

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, December 7, 2021
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Zoom

MINUTES

Senators Present: J. Achrazoglou, F. Ahmad, D. Andersen, B. Ayati, J. Barker, M. Bhatti, S. Bodine, A. Brian, J. Buckley, C. Campbell, J. Carlson, M. Carvour, M. Charlton, C. Cherwin, A. Curtius, R. Curto, S. Datchuk, S. Dayal, L. Durairaj, S. Elangovan, L. Erdahl, A. Farag, P. Gilbert, E. Gillan, S. Girotra, L. Glass, A. Grooms, C. Grueter, J. Halekas, N. Handoo, K. Hegarty, A. Hollingworth, Y. Imai, B. Janssen, A. Jaynes, L. Joseph, J. Kayle, A. Kitchen, J. Kline, A. Merryman, A. Panos, H. Parrish, G. Pierce, M. Pizzimenti, P. Polgreen, A. Prince, S. Sosale, A. Strathman, J. Streit, A. Vijn, E. Welder, D. Wilder, L. Zingman, M. Zmolek.

Officers Present: T. Marshall, A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, J. Yockey.

Officers Excused: M. Lehan Mackin.

Senators Excused: D. Anderson, C. Bradley, C. Brochu, M. Cantrell, A. Chauhan, M. Cunningham-Ford, A. Estapa, M. Kivlighan, J. Murry, N. Nisly, K. Parker.

Senators Absent: N. Brogden, B. Dixon, S. Harwani, D. Jalal, D. Meyerholz, T. Midtrod, Y. Sato, L. Song, C. Swanson, A. Vikram.

Guests: M. Durham (Office of the Ombudsperson); A. Flaming (Center for Teaching); C. Joyce (Office of the Ombudsperson); M. Juelfs (UI Dance Marathon); P. Kamin (UI Dance Marathon); G. Kreber (*Daily Iowan*); J. Lynch (Office of the Ombudsperson); B. Marcelo (Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion); M. Marcelo (Threat Assessment Program); K. Perez (*Daily Iowan*); D. Witt (Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee); L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

- I. Call to Order – President Marshall called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.
- II. Approvals
 - A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Pizzimenti moved and Professor Joseph seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (October 26, 2021) – Professor Farag moved and Professor Strathman seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Committee Appointments (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Chair, Committee on Committees)
 - Debra Trusty (Classics) to fill the unexpired term of Gregory Shill (Law) on the Parking and Transportation Charter Committee, Spring 2022
 - Robert Bork (Art & Art History) to fill the unexpired term of Barbara Mooney (Art & Art History) on the Campus Planning Committee, 2022-23
 Professor Farag moved and Professor Curtius seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. Faculty Senate Elections 2022 Vacancy Tally (Teresa Marshall) – President Marshall explained that Senate approval of the vacancy tally is necessary before we can move ahead with our elections process in the spring semester. Professor Farag moved and Professor Pizzimenti seconded that the vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

III. New Business

- *Dance Marathon (Mercedes Juelfs, Faculty and Staff Chair, UI Dance Marathon and Paige Kamin, Campus Relations Director, UI Dance Marathon)*

Ms. Juelfs informed the group that the annual UI Dance Marathon (UIDM) Big Event will take place on February 4-5, 2022. She explained that over the years, the Big Event has raised millions of dollars for the UI Stead Family Children’s Hospital. A schedule of events and additional information can be found [here](#). Many volunteer opportunities related to the Big Event exist for faculty and staff. A volunteer application form can be found on the website. Ms. Juelfs noted that some Dance Marathon members can have difficulty reaching their fundraising minimum. Donors can contribute to these dancers through the website. She added that the website also includes a link to a UIDM Parent Wishlist. Donors can purchase items from the Wishlist via Amazon and have those items shipped to UIDM for delivery to the families of children being treated in the hospital.

In addition to the Big Event, UIDM also hosts various events for student volunteers and families throughout the year. This fall, UIDM was able to return to its traditional programming, including some in-person events and activities, Ms. Juelfs indicated. She highlighted one of these activities – Dance Marathon the Marathon (DMM) is a marathon training group open to faculty, staff, and students with the goal of running in next year’s Chicago Marathon. DMM raises awareness about UIDM’s mission. Ms. Juelfs invited Senators to join the UIDM Steering Committee, which meets monthly throughout the year, in order to be informed of UIDM activities and volunteer opportunities. Questions about the Steering Committee can be directed to dm-fschair@uiowa.edu

Concluding her remarks, Ms. Juelfs noted several points of pride for UIDM this year: a return to in-person programming; a student-led mask campaign; the launch of this year’s campaign, *Endless Hope*; the recruitment of over 400 dancers on “1/2 Off Registration Day,” and the raising of over \$300,000 in a 24-hour period on “Day to DM” in October.

- *Office of the Ombudsperson Annual Report (Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Faculty University Ombudsperson; Cynthia Joyce, University Ombudsperson; Jennifer Lynch, Associate Ombudsperson)*

Professor Durham reminded the group that the Office of the Ombudsperson creates an annual report describing the Office's activities. The current annual report can be found [here](#). She explained that the role of the Office is to help faculty, staff, and students resolve conflicts and problems. The work of the Office is governed by ethical principles set out by the [International Ombudsman Association](#). Confidentiality is the bedrock of the Office, Professor Durham commented. The only exceptions to this principle are the risk of physical harm and a court or legal order to disclose. Confidentiality can be crucial in surfacing serious issues, she noted.

When visitors come to the Office, the Ombudspersons help them clarify their goals, identify the range of options – formal or informal – available to them, and develop a plan of action, Professor Durham continued. The Office's neutrality, combined with its confidentiality, can be very helpful in this process. The Office's confidentiality and informality provide an opportunity to resolve an issue before the need for formal actions, such as filing a grievance or taking legal action, arises. Informally, the Ombudspersons can serve as go-betweens, facilitate group discussions, and mediate conflicts.

Ms. Lynch indicated that the Office saw 646 visitors during 2020-21. This is a decline from the past three years. Several reasons may explain this drop. First, faculty, staff, and students were interacting less, leading to fewer instances of conflict. And, the Office had fewer opportunities to publicize its work, leading to less awareness of its existence. In 2020-21, staff again made up the largest category of visitors, at 41%. Faculty represented 28% of visitors, which is an increase from five years previously. Ms. Lynch pointed out that the Office always serves a higher percentage of women and people of color than would be predicted based on their campus population. Turning to visitor concerns, Ms. Lynch noted that the primary reason that visitors came to the Office in 2020-21 involved a problem in evaluative relationships, meaning a problem with someone they evaluate or who evaluates them. An example would be a faculty member having a problem with the behavior of an undergraduate student in one of their classes. The percentage of visitors experiencing disrespectful behavior was 24%. This represents a decrease from 30% in the previous year. The Ombudspersons attribute this drop to the campus being largely remote last year. An example of disrespectful behavior would be a faculty member making condescending remarks to another faculty member at a faculty meeting. The Office also provides consultations, Ms. Lynch indicated. For example, an administrator may call the Office for advice on dealing with two staff members in conflict. Professor Durham explained that the Office assesses the perceived risks to campus of the situations that they encounter. Only 29% of visitors had a situation that did not pose a risk to campus. The biggest risk that the Office continues to see is loss of productivity due to ongoing conflict involving more than two people, at 42% of cases with perceived risk. Via a survey, 86% of visitors indicated satisfaction with the Office's services.

Ms. Joyce reminded the group that each year the Office highlights common themes that emerged throughout the past year. COVID, of course, was a major concern. Ms. Joyce

recognized the constraints on actions by university administrators, but also emphasized the high distress seen among faculty, staff, and students regarding public health measures during the pandemic. She asked for kindness, patience, and flexibility as we all deal with COVID. Ms. Joyce also acknowledged that many administrators have worked very hard to navigate situations that have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) component, but the Ombudspersons also see some common errors. Foremost among these errors is delaying action; inaction carries its own risks. Poor communication with all the stakeholders involved is another common error, as is failure to reach out to campus experts for help. She urged remaining alert to DEI components of any difficult situation, quickly convening a meeting of key resources and decision-makers to develop a good plan of action, and doing proactive DEI training so that units are ready to deal with these issues as they come up. The final issue to highlight this year involves student academic accommodations. The Ombudspersons have seen a number of cases recently regarding students very frustrated about trying to obtain academic accommodations. This can be a challenging and emotional experience for students, while faculty members may not know how to deal with requests for accommodations and may be overwhelmed by the volume of requests. The Ombudspersons recommend more training for faculty members and an emphasis on clear expectations for faculty and students around accommodations. They would also like to encourage a more proactive approach, including increased collaboration among Student Disability Services and other campus offices, increased awareness of diversity in learning styles, and greater emphasis on universal design.

There have been some personnel changes in the Office, Ms. Joyce commented. Professor Durham started her position as Faculty Ombudsperson in July. She is a professor and Collegiate Scholar in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Professor Durham has a joint appointment in the departments of Journalism & Mass Communication and Gender, Women's, & Sexuality Studies. Ms. Joyce has been with the Office since 2005. She will be retiring in the spring and a search will be launched for her replacement. Ms. Lynch joined the Office in 2020 and has a half-time appointment, along with another half-time appointment with the Center for Diversity and Enrichment. Nadia Sabbagh Steinberg is a lecturer in the School of Social Work, with ten years' clinical experience, who also holds a half-time appointment in the Office. Ms. Joyce indicated that the Ombudspersons are currently meeting visitors via Zoom and phone, but that in-person visits can be requested. She closed her presentation with the Office's slogan, *No problem too big or too small. Let's talk!*

Professor Joseph asked how information regarding the impact to the university of lost productivity was gathered. Ms. Joyce explained that the Ombudspersons make a determination regarding perceived risks to the university following a visitor's first visit, after listening to the details of a case. Sometimes a visitor will simply state that a situation is impacting their job performance, as well. President Marshall asked whether there has been an increase in stress-related visits recently, given the pandemic and other issues confronting us. Ms. Joyce responded that they have seen enormous stress among their visitors lately, particularly at the beginning of the fall semester. In the Ombudspersons' observations over the years, whenever the campus faces a major stressor, that stressor intensifies pre-existing conflicts. Professor Farag asked what other types of visitors that the Office sees, in addition to faculty, staff, and students. Ms. Joyce responded that the Office sees community members, patients, alumni, prospective and former

employees, and parents of students. President Marshall thanked the Ombudspersons for their presentation and wished Ms. Joyce an enjoyable retirement.

- *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Sparkshop: Identifying Individuals in Distress (Moni Marcelo, Threat Assessment Program)*

As part of the ongoing series of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Sparkshops, as well as in response to questions regarding how to assist students in distress, Dr. Anna Flaming, Director of the Center for Teaching, introduced Ms. Marcelo, Behavior Assessment Consultant and Student Case Manager for the Threat Assessment Program, the mission of which *involves implementing robust support through compassionate solution-based strategies for individuals experiencing distress or grievances through outreach, intervention, and de-escalation to mitigate the risk of planned physical harm to others or self.* The program's primary objective is to provide an individual with assistance, while working to ensure effective safety outcomes for the campus community.

Ms. Marcelo began her presentation by asking the group, *What comes up for you when you hear Threat Assessment?* Orally and via the chat, senators offered various responses. Ms. Marcelo commented that the goal of the Threat Assessment Program is prevention, advocacy, and empowerment. She and her colleagues typically introduce themselves as the Assessment and Care Team. The team's role is to provide robust and unique strategies for mitigating violence. If someone is on the path to violence towards themselves or others, the team strives to de-escalate the situation and support the distressed individual. Working with campus and community partners, the team uses outreach, intervention, and creative approaches, recognizing that we all experience the world differently. Ms. Marcelo indicated that the team has a director, along with several members who focus on the hospital, and others who focus on the academic campus. Team members come from a variety of professional backgrounds, which facilitates healthy dialogue.

Continuing on to an overview of the program, Ms. Marcelo pointed out that threat assessment is not a response training team for active shooters (this is handled by the UI Police). The team's work is also not punitive. She indicated that she is embedded within the Office of the Dean of Students and works extensively with the Office of Student Accountability. Her role is not to make decisions regarding students, but to work with distressed students to guide them toward "soft landings" for their difficult situations. The team's work is also not predictive. Threat assessment is proactive and focuses on prevention. The team gathers information from across campus and the community in an effort to avoid silos of information. It also builds community and coalition to provide a range of services to distressed individuals. Threat assessment is compassionate towards those going through difficult times. The team's approach to its work includes helping distressed individuals so they don't "fall through the cracks," as well as helping individuals set boundaries, manage fear, and plan for safety.

Ms. Marcelo indicated that the purpose of today's presentation is to *grow skills and awareness in ways to be proactive and compassionate in times of distress.* The objectives of the presentation are to *learn about core aspects of the Threat Assessment Program* and to *practice using boundary setting, fear management, and safety planning to identify and refer*

individuals who are in distress. Following the Sparkshop pattern of *what-so what-now what*, Ms. Marcelo explained that the *what* of today's presentation is *signs of distress or violence are indicated early but not identified as such or go unreported.* The *so what* is *possible escalation; increased distress for the student; possible violence towards self or others.* The *now what* is *best practices for identifying if a situation needs to be reported to the Threat Assessment Program.* She then posed the question, *What would you do in this situation?* and introduced a scenario involving a troubled student. Via the chat, senators suggested different courses of action for a faculty member to take. Ms. Marcelo emphasized that the Threat Assessment Program exists to serve as a resource to faculty members. She added that she and her colleagues are comfortable both reaching out directly to a troubled student, or following up with a student once a faculty member has made the initial contact. Community resources are also available, with personnel who can reach out to troubled students.

Turning to general advice for faculty members dealing with an individual in distress, Ms. Marcelo urged that they report concerns to the Threat Assessment Team. It is very difficult for individuals in distress to ask for help, she commented, so listening skills are essential. Try to maintain the individual's dignity as they are talking about their problems, she urged. Other advice included *being open-minded to solutions, preventing silos of information, embracing collaboration, and creating a positive culture.* Ms. Marcelo observed that when someone is in distress, it is easy for those surrounding that person to become fearful, when in fact so many resources and solutions exist to prevent a negative outcome to that person's crisis. Regarding what types of incidents to report to the program, Ms. Marcelo listed *unusual communication or a threat to harm self or others; desperation, hopelessness, or suicidal thoughts; unusual fixation on stressful events or losses; inappropriate interest in weapons, mass attacks, or violence; and suggestion of violence as a solution to a problem.* Ms. Marcelo then provided the team's contact information, including their email address, uitat@uiowa.edu. A report can be submitted at hr.uiowa.edu/threat-assessment. The report can be anonymous or you can provide your contact information. The Threat Assessment Program offers brief or longer presentations, in-person or via Zoom, by request for units.

Professor Carlson commented that the team's name, the Threat Assessment Program, could be viewed as intimidating by the troubled individuals who are contacted by the team. Such individuals might assume that the program's function is disciplinary, not supportive. He added that he has heard of faculty members who, having gotten into conflicts with administrators, have been contacted by the Threat Assessment Program, in what the faculty member perceived as an intimidation attempt by administrators. Professor Carlson wondered if a name change might help the program improve its image. Ms. Marcelo responded that in 1998 the Board of Regents, State of Iowa required that the university create a threat assessment program, so the name cannot be changed. The program is aware of the perception that Professor Carlson referred to, however, and is striving to better articulate its purpose as a prevention, not a punitive, program, she continued. The group often now presents itself as the Assessment and Care Team and focuses on behavior assessment so that crises can be averted. The program has grown and changed considerably since 1998, and continues to build connections and coalition with others on campus, including faculty.

- *Executive Session: Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee Update (Doris Witt, Chair, Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee and Teresa Marshall)*

Professor Carlson moved and Professor Campbell seconded that the Senate move into executive session, inviting Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee chair Doris Witt to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

The Senate discussed potential revisions to several Operations Manual policies.

Professor Glass moved and Professor Panos seconded that the Senate move out of executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

- *President's Report (Teresa Marshall)*

Regarding COVID, President Marshall noted that lawsuits have put on hold any federal vaccine mandates that may have affected the university.

Two administrative searches are currently underway, one for the dean of the College of Dentistry and one for the Assistant Vice President and Director of UI Public Safety.

Faculty morale is an issue that the Senate officers are concerned about, President Marshall indicated. The officers have been trying to identify strategies to improve faculty morale. The Faculty Council discussed this issue and offered some ideas. President Marshall invited Senators to suggest ideas, as well, and to submit them either to herself or to Secretary Lehan Mackin.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 25, 3:30-5:15 pm, Zoom.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, February 8, 3:30-5:15 pm, Zoom.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Pizzimenti moved and Professor Gillan seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Marshall adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.