

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, October 30, 2012
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

- Senators Present: F. Abboud, T. Anthony, C. Benson, C. Bohannon, A. Budd, K. Chandran, D. Cuning, S. Daack-Hirsch, S. Ehly, E. Epping, E. Ernst, R. Ettinger, L. Fielding, J. Fuller, S. Gardner, K. Gerken, F. Gerr, N. Grosland, W. Haynes, D. Jeske, D. Katz, K. Kreder, B. Levy, S. Levy, V. Magnotta, K. Markon, P. Muhly, J. Murry, J. Pendergast, L. Ponto, S. Richardson, R. Rocha, A. Rodriguez-Rodriguez, S. Seibert, J. Sessions, K. Tachau, A. Thomas, T. Treat, W. Vispoel, E. Wasserman, D. Wilder, R. Williams, S. Wilson.
- Officers Present: R. Fumerton, E. Lawrence, L. Snetselaar.
- Officer Excused: N. Nisly.
- Senators Excused: D. Anderson, W. Coryell, C. Getz, B. Hoskins, Z. Jin, M. Johnson, J. McNamara, J. Murph, D. Murry, F. Nothwehr, S. Schultz, E. Ziegler.
- Senators Absent: J. Adrain, L. Ayres, I. Barbuzza, N. Basu, J. Bertolatus, D. Black, D. Bonthius, J. Brown, S. Clark, W. Davies, J. Fiedorowicz, M. Finkelstein, B. Gollnick, D. Hasan, K. Kieran, G. Lal, B. McMurray, J. Niebyl, D. O'Leary, J. Solow, J. Wemmie, S. White.
- Guests: P. B. Butler (Provost), W. Darling (Health & Human Physiology/FPCC), D. Drake (Office of the President), G. Gussin (Emeritus Faculty Council), J. Hermsen (Human Resources), B. Jett (*Daily Iowan*), J. Jorgensen (Office of the General Counsel), R. Kirby (Honors Program), S. Kurtz (Law/FRIC), T. Rice (Office of the Provost), L. Rubin (Office of the President), R. Saunders (Human Resources), A. Spisak (Honors Program), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate), one illegible name.

- I. Call to Order – President Snetselaar called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~facsen/archive/documents/Agenda.FacultySenate.10.30.12.pdf>
- II. Approvals
 - A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Pendergast moved and Professor Ernst seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (September 25, 2012) – Professor Treat moved and Professor Bohannon seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Committee Replacements (Erika Lawrence, Chair, Committee on Committees)
 - None at this time

III. New Business

- *Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee Update (Shelly Kurtz, FRIC Faculty Co-Chair)*

Professor Kurtz explained that he is the faculty co-chair of the Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee, a university charter committee composed of both faculty and professional and scientific staff members. The committee is tasked with providing advice to President Mason regarding the health and retirement benefits available to faculty and professional and scientific staff. Professor Kurtz noted that a mass email went out today announcing the beginning of open enrollment in university benefits. As of 2013, there will be only one health insurance plan, UI Choice. CHIP II, formerly available to UI employees, is being phased out. The committee had recommended to President Mason that CHIP II be discontinued because it was no longer cost-effective. The CHIP II plan did provide “worldwide” coverage, however, so the FRIC committee will be looking into how to make out-of-state care more affordable through UI Choice (which currently has a high co-pay for care received outside the state). This primarily affects faculty who may be on extended leave outside of Iowa or who have children in college in other states.

Single individuals enrolled in UI Choice will continue to pay no premium for their health insurance coverage. Those employees choosing one of the three family plans will see no increases in premiums for their coverage. Professor Kurtz indicated that this occurred because there had been no significant increase in claims recently. He suggested that perhaps the university’s wellness programs are making an impact on employee health. Regarding dental insurance, Professor Kurtz noted that the Dental I plan is also being eliminated, because it was not cost-effective. The Dental II plan is still available. Professor Kurtz concluded by adding that, by federal law, the maximum amount that could be put into a health spending account in 2013 is \$2500.

- *Honors Program Update (Arthur Spisak, Director and Robert Kirby, Associate Director)*

Professor Spisak explained that one of his tasks when he became director of the Honors Program last fall was to formulate requirements for the program in addition to the grade point average of 3.33 that must be maintained. In order to formulate these new requirements, program staff reviewed the activities of past and current honors students, determined what types of requirements would be a good fit for the UI culture, and consulted the list of basic characteristics of honors programs established by the National Collegiate Honors Council. Honors Program staff conducted a self-assessment to determine what honors students were actually doing, since currently they have no other requirements except to maintain their grade point average. Taking honors courses is a central activity for current honors students, so the newly-established requirements involve two levels of courses. Starting with the 2013-14 academic year, honors students will take a required minimum core of 12 semester hours of credit through honors coursework. This level of coursework will emphasize “building

knowledge.” A second level of coursework will emphasize “learning by doing,” and will offer students an array of options, including honors in the major, mentored research, study abroad, and internships.

Professor Spisak further noted that one more new requirement for honors students is that they will need to opt into the program through acceptance of a formal invitation. Currently, all students with a high enough high school grade point average and ACT score are placed into the Honors Program automatically. About 25% of the undergraduate student body has met this threshold, so the Honors Program includes about 6,500 students. It is expected that the new requirements will reduce that number by half. However, about half of the current honors students are inactive, so this should have little impact on the program. Graduation with university honors will now be noted on students’ transcripts. Professor Spisak concluded his presentation by indicating that these changes to the Honors Program had been reviewed by various faculty and student groups.

Professor Tachau commented that she recalled that the current requirement for students simply to maintain a certain GPA to remain in the Honors Program may have been instituted because the number of honors students was one of the components of a university’s ranking by *U.S. News and World Report*. Professor Spisak responded that there were good reasons why the Honors Program was structured as it had been and he praised its accomplishments. He added that he was not concerned about the potential drop in participants and any resulting impact on the UI’s rankings. Professor Sessions asked if there would be active support for honors courses in the departments. She noted that most honors courses in her department (History) were upper-level courses, but the new requirements call for additional introductory-level honors courses. Both Professor Sessions and Professor Spisak expressed their enthusiasm for teaching honors students. Professor Spisak commented that the biggest hurdle was making honors students aware of all the courses available to them. Now, however, honors students can be reached through their required courses. Professor Sessions also expressed concern that, since honors courses typically have smaller enrollments, departments may be reluctant to have faculty teach them, preferring instead that faculty teach courses with large numbers of students. Professor Murry asked how the Honors Program might play a role in recruiting students. Professor Spisak responded that the Honors Program will now have a stronger identity, making it more attractive to prospective students. Robert Kirby, Associate Director, added that scholarship opportunities might be available to Iowa students who are eligible for the Honors Program.

- *Criminal Background Check Policy (Warren Darling, Chair, Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee; Judie Hermsen, Human Resources; James Jorgensen, Office of the General Counsel; and Tom Rice, Associate Provost for Faculty)*

President Snetselaar referred the group to the cover sheet that accompanied the revised Criminal Background Check at Point of Hire policy. She pointed out the list of significant revisions to the policy, as well as the lists of concerns discussed by both the Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee and the Faculty Council. She added that, in addition to those two groups, the Office of the Provost, the Faculty Senate officers, and the Staff Council Executive Committee had reviewed the revised policy. The cover sheet also contained brief information on

whether criminal background checks (CBC's) were conducted at other Regents and CIC institutions.

Professor Darling then spoke in more detail about the revisions made to the policy and the discussion of those revisions by the Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC), which he chairs. He indicated that the most important revision to the policy was its extension to cover all regular merit, professional and scientific, and faculty positions, thus bringing the UI policy in line with the policies of many other institutions. He explained that the other major revision, discussed extensively by the FPCC, was whether the policy should list the specific single, minor convictions for which the Senior Human Resources Representatives would not need to consult with other offices on campus before proceeding with a hire. The FPCC had eventually decided to allow the Senior HR Representatives to work with the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of the Provost, and Human Resources to develop this list without putting it into the policy. Among the issues discussed by the Faculty Council, Professor Darling pointed out the concern over the CBC being completed no later than 15 days following the first day of employment. Professor Darling explained that it is unlikely that a faculty member would fall into this situation, given the usual timetable for faculty hires; this provision would mainly affect staff and student staff, who may be hired swiftly.

A senator asked what constituted a minor conviction. James Jorgensen, Office of the General Counsel, indicated that the three minor convictions originally listed in the policy were possession of alcohol under legal age, use of false identification by a minor to obtain alcohol, and driving without appropriate registration. The policy as now written would allow for convictions to be added or removed from the list as deemed appropriate by the offices listed above. Another senator asked for a definition of "security sensitive" (temporary employees in security sensitive positions would also need to undergo a CBC). The definition of this term was pointed out in section 9.3 c.(4) and includes positions involving patient contact, cash handling, etc. Professor Cunning asked if there were relevant legal terms that would apply to the phrase "minor conviction." Mr. Jorgensen responded that the revisers of the policy had not chosen to define in specific legal classifications the convictions for which consultation would not be necessary, instead focusing on those minor convictions that turn up frequently and rarely have relevance to a position. He added that guidelines on this matter would be developed to ensure that the policy is applied uniformly. A question was raised about employees who eventually go on to commit crimes. Mr. Jorgensen responded that this would be addressed through existing human resources policies.

Professor Tachau expressed approval for this version of the policy, commenting that it was appropriate for a university setting. Professor Barcey Levy observed that the single minor convictions referred to by Mr. Jorgensen seemed most applicable to young people. Professor Darling and Mr. Jorgensen responded that these are the convictions that come up most frequently and are very infrequently relevant to job duties. In response to several questions, Mr. Jorgensen indicated that it is common practice for CBC's to go back only seven years. All domestic and international locations in which the applicant has lived during that time period would be checked. He added that seven years has become the standard because of federal concern about a disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities of more lengthy CBC's. Professor Bohannon asked if the stricken sentence regarding allowing individual departments to

have more comprehensive CBC guidelines would be included in the final version of the policy. Professor Darling indicated that it would not be.

Professor Pendergast moved and Professor Ernst seconded that the revised Criminal Background Check at Point of Hire policy, with the abovementioned sentence stricken, be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 13, 3:30-5:15 pm, 2520D University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 4, 3:30 – 5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.
- The annual Faculty Senate/Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce reception for local legislators will be held on Monday, December 10, 4:30-6:00 pm in the Old Capitol.
- The Working at Iowa survey will run until midnight tonight. Professor Snetselaar urged those who have not yet filled out the survey to do so.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Bohannon moved and Professor Pendergast seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Snetselaar adjourned the meeting at 4:20 pm.