

**FACULTY COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday, November 19, 2013**  
**3:30 – 5:15 pm**  
**Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre**

**MINUTES**

Councilors Present: S. Ali, D. Black, C. Bohannon, E. Ernst, C. Fox, S. Gardner, E. Gillan, N. Grosland, J. Kolker, P. Muhly, J. Pendergast, S. Seibert.

Officers Present: D. Cunning, E. Dove, E. Lawrence, A. Thomas.

Councilors Excused: F. Abboud, H. Bartlett, S. Schultz, E. Wasserman.

Councilors Absent: P. Brophy.

Guests: S. Agnew (*Press-Citizen*), B. Ingram (Office of the Provost), T. Rice (Office of the Provost), M. Vander Weg (Internal Medicine and Psychology), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate).

I. Call to Order – President Lawrence called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm,  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~facsen/archive/documents/Agenda.FacultyCouncil.11.19.13.pdf>.

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – President Lawrence indicated that one additional item would be added to the agenda – a follow-up discussion on electronic cigarettes with Professor Mark Vander Weg, from the departments of Internal Medicine and Psychology. Professor Black moved and Professor Gillan seconded that the revised agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Council Minutes (October 8, 2013) – Professor Ernst moved and Professor Pendergast seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Draft Faculty Senate Agenda (December 10, 2013) – Professor Pendergast moved and Professor Black seconded that the draft agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. Committee Appointments (Alexandra Thomas, Chair, Committee on Committees)
  - Carolyn Jones (Law) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - John Westefeld (Psych & Quant Foundations) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - Matthew Geneser (Pediatric Dentistry) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - Nancy Langguth (Teaching & Learning) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - Lois Cox (Law) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - Vilia Tarvydas (Rehabilitation Counseling) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - David Mauer (Finance) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
  - Samuel Burer (Management Sciences) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16

- John Whiston (Law) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16
- Erika Ernst (Pharmacy) to the Judicial Commission, 2013-16

Professor Gardner moved and Professor Fox seconded that the appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Faculty Senate Elections Vacancy Tally (Erika Lawrence) – President Lawrence indicated that online nominations for the Senate will begin on January 31 and run through February 8. She requested that Councilors encourage their colleagues to vote, and if nominated, to agree to have their names put on the ballot for elections, which will begin February 28. Professor Gardner moved and Professor Black seconded that the Faculty Senate elections vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

### III. New Business

- *Report on Hawkeye Caucus (Erika Lawrence)*

President Lawrence reported on the Hawkeye Caucus event that took place in Washington, D.C. on November 13. This was the second year that students, staff and faculty were invited to display exhibits from their colleges and units in the Cannon House Office Building (a congressional office building). In addition to legislators, about 250 area alumni attended the event. Faculty Senate had a table and display, and President Lawrence spoke to legislators and alumni about the teaching, research and service endeavors of our faculty and the impact of these efforts on our students and on our state.

- *Possible limits to grant application submissions (Chronicle article) (David Cuning)*

President Lawrence drew the Council's attention to an article written by Paul Basken, *Cash-Strapped NIH May Ask Universities to Limit Grant Applications*, that appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* online on November 12, 2013. President Lawrence observed that in the current federal funding environment, National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants have become less numerous and less well-funded. This is already a difficult situation for faculty in the health sciences, but the article suggests that universities may now possibly be asked to limit the number of grants they submit, further diminishing the number of grants available and creating additional pressure on faculty.

Secretary Cuning commented that the system of limiting university grant submissions possibly being considered by the NIH was similar to a system currently used to solicit applications for summer fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). He explained that in the NEH process, faculty first submit their applications to an on-campus committee. Two are selected for forwarding to the NEH, where the final decision will be made. Should the NIH adopt this procedure, it would appear to be a cost-cutting measure for the agency. Another possible procedure the article mentions as being considered by the agency is to give greater weight to applicants' credentials than to the merits of proposed projects. The article indicates that in this case awards would perhaps be more substantial, but younger researchers would be at a disadvantage.

Professor Pendergast wondered if additional information about possible changes at NIH was available. She noted that the changes suggested in the article seemed to run counter to recent

emphases at NIH of encouraging applications from junior scholars. Professor Gardner expressed concerns about research dollars increasingly flowing primarily into a small number of elite institutions. Professor Pendergast observed some funding agencies are funneling grants into targeted areas and awarding applicants who address issues of interest to the agencies themselves. Professor Bohannon asked at what stage these proposals were and wondered if universities would have the chance to weigh in on them. Professor Gillan observed that the National Science Foundation (NSF) is also finding ways of limiting the applications submitted to it. For example, it is no longer possible to submit multiple applications. And, the funding windows have been reduced from twice annually to once annually. Following up on her earlier comments, Professor Bohannon expressed the opinion that the possible proposed changes to NIH application procedures were not very promising and that perhaps the agency could benefit from hearing a range of suggestions from universities and other entities.

Professor Black commented that the NIH appeared to be sending up a “trial balloon.” He thought that these proposed changes would not be well-received, and that they would certainly have a detrimental impact on the Carver College of Medicine. Tenure and promotion processes would be negatively affected, as many such decisions are based on grant productivity. He expressed concern about who would make the university-level decisions about whose research to promote. Professor Muhly commented that perhaps the professional societies could play a role in reviewing applications before they are sent to funding agencies. President Lawrence thanked the Councilors for their input and indicated her intention to follow up with Vice President for Research and Economic Development Dan Reed about this.

- *Reprioritizing undergraduate education (Chronicle article) (Ed Dove)*

President Lawrence drew the Council’s attention to another recent article of interest, *Research Universities Are Praised for Returning Focus to Undergrad Education*, written by Don Troop and published online in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on November 12, 2013. Past President Dove explained that the Association of American Universities (AAU), featured in the article, is a group of sixty-two research intensive universities. The group’s president, whose remarks were quoted in the article, is Hunter R. Rawlings III, formerly the president of Cornell University and prior to that, of the University of Iowa. In his remarks, Dr. Rawlings made the claim that public research universities are once again focusing their attention on teaching undergraduate students, after a period of neglecting, to some extent, this activity. Dr. Rawlings also took issue with what he perceived to be the lack of a structured curriculum for undergraduate students (particularly in the liberal arts), arguing that students were not necessarily well-informed enough to choose their own courses of study. Past President Dove added that in 2011, the AAU had embarked upon an initiative to improve undergraduate education in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields. Eight universities were given five-year grants to improve student achievement in these areas. Past President Dove wondered if a similar initiative should be developed for humanities students. He added that perhaps the university would wish to go on record as having been consistently focused on undergraduate education.

Professor Pendergast commented that there seems to be an expectation from some corporations and other entities and individuals that students should leave a university ready to

perform a specific job with no additional training. In her view, this has never been the primary purpose of higher education, however. She added that universities train students to become lifelong learners, not to be certified for a narrow job title. Professor Bohannon commented that the dean of her college has been told by employers that they value the well-rounded education that students receive at the university and that they are not looking for narrowly-trained employees. Professor Seibert observed that some of the article's quotes seem to imply that faculty members' research has an adverse effect on undergraduate teaching, when in fact the opposite is true, in his opinion. Professor Gillan added that there is also an implication that universities have neglected their undergraduate programs. In his college, however, several programs are in the midst of re-structuring their undergraduate degree programs to improve quality and provide new opportunities to students. Perhaps one should look at what universities are doing on a collegiate level to enhance undergraduate education for a better picture of the situation. Other Councilors weighed in on innovations occurring here and at other universities, from first-year seminars to the participation of undergraduates in faculty research.

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Beth Ingram observed that there has been a nationwide conversation lately about the quality of undergraduate education, specifically about graduation and retention rates, which may not have gotten the attention over the years that they deserved. She noted that the University of Iowa's four-year graduation rate has risen 3.5% over the previous year. She speculated that Dr. Rawlings may have had institutions with lower graduation rates in mind while making his remarks. Associate Provost Ingram also commented that some of the skills (critical thinking, communication skills) with which students emerge from universities are difficult to quantify. She wondered if perhaps Dr. Rawlings was implicitly responding to those who are uncomfortable with the lack of measurable data on these skills. She added that many universities have recently put greater emphasis on helping their undergraduate students to thrive, no matter their level of college readiness, instead of simply assuming that students with lower levels of college readiness cannot succeed academically.

President Lawrence commented that, in her experience in her college, undergraduate teaching is highly valued at the University of Iowa. She reminded the group of the important role that teaching evaluations, by both students and other faculty members, play in faculty reviews, and of the effort that faculty members put into working with individual students, into continually revising their classes, and into improving curriculum at the departmental level.

- *Follow-up discussion on e-cigarettes (Mark Vander Weg, Internal Medicine & Psychology)*  
President Lawrence reminded the group that the Council had engaged in a lively discussion on this issue at the last meeting. Following that meeting, she had received numerous inquiries and comments from faculty members and others expressing an interest in the discussion and sharing data about electronic cigarettes. One of those faculty members, Professor Mark Vander Weg, of the departments of Internal Medicine and Psychology, has done research on smoking behavior and agreed to speak to the Council about some of the scientific data currently available.

Professor Vander Weg indicated that his research focuses on developing interventions for individuals to quit smoking. He does not specifically research electronic cigarettes, but does follow the literature written about them. This literature is still not plentiful, but some data is beginning to emerge. He commented that a perception exists that the devices emit a purely

water vapor, but this is not the case, as various chemicals have been detected in the nicotine cartridges. Professor Vander Weg explained that e-cigarettes are made up of three components, a battery, a liquid cartridge (that contains nicotine and other chemicals), and an atomizer (that transforms the liquid into vapor). While the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not issued any regulations on e-cigarettes yet, they have performed tests on the devices and found that the liquid cartridges of many different brands do contain harmful substances, including some confirmed and possible carcinogens. It is unclear at this point, however, how harmful these substances are at the levels in which they occur in e-cigarettes. That information will most likely not be known for years. Risks to bystanders are also not known at this time. Professor Vander Weg observed that there is currently no quality control for the manufacture of these devices and there can be wide variation among the products of the same manufacturer. E-cigarettes can also be used as a delivery device for various types of drugs. Although the long term effects of these devices will not be known for some time, Professor Vander Weg expressed concern about having e-cigarettes readily available and without regulation, given the potential harm to users and to bystanders. He added that e-cigarettes may function as a gateway to other tobacco products. It would also become challenging to enforce tobacco control policy if e-cigarettes are allowed in public places, as they are difficult to distinguish from regular cigarettes.

Professor Pendergast asked if there was evidence indicating that e-cigarettes are an effective smoking cessation device. Professor Vander Weg responded that he is aware of several studies on this topic. One study indicated that there were no significant differences in smoking cessation rates between those who used e-cigarettes and those who used patches. The number of those individuals who quit smoking using either method was quite small, however. Professor Bohannan commented that among traditional-aged college students it is unlikely that e-cigarettes would be used as a smoking cessation device. It is more likely that they would serve as a bridge to other tobacco products. She also noted the peculiarity of cigarette companies manufacturing both regular cigarettes and a competitive product, e-cigarettes. She expressed concern about the potential for e-cigarettes to lure young people who may never have used regular cigarettes into the smoking habit. Professor Bohannan stressed that the possible long-term effects of these devices on this vulnerable age group be kept in mind as the university community considers a response to e-cigarettes.

Professor Ernst reminded the group that the FDA has not yet issued regulations on this product and she expressed the opinion that it would therefore be premature for the university to modify its smoke-free policy to include e-cigarettes or to take any other actions just yet. She pointed out that there are many potentially harmful substances that the university does not prohibit. Professor Gillan commented that his concerns were focused on the vapor emitted by e-cigarette users and its possible negative health impact even on those who choose not to use the devices. In response to Professor Ernst, Professor Bohannan commented that the limited data that we do have would seem to indicate that e-cigarettes are potentially harmful. She added that there is a larger issue here of how to act in the face of uncertainty. She expressed the opinion that if cigarette smoking had been more regulated decades ago, when there was already some understanding of how harmful it is, our society would not now be facing the many negative health effects that smoking has caused. Professor Bohannan urged that the university be

proactive on this issue, especially considering the population on campus. If it later turns out that e-cigarettes are not harmful, then policies can be changed.

Secretary Cuning commented that in general we do not ban a product until there is proof that it does harm, but that in this case it might be argued that with all the damage cigarettes have caused for so many years, the burden is now on cigarette-makers to prove that their new product is not harmful. Professor Ali observed that the purpose of the smoke-free campus policy was to promote the public good, protecting those who choose not to smoke from smoking's harmful second-hand effects. Vice President Thomas added that we have a duty to protect our collective health. Professor Pendergast cautioned against opposing e-cigarettes too strongly until more conclusive data has appeared, as this is a strategy that might backfire among the student population.

President Lawrence asked the Councilors if they would like to vote on a resolution to recommend that e-cigarettes be included in the university's smoke-free policy. Several Councilors expressed the view that they were not ready to take this step.

IV. From the Floor – There were no items from the floor.

V. Announcements

- The Faculty Senate/Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce reception for local legislators will be held on Monday, December 9, 4:30-6:00 pm in the Old Capitol. President Lawrence urged Councilors to attend and thank our local legislators for all they do for us.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 10, 3:30-5:15 pm in the Senate Chamber of the Old Capitol. President Mason will be speaking, along with the new Vice President for Strategic Communication, Joe Brennan.
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 28, 3:30-5:15 pm in room 2390 of the University Capitol Centre.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Pendergast moved and Professor Gardner seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.