

University Faculty Senate Minutes

September 22, 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, Jeff Morgan, John Preston, Julie Kang, Karen Breitbach, Mark Hecimovic, Matt Weedman, Melanie Hill, Nick Bailey, Rebecca Dickinson, Rob Hitlan, Scott Giese, Susan Moore, Syed Kirmani, Tom Hall

(Fifty percent quorum met, with 25/31 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, Jose Herrera, Alli Webster, Chris Martin

Other Guests: Amy Nielsen, Fernando Calderon, Deirdre Heistad

Courtesy Announcements

Comments from President Nook

00:00:53 – Introduction

President Nook welcomed attendees and focused his remarks on updates from the recent Board of Regents meeting.

00:01:01 – Closed-Door Session & Social Media Concerns

The BOR held a closed-door session addressing social media posts related to Charlie Cook's assassination. Four action items were approved, including directives for universities to investigate alleged policy violations.

00:01:59 – UNI's Status per Board Directives

UNI has not received any credible allegations. One vague complaint was submitted without sufficient details to investigate. There are no current investigations underway.

If future allegations arise, universities must:

- Investigate within two weeks.
- Place employees under investigation on administrative leave or remove them from classrooms.
- Allow university presidents to take immediate action, including termination, if violations are confirmed.

President Nook emphasized that termination would only be considered under extraordinary circumstances and that First Amendment protections will be carefully considered. The Board's Executive Director has authority to initiate investigations and direct universities to act. President Nook echoed United Faculty President Christopher Martin's caution about the current political climate and the importance of thoughtful communication, and urged faculty to be mindful of the broader impact of their public statements, especially on social media. He emphasized the need to protect individuals from undue harm while maintaining institutional integrity and stated that UNI aims to remain politically neutral and responsive to legislative scrutiny. He emphasized that if any allegations arise, UNI will follow established procedures and avoid rushing to judgment. Nook acknowledged campus concern over the Board of Regents' directives and encouraged open discussion.

00:08:20 – Positive Feedback from Regents

The Regents expressed strong appreciation for UNI's campus and its celebration of the 150th anniversary. They praised the campus aesthetics and the university's efforts to honor its history and future.

00:08:57 – College of Education Presentation

Dean Colleen Mulholland's presentation on changes within the College of Education received high praise. The Regents described it as a "home run" and "innovative," with one sending a personal commendation.

00:09:33 – UNI at Iowa Community Colleges

The Regents were impressed by the expansion and impact of the UNI at Iowa Community Colleges initiative. President Nook noted that the number of baccalaureate programs offered has grown from 5 to 12, including a hybrid accounting program.

00:10:37 – Student Engagement Recognition

NISG President Allie Webster and colleagues were commended for their presentation to the Regents. A senior board member called it the best student presentation they had ever seen. The presentation contributed to the approval of a \$1 million state appropriation request for mental health support.

00:11:54 – Closing Remarks

President Nook thanked faculty, staff, and students for their contributions to a successful Board of Regents meeting. He acknowledged the challenges at the start of the meeting but emphasized the overwhelmingly positive outcomes.

00:12:10 – Transition

Senate Chair Alexa Clements thanked President Nook and invited final questions or comments. She expressed appreciation for the detailed update and praised student representation.

Comments from Provost Herrera

00:12:43 – Enrollment Update

- UNI's total enrollment stands at 9,204 students.
- FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) enrollment is up by 120 students (1.4%), indicating growth in full-time student engagement.
- Increases across new undergraduate, graduate, and transfer student categories.
- A slight overall decrease due to the expiration of a grant that previously funded one-credit graduate courses, resulting in a loss of ~90 students.

00:14:27 – Neighboring States Rate Impact

Applications from six neighboring states have increased significantly:

- 286 applications this year vs. 153 last year — a 95% increase.
- Efforts are ongoing to convert these applications into enrollments.

00:15:08 – Application Portal Improvements

UNI's redesigned application portal has reduced average completion time from ~60 minutes to ~30 minutes. The goal is to reduce this further to ~20 minutes to improve applicant conversion rates.

00:15:58 – WAR Council Update Introduction

Provost Herrera invited Interim Associate Provost of Academic Affairs Deirdre Heistad to provide a brief update on the Workforce Alignment Review Council's recent activities, noting her presence along with Steph Huffman and Kristen Moser as representatives.

00:16:33 – Overview of Review Focus

The Workforce Alignment Review is examining three key areas:

- Return on Investment (ROI) and wage data for graduates
- Low-enrolled programs
- Associated recommendations for program alignment

00:17:13 – Data Sharing & Report Preparation

ROI data is currently being reviewed by college deans. The final report is scheduled for presentation at the November Board of Regents meeting. A complete version must be ready by October 15.

00:18:02 – Recommendation Categories

Recommendations will fall into three main areas:

- Workforce alignment –potential inclusion of ROI data in public dashboards for prospective students and stakeholders.
- Enrollment-based vitality – emphasizing enrollment as a key indicator of program health.

Curricular enhancement – exploring ways to better prepare students for workforce needs and identify Iowa industry demands.

Comments from Faculty Chair Elgersma

00:21:18 – Fall Faculty Meeting Announcement

The Fall Faculty Meeting will be held on October 6 at 3:30 p.m. in Schindler Room 220 (note change from usual Lang Hall location). The agenda will include remarks from the President and Provost, recognition of new faculty, and celebration of faculty award recipients.

00:22:24 – Open Educational Resources (OER) Mini-Grants

Rod Library and the Graduate Division are offering mini-grants to support faculty in transitioning courses to open educational resources. Faculty are encouraged to apply and share this opportunity within their departments to help reduce student costs.

00:23:53 – ADA Compliance Reminder

Faculty are reminded of the upcoming requirement for all university-produced materials to be accessible and ADA compliant. A Blackboard training course is available to help faculty learn how to make common materials (e.g., PDFs, PowerPoints) accessible. Chair Elgersma encouraged early engagement with this work to ease future transitions.

00:25:13 – Reflection on Campus Climate

Faculty Chair Elgersma acknowledged the current climate surrounding free speech and academic freedom, referencing President Nook's earlier comments. He expressed confidence that UNI administrators will follow faculty handbook policies in handling any related allegations or disciplinary actions.

Comments from United Faculty President Martin

00:26:32 – Response to BOR Directive

United Faculty President Christopher Martin expressed appreciation for President Nook's comments regarding the Board of Regents directive on social media and free speech. He acknowledged the directive's ambiguity, which raised concerns among faculty and reaffirmed that United Faculty is available to support any faculty members with questions or concerns related to free speech and academic freedom.

Comments from NISG President Webster

00:27:18 – Regents and Roundtables Event

- NISG hosted a "Regents and Roundtables" event to facilitate informal conversations between student government members and the Board of Regents.
- Purpose: Introduce newer NISG members to the Regents and discuss student concerns, ranging from program preservation to campus initiatives like. bringing a panther mascot

00:28:18 – Regents Breakfast & Mental Health Funding Advocacy

- NISG leadership participated in a breakfast meeting with student government leaders from University of Iowa and Iowa State and the Regents.

- Discovered that \$1 million in mental health funding was missing from the Regents' budget.
- NISG successfully advocated for an amendment to reinstate the funding:
 - Iowa: \$400,000
 - Iowa State: \$400,000
 - UNI: \$100,000 (based on enrollment proportions)
 - Final allocation for UNI adjusted to \$165,000, deemed appropriate after consultation with campus stakeholders.

00:30:40 – Campus Recognition

Regents praised UNI's campus improvements and expressed enthusiasm for the 150th anniversary celebrations, despite ongoing construction.

00:31:01 – Closing Remarks

Senate Chair Clements commended Alli Webster for her leadership and advocacy. President Webster thanked the Senate for the opportunity to speak.

Comments from Senate Chair Clements

00:31:17 – New Senator Introduction

Dr. Dawn Mollenkopf was welcomed as the new Senate representative for the Department of Literacy, Early Childhood, and Special Education in the College of Education.

00:31:46 – Committee Assignments & Structure

Senate subcommittee assignments were emailed to senators earlier in the day. This year, committee chairs will be elected by committee members, per charter guidelines. Committees are responsible for organizing their first meetings and determining their preferred format (Zoom or in-person). Senate Chair Clements will provide suggested agendas to help guide initial meetings, including reviewing charters, electing chairs, and discussing potential goals.

00:34:03 – UNIFI Committee Representation

Senator Karen Breitbach was thanked for agreeing to serve as the Faculty Senate's representative on the UNIFI Committee, which is expected to handle significant matters this year.

00:34:18 – ADA Compliance Reminder

Chair Clements echoed earlier comments about the importance of ADA compliance for instructional materials, and encouraged faculty to begin reviewing resources on eLearning to ensure materials (e.g., PDFs, presentations) meet accessibility standards.

00:35:19 – Ad Hoc Committee on BOR Policy Revisions

Expressed gratitude to Senators Price-Williams and Dickinson for quickly agreeing to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee addressing Board of Regents policy revisions and UNI's response. Their prompt commitment and expertise were praised as essential for navigating this fast-moving issue.

Minutes for Approval

00:35:58 – Approval of Previous Minutes

- Motion made to approve minutes from August 25, 2025.
- Motion by Senator Andrew Berns, seconded by Senator Kirmani.
- Final vote: 23 yes, no objections, no abstentions. Motion passed.

Docketed Items

1654 [CONSULTATION: Green Dot, Office of Civil Rights Compliance](#)

00:37:06 – Green Dot Program Presentation

- Brenda White, Investigator and Prevention Specialist from UNI's Office of Civil Rights Compliance, presented on the Green Dot bystander intervention program. The program was launched at UNI in Spring 2022 following student advocacy and is funded by Student Activities Fee Funding.
- Green Dot aims to reduce sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking through proactive community engagement. The initiative uses "red dots" to represent acts of violence and "green dots" to represent actions promoting safety. Research shows a 17% reduction in interpersonal violence at universities implementing Green Dot.
- UNI has trained 29 faculty/staff facilitators; over 500 students and 300 faculty/staff have attended workshops. Faculty and staff are encouraged to host or attend workshops and integrate Green Dot concepts into their work.

00:41:35 – Green Dot Program Discussion

- Senator Kogl asked how to schedule a workshop; Brenda White recommended contacting either her directly or emailing greendot@uni.edu.
- Chair Clements inquired about future goals for faculty involvement; White emphasized faculty attending workshops and encouraging student participation to increase attendance.
- Senator Dooley asked about ideal workshop size; White noted 10–35 participants is preferred.
- Chair Clements suggested engaging student organizations through faculty advisors; White confirmed flexibility in scheduling workshops for student org meetings and encouraged faculty to help promote participation.
- Senator Price-Williams asked about Green Dot's presence at other Iowa universities and ethical considerations for classroom integration. White confirmed Iowa State has the program and emphasized workshops should not be mandatory, especially to avoid potential trauma triggers for students. White recommended offering workshops as optional or extra credit opportunities.

1655 [End of Year Report: Policy Committee](#)

00:48:20 – Faculty Senate Policy Committee Report

- Motion made to receive the end-of-year report from the Faculty Senate Policy Committee.
 - Motion by Senator Moore, seconded by Senator Berns.
- Alexa Clements noted the committee's productive year reviewing policy revisions and emphasized the importance of faculty representation in policy discussions across campus and with the Board of Regents.
- Final vote: 26 yes, no objections, no abstentions. Motion passed.

1656 [Curriculum Proposals: College of Social and Behavioral Sciences AY2025-26](#)

00:51:06 – Curriculum Proposal: College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

- Motion made to approve the 2025–26 curriculum proposals for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.
 - Motion by Senator Ana Kogl, seconded by Senator Edminster.
- Deirdre Heistad provided context on the role of the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees in reviewing and forwarding curriculum changes. She acknowledged faculty and administrative members involved in the review process and noted the UCC’s unanimous approval of the packet on September 3.
- Chair Clements highlighted notable changes, including course restructuring within the College of Nursing.
- Final vote: 26 yes, no objections, no abstentions. Motion passed.

1657 [Curriculum Proposals: Wilson College of Business AY2025-26](#)

00:57:08 – Curriculum Proposal: Wilson College of Business & Interdisciplinary Programs

- Motion made to approve curriculum proposals from the Wilson College of Business and interdisciplinary programs.
 - Motion by Senator Price Williams.
- Deirdre Heistad noted the UCC unanimously approved the proposals on September 10.
- Chair Elgersma raised a question about potential budget impacts related to a cross-listed course (Management/Marketing 3114). Deirdre clarified that budget concerns are addressed at the college level and require dean approval before proposals reach UCC.
- Senator Moore confirmed the budget impact note was an editorial error and that no financial implications were associated with the course.
- Final vote: 26 yes, no objections, no abstentions. Motion passed.

1658 [Emeritus Request: Soo Hostetler](#)

01:01:19 – Emeritus Request: Professor Sue Hostetler

- Motion made to approve emeritus status for Professor Sue Hostetler.
 - Motion by Senator Bass, seconded by Chair Elgersma.
- Senators praised Professor Hostetler’s global impact, dedication to student professional development, and support in graphic design education.
- Final vote: 26 yes, no objections, no abstentions. Motion passed.

1659 [Consultation: Ad Hoc UNI Policy Alignment Committee](#)

01:04:46 – Ad Hoc UNI Policy Alignment Committee Consultation

- Deirdre Heistad and Chair Elgersma provided an update on UNI’s efforts to align institutional policies with recent Board of Regents revisions to Policies 3.10 and 3.20.
- The original DEI policy proposed by the Board was withdrawn following feedback from all three regent institutions, including organized input from UNI faculty leadership, especially United Faculty.
- In August, the Board approved changes to Policies 3.10 and 3.20 and requested each institution to demonstrate compliance.
- UNI formed an ad hoc working group to review and revise Policy 6.10 (Academic Freedom, Shared Governance, and Academic Responsibility) to align with the Board’s revisions.

- The committee aims to complete policy alignment during the fall semester to prepare for the upcoming legislative session.
- Committee members include Kenneth Elgersma, Chris Martin, Shelley Price-Williams, Rebecca Dickenson, Steph Huffman, and Amy Nielsen.

01:09:11 – Policy Alignment Strategy and Approach

Faculty Chair Elgersma explained the committee's approach to revising UNI Policy 6.10 to align with Board of Regents Policies 3.10 and 3.20. He noted that the Board consulted constitutional scholars to ensure compliance with First Amendment protections. The revised Board policies reflect principles from the AAUP's 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom, which already informs UNI's existing policies. The committee's strategy focused on highlighting alignment by incorporating direct quotes and references from the Board policies into UNI's redlined policy draft. Elgersma emphasized that UNI's existing policies were already largely in alignment, making the revision process more straightforward than initially anticipated.

01:11:21 – Policy Revision Discussion

- Chair Clements shared the redlined policy revisions for Senate review.
- Associate Provost Heistad outlined the consultation process, including meetings with Faculty Senate, NISG leadership, Dean's Council, and University Council, prior to final approval by President Nook.
- Faculty Chair Elgersma noted the addition of a section clarifying that any allegations of non-compliance with the revised policy would be investigated using existing misconduct procedures.
- Associate Provost Heistad shared feedback from University Council suggesting a minor language revision to clarify disciplinary procedures ("if appropriate").
- Clements reflected on initial concerns about the impact of revisions and expressed reassurance upon seeing the strong alignment between UNI's existing policies and the Board of Regents' changes.
- Discussion continued regarding the thoughtful approach taken to ensure revisions support compliance without compromising UNI's values. The committee emphasized the importance of consensus-building and encouraged ongoing faculty input throughout the process.

New Business

No new business was raised.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Chair Elgersma, seconded by Senator Bohler.