

**FACULTY SENATE**  
**Tuesday, March 28, 2023**  
**3:30 – 5:15 pm**  
**Senate Chamber, Old Capitol**

**MINUTES**

Senators Present: B. An, D. Anderson, B. Ayati, A. Brian, M. Carvour, M. Charlton, C. Cherwin, M. Coleman, R. Curto, H. Dybevik, A. Estapa, A. Farag, C. Fox, S. Ganesan, P. Gilbert, B. Greteman, J. Gutierrez, N. Handoo, A. Jaynes, L. Joseph, A. Kalnins, A. Kitchen, M. Kivlighan, J. Kline, M. Landsman, D. Langbehn, A. Lesch, V. Lira, D. Macfarlane, T. Mangum, S. Martini, D. McGehee, M. McQuistan, J. Murry, A. Panos, J. Sa-Aadu, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, Y. Shi, A. Shibli-Rahhal, C. Swanson, E. Van Otterloo, T. Wadas, S. Young.

Officers Present: E. Gillan, T. Marshall, A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, C. Sheerin.

Senators Excused: N. Brogden, M. Cantrell, J. Carlson, L. Durairaj, N. Greysen, C. Grueter, B. Janssen, C. Just, K. Parker, C. Pinnaro, M. Pizzimenti, A. Strathman, E. Welder.

Senators Absent: M. Abou Alaiwa, J. Achrazoglou, K. Ait-Aissa, M. Bhatti, R. Cox, P. Ferguson, J. Halekas, E. Hill, J. Kayle, B. Li, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, P. Nau, G. Pierce, P. Polgreen, Y. Sato, C. Turvey, A. Vikram, L. Zingman.

Guests: D. Barker (Board of Regents, State of Iowa); A. Crow (Graduate & Professional Student Government); L. McLeran (Office of the President); L. Tovar (Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion); A. Williams (Center for Teaching); L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

I. Call to Order – President Rodríguez-Rodríguez called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Mangum moved and Professor Anderson seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (February 7, 2023) – Professor Macfarlane moved and Professor Langbehn seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Committee Appointments (Ed Gillan, Chair, Committee on Committees)
  - *None at this time*

### III. New Business

- *Amber Crow, President, Graduate & Professional Student Government*

Ms. Crow indicated that she is a third-year College of Law student, soon to graduate. She also received her undergraduate degree at UI, arriving on campus in 2015. Ms. Crow then gave an overview of the activities of the Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG) recently. Last year, GPSG conducted a needs assessment of its constituents. While some results were not surprising, there were some jarring elements. The assessment revealed that graduate and professional students, including international students and students with families, were struggling with their mental well-being, especially with isolation and loneliness. Many of our graduate programs are very competitive, while others are quite small, so that fostering community can be difficult. Food insecurity is also on the rise. Ms. Crow commented that it is challenging to thrive in an academic setting when one feels isolated and even hungry. As a result of these findings, GPSG has been supporting food pantries and hosting social events. An especially popular social event was Friday Night Vibes, held several times in a local restaurant. Other events, such as ice skating, roller skating and a fall festival, attracted those interested in more family-friendly activities or events without alcohol.

Continuing with her description of GPSG recent activity, Ms. Crow noted that the organization has given away about \$160,000, split evenly between grants for student research and travel and grants to student organizations for programming on campus and in the community. A longtime advocate for suicide prevention and mental health, Ms. Crow indicated that GPSG has chosen to prioritize this type of programming. Early in the year, GPSG joined with their colleagues at ISU and UNI to lobby for additional funding for mental health-related resources at the three universities to be added to the appropriation request from the state government. The GPSG governmental relations committee has been busy preparing for Hawkeye Caucus Day at the state capitol next month; the committee also led a very successful Hawk the Vote campaign last fall. As part of an effort to strengthen advocacy for international students, GPSG was instrumental in the [re-naming](#) of the IMU 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Ballroom to the International Ballroom. Robust discussion took place within GPSG regarding whether to support a fee increase to fund IMU renovations. Ms. Crow took pride in representatives' efforts to engage in this issue, evidence that GPSG is thriving again after a period of waning interest.

Among numerous other initiatives, GPSG supported the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students (COGS) in their collective bargaining negotiations, helped fund the Law Clinic, advocated for emergency housing for international students, worked toward developing resources related to finding affordable housing, founded a pilot peer-based mental health support group, and supported the university's continued usage of the [Kognito](#) Distress Intervention and Suicide Prevention Program. GPSG strongly encourages all members of the university community, including faculty and staff, to take the Kognito training. Upcoming GPSG activity includes supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming on campus, along with funding several University Counseling Service (UCS) programs and recruiting for annual elections. Moving forward, GPSG will keep a broad focus on food insecurity, DEI efforts, fair compensation, and isolation and loneliness on campus, Ms. Crow concluded.

Professor Langbehn requested more details about Kognito. Ms. Crow responded that Kognito is an interactive online tool that helps participants identify when an individual may be struggling with mental health issues, start a conversation with that individual, and steer them towards available resources. Professor Joseph commended GPSG members, and especially Ms. Crow, for their dedication to shared governance and their willingness to put in many hours of work on behalf of their constituents. Ms. Crow expressed appreciation for this recognition and emphasized that GPSG members care deeply about their constituents and about seeking solutions to the problems they face. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez asked how many graduate and professional students have families. Ms. Crow did not know the specific number, but she speculated that it was larger than one might assume. She added that some international students with families are here alone, far from their children, which is an additional stressor. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez recalled her experiences as a graduate student with young children and she thanked Ms. Crow and GPSG for their efforts to assist graduate and professional students with families.

- *Mental Health Training Resolution (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez)*

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez explained that the Senate officers were approached by the undergraduate, graduate, and professional student shared governance leaders with a request for the Faculty Council and Faculty Senate to endorse a resolution encouraging all faculty and staff to participate in the Kognito mental health online training. She reminded the group that Kognito is an interactive, online simulation program available to students, faculty, and staff. The program trains users to have conversations with students or colleagues who are in distress and to direct these individuals to appropriate resources. The training takes about 45-60 minutes. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez praised the quality of the Kognito program. She added that the Faculty Council, as well as Staff Council, have endorsed the resolution.

Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Kalnins seconded that the Faculty Senate endorse the Undergraduate Student Government resolution encouraging faculty and staff to participate in the Kognito mental health online training.

Professor Kalnins asked for background on the company that created the program. He also wanted to know if any of our campus faculty or staff subject matter experts had reviewed the program for consistency with current knowledge and best practice. Ms. Crow responded that the [Kognito](#) company specializes in training on mental health and well-being. The company's clients include many higher education institutions. The UI University Counseling Service personnel are strong supporters of the program, as is Professor Barry Schreier, Director of Higher Education Programming at the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health and clinical professor of counseling psychology. Ms. Crow added that the contract with Kognito costs \$100,000 for three years and that the fee is based on the user group population.

The motion carried unanimously.

- *Liz Tovar, Executive Officer and Associate Vice President of the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

Dr. Tovar indicated that her goal for today's presentation was to describe her role on campus, as well as the role of the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#), and to talk about the challenges we currently face related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). She also wanted to suggest some guiding questions to consider when we think about DEI. The Division of DEI is comprised of three components, she explained. The [Office of Institutional Equity](#) is the university's compliance office, tasked with ensuring that UI is following federal laws. The [Center for Inclusive Academic Excellence](#) focuses on student success and retention. Among the programs housed here is the long-standing federally-funded [TRIO](#) program. [Inclusive Education and Strategic Initiatives](#) offers voluntary educational opportunities for faculty and staff. The Division also collaborates on initiatives with shared governance groups.

Recalling President Wilson's remarks at the recent Staff Council annual DEI celebration, Dr. Tovar quoted the President's statement that, "A university is healthiest when it reflects the society it serves." President Wilson went on to say that, "by definition, a university needs to include multiple perspectives and strive to foster dialogue and understanding across differences," and "the definition of diversity needs to be thought about in the broadest sense possible." Building on President Wilson's remarks, Dr. Tovar added that the role of DEI on any campus is to sustain a culture in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute and to reach their full potential. The campus culture should also prepare our students to enter a global society and to work with a wide variety of people. Dr. Tovar complimented senators on the work they do every day to prepare our students for the future.

Dr. Tovar then quoted organizational psychologist Adam Grant who wrote, "If knowledge is power, then knowing what you don't know is wisdom." She observed that she has come to understand recently that there are many people who don't know about the breadth and depth of DEI-related work. She has also learned that there is a massive misperception of what DEI is. Dr. Tovar expressed the view that we must do a better job of defining DEI, rather than having others define it for us. The consequences of proposed state legislation to defund DEI initiatives on campus, she continued, would be widespread, impacting the skill sets we provide to our students, our efforts to recruit and retain outstanding faculty members, and our participation in NCAA athletics. Dr. Tovar indicated that she is looking forward to the study and review, recently initiated by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, of all DEI programs at the Regents institutions. The review will be a great opportunity for our campus leadership to collaborate with the Regents in order to evaluate how we provide campus services that enable our students to obtain a world-class education and our faculty and staff to enjoy an outstanding work environment.

There are four questions that Dr. Tovar suggested we keep in mind as we think about DEI. First, how can we more clearly define DEI? She indicated that she tends to refer to *culture* rather than *DEI* because *culture* is a concept that most people can more readily understand. If we do not create a culture at UI that draws people here and keeps them here, then we have failed as an institution. Taking the women's basketball team as an example, Dr. Tovar noted that the players are dedicated to maintaining a great team culture. Team members respect members' differences, they are open to receiving feedback, and they know how to work together towards a

common goal. On the UI campus, DEI plays a large role in shaping the culture we want to create here. Second, how do we clearly set goals and measurable outcomes that will inform and have a positive impact on, not just our campus community, but our surrounding communities across the state and country? The Division of DEI is seeking to learn from employers around the state what kind of DEI-related skill sets they need for their employees to possess. Third, how can we foster a culture in which disrupting divisiveness is a common occurrence? In other words, how do we work with people who are different from us to find common ground and thus achieve our institutional goals? Dr. Tovar indicated that she had recently had a robust conversation with members of the Johnson County Republican Party about the meaning of DEI on our campus. She commented that she had found participation in this meeting to be an informative experience and that she had learned more about the views of people who question the value of DEI. Fourth, who can we partner with to accomplish our DEI goals? It takes an entire community to do DEI work effectively, Dr. Tovar observed. In conclusion, Dr. Tovar stated that we should ask ourselves, how can we define DEI work, how can we educate our students, and how can we shape the future, not only of our state, but of our nation? She added that the three takeaways from her talk today were *culture*, *community*, and *common ground*; these three concepts are her priorities for DEI on campus.

Professor Langbehn commented that he supported the ideals behind DEI and wondered how to combat DEI misperceptions in the wider community. Dr. Tovar responded that there are multiple perspectives in the DEI space. Misunderstandings arise when we fail to ask questions about what something really means. Our goal should be to create spaces in which we can truly listen to and communicate with one another. She mentioned several resources. The Obermann Center sponsors a working group on facilitating difficult dialogs; the group seeks to help students engage with diverse perspectives. Kognito has produced a module called [Cultivating Inclusive Communities](#), an avatar-based simulation series in which participants can learn strategies for having difficult conversations. Professor Kalnins followed up to ask if communication would be at the center of Dr. Tovar's message to legislators regarding DEI; she responded that it was and that she hoped legislators would be open to hearing her message.

Professor Mangum thanked Dr. Tovar for her presentation. She expressed concern, shared by many other faculty members, about those voices across our state and our country, who are speaking loudly and forcefully about controlling the lives of transpeople and eliminating efforts and policies that support people of color. Our students and colleagues who belong to these vulnerable groups, however, are not hearing voices speaking loudly and forcefully in opposition to these views. That silence can be read as a lack of care and support. She welcomed advice on how to deal with this situation. Dr. Tovar acknowledged that our campus community wants to hear from us. The Division of DEI seeks to communicate not just through statements, but in other, more creative ways, especially through its website. For example, if legislation is proposed, an explanation is given on its potential impact on members of our community. Dr. Tovar tries to meet with groups across campus, but she also relies on collegiate DEI leaders to help with dissemination of DEI messaging throughout their organizations. Others are encouraged to share this messaging widely, as well.

Professor Curto asked for more information about the upcoming Board of Regents review of DEI programs on the three campuses. Dr. Tovar responded that the university has not yet received directions from the Regents about the review. She hoped to be able to provide an update at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Referring to Dr. Tovar's earlier comments about the need for improved communication around DEI, Professor Young asked if the Division intended to provide information about the economic impact on the university of the potential loss of DEI programming. Dr. Tovar responded that over the past month, the Division has been collecting a wealth of data on the possible economic and academic impacts. Federal grants typically have a DEI component, so that our extensive research funding could be jeopardized if DEI programming is eliminated here. The NCAA seeks confirmation that the Athletics department is working with the entire institution on DEI. Our institutional reputation could also suffer, affecting our ability to recruit the best faculty, staff, and students. Professor Charlton asked about the possibility of the university issuing a statement in support of some of our vulnerable populations. Dr. Tovar indicated that she would follow up with her after the meeting.

- *Consensual Relationships Policy Update (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez)*

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez explained that a committee was formed last fall to review and to recommend possible changes to the [Consensual Relationships Involving Students](#) policy. The committee is charged with reviewing research on and best practices for such policies at higher education institutions; reviewing similar policies from peer institutions; meeting with various stakeholders, including relevant administrators, along with faculty, staff, and students, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the policy; and outlining proposed changes to the policy.

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez and Tiffini Stevenson Earl, Director of Equity Investigations and ADA Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity, co-chair the committee, which includes administrators, faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. The faculty committee members are Naomi Greysen, Associate Professor, Departments of American Studies, English, and Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies, and Faculty Councilor and Senator; June Tai, Clinical Professor, College of Law; and Doris Witt, Associate Professor, Department of English, and Chair of the Senate's Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee.

In order to gather feedback from faculty, the committee has proposed surveying the members of the Faculty Senate. This will be a short survey that will include an option for an open-ended text response. Senators will also receive a link to the current policy so that they can review it prior to filling out the survey. Given the low number of instructional-track faculty (ITF) in the Senate, an effort will also be made to gather feedback from additional ITF.

Professor Langbehn asked if Senators will be informed regarding areas of particular controversy in the current policy, as well as of potential revision. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez indicated that this would be the case, but that survey respondents should feel free to point out other areas of concern in their comments.

- *President's Report (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez)*

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez reported that a committee has been formed to review the [charter committee](#) structure. Past President Marshall serves as the Faculty Senate representative on the committee. The review committee is seeking to determine whether the committee structure that was developed many years ago is still appropriate today. She added that, for the past few months, the Faculty Council has been hearing presentations from the chairs and co-chairs of a number of charter committees, to learn about recent committee activity, as well as about challenges facing individual committees.

As a result of discussions that took place at the August Faculty Council/Administrative Retreat, a task force, chaired by Secretary Sheerin, has been formed to address childcare issues. The task force will identify issues and challenges surrounding childcare that impact members of the university community and will develop and recommend solutions to address these concerns. The task force intends to identify best practice guidelines to be shared with deans and to seek some university-facilitated solutions. Improved communication around existing childcare resources is also a focus of the task force.

Acting on recommendations made in the ITF policy review report, the Faculty Senate's Committee on Rules and Bylaws will be examining the Senate's current structure and proposing changes to allow for more representation for faculty on the non-tenure tracks.

The Senate officers have been considering ways to make Faculty Senate meetings more engaging. This initiative will be a priority throughout the next year. President Wilson has indicated that she would like to be more involved in Council and Senate meetings, as well. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez commented that she would like to see more administrators attending our meetings, in general.

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez invited feedback or comments from Senators on any issues of concern to them. In closing her report, she reminded the group of the [2023 Highly Prestigious Faculty Award Investiture](#) taking place on Tuesday, April 25, 1:30-3:00 pm, in Hancher Auditorium. The event is open to all. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez urged Senators to attend and celebrate the successes of our colleagues. She also thanked the Office of the Provost for hosting this event.

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

V. Announcements

- Regents Award for Faculty Excellence Recipients

President Rodríguez-Rodríguez announced that the following individuals have been selected to receive the 2023 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence: Ted Abel (Neuroscience and Pharmacology), Joseph Cavanaugh (Biostatistics), Rebekah Kowal (Dance), Joseph Reinhardt (Biomedical Engineering), Karin Weber-Gasparoni (Pediatric Dentistry), and Catherine Welch (Psychological and Quantitative Foundations)

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, April 11, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, April 25, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol. Election of officers will take place.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Mangum moved and Professor Langbehn seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Rodríguez-Rodríguez adjourned the meeting at 4:45 pm.