for the UNI's support of student athletes and the leadership of coaches in creating a thriving culture.

National History Day: *UNI hosted the event for the first time, welcoming high school students to present research projects in the Rod Library. The event highlighted the importance of research and education.*

Education Policy: *President Nook addressed the current uncertainty surrounding changes in federal education policy, particularly the U.S. Department of Education, due to executive orders and legislative discussions. He noted the significance of this department's oversight in areas directly impacting the university, including Pell Grants, Teach Grants, Title IX, and other funding programs. Nook emphasized the importance of remaining calm and focused on UNI's mission amidst the chaos and lack of clear information. He acknowledged that while potential changes could bring significant impacts, it's too early to determine what these changes might entail. To prepare for possible outcomes, UNI is assembling teams to analyze and address anticipated impacts. Collaboration with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) plays a key role, as this organization provides updates and insights from its close connections with Congress and federal departments. He explained that although dismantling the Department of Education would require Congressional approval, making such a change unlikely due to the current lack of sufficient Senate votes, there is still potential for programs to be shifted within the federal structure. He stressed the need for the university to carefully monitor these developments, dismiss rumors, and stay focused on concrete actions to adapt to any forthcoming changes. UNI is committed to proactively managing impacts while continuing to prioritize its mission and the needs of its students.*

Comments from Provost Herrera

[00:10:52]

Provost Herrera addressed the discussion of changes in education policy. He anticipates a productive conversation with faculty leaders about federal education policy changes, as discussed by President Nook. However, he emphasized the current lack of concrete information on the topic. He expressed optimism about enrollment trends, noting that applications and net confirmations are up. He thanked staff for their efforts and acknowledged the challenges families face due to broader uncertainties.

Provost Herrera plans to attend the juried student exhibition, showcasing the creative work of student artists, alongside ongoing academic and historical presentations. He concluded by highlighting the positive atmosphere at UNI, both academically and athletically, and expressed hope for clearer answers to pressing questions in the coming days.

Comments from Faculty Chair Dobosh

[00:14:03]

Chair Dobosh shared that Faculty Senate elections began at 1 p.m. today and will run until 5 p.m. on Monday, April 7th. Faculty are encouraged to participate, and the committee expressed gratitude for the many individuals stepping up for service roles. She shared that a technical issue affected the display of titles for term faculty on the Faculty Senate website's spring roster. Dobosh worked with Associate Provost Nielsen to correct it. Faculty who provided updates had their titles manually adjusted, and the revised roster has been posted. Any remaining concerns can be forwarded to Chair Dobosh. She concluded with an update on the Faculty Handbook Committee. The Faculty Handbook Committee is finalizing a survey regarding the evaluation system. The survey is expected to be distributed before the end of the semester, and faculty are encouraged to watch for its release.

Comments from United Faculty Vice President Earle

[00:16:31]

Vice President Robert Earle reported that United Faculty elections will open around March 31st and remain active until April 9th. Faculty are encouraged to participate. United Faculty is hosting dialogue sessions to provide updates and facilitate discussion on key issues. Upcoming sessions are scheduled for April 1st (in-person), April 16th (via Zoom), and May 7th (in-person). Earle hopes these sessions will continue in the fall. Vice President Earle highlighted several Iowa House bills: HF270 (Syllabus Transparency Act), HF269 (Freedom from Indoctrination Act), HF295 (Accreditation Autonomy Act), and HF401 (Core Curriculum Act). He emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding these legislative initiatives and urged faculty collaboration through dialogue sessions.

Comments from NISG President Montalvo

[00:21:49]

President Montalvo reported that recent elections concluded with Allie Webster elected as President and Gabriel Salazar as Vice President. Transition plans are underway for their leadership starting in April. Efforts continue to transfer the Green Fund to NISG, establishing it as a subcommittee. Plans are being finalized to potentially rename the Multicultural Council to the Unity Council, aiming to broaden its scope in alignment with future administrative goals. The current Director of Diversity is leading these efforts.

Comments from Senate Chair Elgersma

[00:23:41]

Chair Elgersma expressed gratitude to those participating in upcoming elections, including both Faculty Senate and United Faculty elections. He emphasized the importance of shared governance in improving university outcomes and thanked senators and candidates for their dedication. He encouraged faculty to acknowledge and thank those who step forward to serve.

Minutes for Approval

[00:24:55]

Motion to approve the minutes from February 25, 2025

MOTION: Kirmani/ Holcombe (25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain) *Minutes are approved.*

Docketed Items

1638 Consultation: HLC report

[00:26:02.000]

Scott Peters and Kristin Moser provided a senate consultation on UNI's HLC accreditation process. Peters stated that UNI is preparing for its four-year accreditation self-study, called the assurance argument, which is due this summer. This document demonstrates compliance with criteria set by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and involves collecting extensive evidence. Unlike the 10-year reaccreditation, this process does not include a site visit. The assurance argument must reflect recent changes, such as the new nursing program. Additionally, sections related to diversity require significant revisions due to new laws and regulations. The preparation period is shorter than the 10-year reaccreditation process, but a team has been working on drafts, which will be finalized and submitted on schedule. Peters expects a successful outcome.

Discussion:

Chair Elgersma opened the floor for questions and suggested senators direct any follow-up questions to her for collation and submission to Scott Peters and Kristin Moser.

Kristin Moser mentioned the accreditation self-study's final draft will be posted on the accreditation.uni.edu website later this summer and encouraged senators to review it once available.

Chair Elgersma acknowledged the challenging nature of the accreditation process and expressed gratitude to Peters and the team for their efforts.

Scott Peters highlighted the collaborative efforts of the team and thanked committee members, staff, and student workers for their contributions to the extensive process of gathering evidence for accreditation.

1639 Policy 3.06: Class Attendance and Make-up Work

[00:32:39]

Motion to accept revisions

MOTION Berns/ Holcombe (26 yes, 0 no, 0 no) *motion passes*

Senator Harlow presented an update on changes to Policy 3.06. The policy on mandatory excused absences, revised in 2021 to include religious observances, raised concerns about

potential misuse and inadequate coverage of certain legitimate cases. Examples included a student allegedly misusing the policy and another case where a legitimate religious event was not covered. These prompted a review and collaboration with University Council, student government, and the Dean of Students. A revised clause aligns the policy with peer institutions, requiring students to inform instructors of religious observances by the second week of class. It focuses on scheduled holy days and was well-received by student government. For unforeseen circumstances, students can work with the Dean of Students, who will coordinate with faculty to ensure fair resolutions. Finally, minor wording adjustments were made to improve clarity and avoid confusion with other accommodations. This revision aims to provide clarity, guardrails, and fairness while maintaining alignment with similar policies at other institutions.

1640 [Sharing syllabi on Blackboard](#)

[00:37:27]

Chair Elgersma introduced a discussion about publicizing syllabi through Blackboard, prompted by proposed legislation that might mandate making syllabi publicly accessible. Faculty feedback was sought on the proposal.

Motion to enter executive session

MOTION Dobosh/ Clements (25 yes, 1 no, 0 abstain) *motion passes*

Emeritus Requests

1641 [Emeritus request: Robin Guy](#)

[00:40:48]

Motion to approve requisition

MOTION Berns/ Bass (24 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain)

Discussion:

Senator Harlow praised Dr. Guy's impactful career, highlighting her contributions to the School of Music. She was commended for creating a fair system for music students to access pianists, ensuring equitable opportunities regardless of financial circumstances. Harlow expressed strong support for the request.

Chair Elgersma also remarked on Dr. Guy's distinguished achievements, including guest appearances on "Prairie Home Companion" and collaborations with renowned musicians, as well as her teaching at Interlochen.

New Business: None raised

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

MOTION Kogl/ Bass

Minutes were prepared and submitted by Vice-Chair Alexa Clements.
Summaries of comments were generated using Microsoft Copilot and reviewed for errors.

Appended Zoom Chat

00:17:50 Kristin Moser: Kristin Moser, Institutional Effectiveness & Planning
00:17:55 Scott Peters: Scott Peters, Dept of Political Science, here to talk about HLC
00:18:05 Noah Doely: Noah Doely filling in for Tim Dooley in Art
00:48:18 Susan Moore: Thank you Scott and Kristin