**Amy Petersen remarks:**

Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you for taking the time to attend today’s fall faculty meeting.

Thank you to President Nook, Provost Wolhpart, my colleagues in faculty leadership, and university faculty. It is an honor to serve as your senate chair. And, I am appreciative of the opportunity to address the faculty and share a few thoughts.

Last week, I attended the Board of Regents meeting, and as some of you might know from reading the papers and watching the news, it was one of the more eventful meetings. I witnessed the University of Iowa Labor Center protest the closure of their beloved center. I heard non-tenure track faculty from the University of Iowa advocate for better pay and benefits. And, I had the opportunity to meet with Senate Chairs from the U of I and Iowa State and hear about the celebrations, as well as challenges on their campuses. As I reflect on what I heard last week at board of regents meeting, as well as our current state of affairs as we begin our academic year here at UNI, I am excited and hopeful, and also cautious.

I am excited by the relationships faculty leadership and administration have worked to develop and grow this past year. We already know that UNI sets itself apart from other schools because of the strong relationships we build with our students, but I have also come to realize that our community is not only premised on the strong relationships that we build with students but also includes the strong relationships with build among the three branches of faculty leadership, as well between faculty leadership and administration. And, just as the close relationships we have with students are unique, so are the relationships we have developed among administration, UF, the Senate, and the Chair of Faculty. I can say with confidence that we regularly communicate, collaborate, and work together to get things done.

In the last year, I have been proud to be a part of numerous conversations, committees, and work groups with other faculty, faculty leadership, United Faculty, and administration. We have collectively worked to brainstorm, plan, problem-solve, and imagine the future of UNI. This is complicated, messy, and imperfect work, but it is what I have come to understand as the work of shared governance. And, I am hopeful because through such meaningful faculty participation and involvement, we have to date:

* Facilitated open dialogue and conversations through multiple open forums to gather faculty input on important issues including: evaluation, nonstandard teaching, workload, and university-wide standards for teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service
* Developed university-wide procedures that affirm shared governance and academic freedom
* Revised and published chapter four of the Faculty Handbook
* Convened a committee to re-envision general education at UNI and are in the process of crafting a mission statement and learning outcomes

Yet, there is always more work to be done, including:

* Gathering feedback on the General Education Committee’s recommendations regarding a mission statement and learning goals
* Aligning current courses and potentially developing new courses to be delivered within the LAC
* Finalizing revisions to chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook, including celebrating faculty excellence through recognizing and rewarding faculty work through a commitment to awarding merit pay and a career ladder for our term, temporary, and renewable term employees
* Preparing for the Higher Learning Commission visit in 2020
* Considering the voting rights of non-voting faculty
* Becoming more aware of and knowledgeable about our university budget

And, this is where we must also remain cautious. While these new directions are exciting, they are also not without challenges. We must remain diligent as faculty in our system of shared governance.

* We must engage with another
* We must actively participate
* We must ask hard questions of one another
* We must remain open to dialogue
* We must be critical consumers
* We must all work to make a contribution

And, I believe our current climate and culture is ripe for such engagement.

At the board meeting last week, a Senate Chair from another university asked me, “Why did you get involved with shared governance?” Responding with perhaps, the least compelling reason, I replied, “Because someone asked me to serve.”

Today, I ask you to serve. In the coming academic year, you will have many opportunities to serve in large and small ways—please ask the hard questions, provide input during a faculty forum, join a committee, participate in a listening session, attend a senate meeting, or reach out to faculty leadership. And, most important, please participate in the recertification vote this November. I encourage you to vote “yes” for United Faculty.