

University Faculty Senate Minutes

February 23, 2026

Online Zoom meeting

Please note that a complete audio recording of this senate meeting is available at [UNI Scholar works](#). 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.

Senators in attendance:

Timothy Dooley (Vice-Chair), Kenneth Elgersma (Faculty Chair, Past Senate Chair), Shelley Price-Williams (Parliamentarian), Ana Kogl, Andrea Johnson, Andrew Berns, Babara Cutter, Cathi Bowler, Erika Bass, Eva Chen, Evette Edmister, Dawn Mollenkopf, Jeff Morgan, John Preston, Julie Kang, Karen Breitbach, Mark Hecimovic, Matt Weedman, Melanie Hill, Nick Bailey, Randall Harlow, Reza Lahroodi, Rob Hitlan, Ronnie Chen, Scott Giese, Susan Moore, Syed Kirmani, Tom Hall

Call to Order at 3:31 PM

Call for Press Identification

None Present

Introduction of Guests

Regular Guests: José Herrera, Fernando Herrera Calderón, Alli Webster

Other Guests: Amy Nielsen, Deirdre Heistad, Sarah Vander Zanden, Robert Earle

Comments from President Nook

President Nook was unable to attend due to commitments at the state capitol.

Comments from Provost Herrera

- Provost Herrera noted that fall enrollment estimates have been revised slightly downward due primarily to lower graduate student enrollment and higher 3-year graduation rates.
- He emphasized increasing focus on direct career pathways at the graduate level, including four-plus-one options, business, and newly added health care offerings. He encouraged imaginative program pairings and stressed the need to pivot quickly in a changing environment.

Comments from Faculty Chair Elgersma

[timestamp 0:01:12-0:12:46]

- Faculty Chair Elgersma asked senators to relay updates on changes to the UNI prescription drug plan and to review HR's cost-estimator tool [found in their February](#)

[newsletter](#) due to new legislative restrictions on recommending the lowest-cost option.

- He shared current ICE-related guidance: call Public Safety, avoid personal engagement, and treat campus spaces as public— he acknowledged these directives may be inadequate and encouraged departmental discussion.
- Senators raised several questions about how to avoid “engaging” with ICE officers, and what “not engaging” truly means in practice.
- Discussion broadened to whether classrooms and offices count as public spaces, who is allowed to enter instructional areas, and concerns about safety in labs and specialized spaces.
- Additional concerns were raised about individuals falsely presenting themselves as law enforcement.
- Senators requested clearer formal guidance; Provost Herrera noted the legal and regulatory complexity and pointed to an [ACE resource](#) summarizing key issues.

Comments from United Faculty Vice President Calderon [timestamp 0:13:17-0:14:50]

- Fernando Calderon (United Faculty VP) reported collaboration with UI and ISU through the Iowa Higher Education Coalition to educate the public about higher-ed bills; UF will address the Board of Regents and is monitoring legislation perceived as harmful to public education and regent universities.

Comments from NISG President Webster

NISG President Webster was unable to use audio and shared a message in the chat

Comments from Senate Chair Dooley [timestamp 0:15:25-0:18:39]

- Chair Dooley previewed a consultation with Interim Associate Provost Deirdre Heistad regarding UNI’s response to the BOR report focused on low-enrolled programs. He contrasted today’s process with 2012, highlighting greater transparency, communication, and shared governance, while urging attentiveness to the process.

Minutes for Approval:

Motion to Approve Minutes from January 26, 2026

[timestamp 0:18:39-0:19:38]

Motion – Kirmani / Berns

25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

Docketed items:

1680 [Consultation: Low-enrolled programs](#)

[timestamp 0:19:38–0:55:45]

- Interim Associate Provost Heistad reviewed the BOR Workforce Alignment Review, highlighting needs for better transparency, updated data, ROI dashboards, and clearer enrollment-based evaluations.
- BOR expects universities to identify which programs will be retained, reorganized, or eliminated, with action plans and timelines.

- UNI is preparing an annual process using fall census data and thresholds (≤ 25 for bachelor's programs; ≤ 10 for graduate programs) to create a low-enrollment watch list.
- Programs will choose an "enrollment optimization pathway": either a growth plan (for those near thresholds) or reorganization/closure.
- Guiding principles include no faculty elimination and reliance on existing resources, though UNI must be ready to pivot quickly if legislation changes.
- Senators raised concerns about faculty job security, the duration of growth plans, and whether to use single-year or multi-year enrollment averages.
- Heistad and Provost Herrera noted multi-year averages may be more stable and are under discussion.
- Clarification was given that "programs" refers to majors tied to specific CIP codes.
- Discussion included shifting from avoiding duplication across institutions to demonstrating workforce alignment, including consolidating emphases under broader majors.
- Senators questioned the impact on student choice, accreditation complexity, and whether consolidation truly creates efficiencies.
- Heistad acknowledged that data are imperfect and stressed offering qualitative "impact stories" alongside metrics.
- Concerns were raised about institutionalizing an imperfect external process and the future use of ROI data.
- UNI anticipates improved employment-outcome data through proposed state action involving Iowa Workforce Development.

1681 [Curriculum proposals: Wilson College of Business & College of Education](#) [timestamp 0:55:45-1:05]

- Heistad summarized the curriculum items: Business Analytics BA adding an AI track; an Applied AI certificate; and a BA in Special and Inclusive Education. The spring add cycle is intended to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies and remain competitive. Another idea was deferred for more work.
- Chair Dooley invited Sarah Vander Zanden to speak to the education package.
- Sarah Vander Zanden explained the new Special and Inclusive Education BA responds to legislative changes and workforce shortages and would provide three endorsements versus one with the former minor.
- Senator Scott Giese asked about courses cross-listed under multiple prefixes (e.g., ethics and AI items).
- Heistad explained cross-listing supports interdisciplinary teaching and allows students to count the course within their major; the college has also added an ethics fellow to infuse ethics into business curricula.
- Senator Giese questioned whether one combined section would be preferable to multiple prefixes.

- Heistad noted enrollment and cancellation policies by prefix; combining enrollments across prefixes can ensure course viability while letting students apply the credit within their program.

Motion to approve curriculum package – Elgersma / Mollenkopf

25 yes, 1 no, 0 abstain

1682 [Emeritus request: Mark Fienup](#) [timestamp 1:06–1:10]

Colleagues commended his long-standing contributions in computer science and robotics.

Motion to approve Emeritus status – Berns / Moore 25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

1683 [Emeritus request: Suzanne Riehl](#) [timestamp 1:10–1:12]

Colleagues cited her strengths bridging mathematics and math education and her service on curriculum processes.

Motion to approve Emeritus status– Price / Bass 26 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

Motion to extend Senate Meeting 15 minutes Elgersma / Moore 19 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain

1684 [Emeritus request: Amy Rohrberg](#) [timestamp 1:14–1:17]

Colleagues praised her 35 years of collaborative service.

Motion to approve Emeritus status– Weedman / Moore 23 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

New Business

Elect new Senate Vice-chair (executive session)

Dawn Mollenkopf was unanimously elected Vice-chair

Adjournment by 5:05 PM

01:16:47.620 --> 01:17:26.409

Chat Transcript

2026-02-23 15:32:48 From Sarah Vander Zanden to Everyone:

Sarah Vander Zanden

2026-02-23 15:32:56 From Robert Earle to Everyone:

Robert Earle, guest. Assistant Professor of Instruction and Wilson Ethics Fellow, Philosophy and World Religions

2026-02-23 15:34:26 From Reza's Notetaker (Otter.ai) to Everyone:

Hi, I'm an AI assistant helping Reza Lahroodi take notes for this meeting. Follow along the transcript here: https://otter.ai/u/tI7J2SLdBNR1YO7ANU51Eb8mf0?utm_source=va_chat_link_1

You can see screenshots and add highlights and comments. After the meeting, you'll get a summary and action items.

If you'd like to stop this recording, you can go to the link above and click the Stop button.

If you'd like to stop the recordings for all Otter Notetakers in this meeting, you can type "otter stop" in Zoom chat.

2026-02-23 15:45:48 From Kenneth Elgersma to Everyone:

<https://hrs.uni.edu/your-benefits/benefits-and-wellbeing-newsletter/february-2026>

2026-02-23 15:52:27 From Rebecca Dickinson to Everyone:

Classrooms, dorms, offices...

2026-02-23 15:56:42 From Kenneth Elgersma to Everyone:

<https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Issue-Brief-Immigration-Related-Campus-Concerns.pdf>

2026-02-23 15:59:12 From Alli Webster to Everyone:

Apologies to the group - I'm still at work! No updates from myself, just hope you're all staying warm and weren't too fooled by the false spring we had last week:) Additionally, I appreciate the concern and advocacy that you all are taking part in as far as student safety and ICE. I will say, students are looking out for each other. I too am lost and upset with lack of clarity in what to do but am hoping to gain more knowledge regarding such. Thank you!

2026-02-23 16:00:43 From Shelley Price-Williams to Everyone:

Thank you, Alli, for sharing your voice and that of our students.

2026-02-23 16:47:58 From Robert Earle to Everyone:

I am here, but you explained it very well. I would just say the multi-prefix is independent of this change and a long-term practice between these programs and colleges

2026-02-23 16:57:59 From Barbara Cutter to Everyone:

Sorry I have another meeting.

2026-02-23 16:58:40 From Melanie Hill to Everyone:

Sorry. I have another meeting as well.

2026-02-23 17:02:24 From Karen Breitbach to Everyone:

Thank you Dawn!