

FACULTY COUNCIL
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre

MINUTES

Councilors Present: D. Anderson, R. Curto, A. Farag, C. Fox, N. Greyser, J. Gutierrez, C. Just, J. Kline, J. Koch, T. Mangum, D. Shane.

Officers Present: M. Charlton, E. Gillan, A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, C. Sheerin.

Councilors Excused: L. Durairaj, M. McQuistan, M. Santillan, M. Schroeder, A. Shibli-Rahhal, E. Welder.

Councilors Absent: J. Sa-Aadu.

Guests: M. G. Durham (Office of the Ombudsperson), M. Gardinier (Emeritus Faculty Council), L. Geist (Office of the Provost), S. Reddy (*Daily Iowan*), I. Tisdale (*Daily Iowan*), D. Witt (Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

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

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Just moved and Professor Fox seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Council Minutes (October 10, 2023) – Professor Mangum moved and Professor Farag seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Draft Faculty Senate Agenda (December 5, 2023) – President Gillan indicated that changes may be made to the draft agenda prior to the Senate meeting. Professor Just moved and Professor Farag seconded that the draft agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. Committee Appointments (Caroline Sheerin, Chair, Committee on Committees) –
 - *None at this time*
- E. Faculty Senate Elections 2024 Vacancy Tally – President Gillan explained that Faculty Senate approval of the vacancy tally is necessary before we can move ahead with our election process in the spring semester. Professor Farag moved and Professor Shane seconded that the vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously. Professor Curto asked when the changes underway to the instructional faculty track policy would be reflected in the Senate elections. President Gillan explained that the policy revision would not impact the numbers calculated for the annual vacancy tally. The collegiate cap on the percentage of instructional track faculty members allowed to be elected, however, will increase to 20%; this change

mainly affects the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The smaller colleges will continue to be capped at one instructional faculty member in the collegiate delegation.

III. New Business

- *Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Faculty Ombudsperson*

Professor Durham indicated that she has been a faculty member at the UI since 2000, in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, where she has been a Collegiate Scholar. She now has a 50% appointment as the Faculty Ombudsperson for a four-year term. Professor Durham went on to explain that the Office of the Ombudsperson *provides problem solving and conflict resolution services* to all faculty, staff, and students. The Office works with visitors based on ethical principles established by the [International Ombuds Association](#). The services of the Office are therefore confidential, impartial, informal, and independent. The Office is one of the few confidential resources on campus; nothing is disclosed about visitors, unless there is a danger of physical harm or if a court order requires disclosure. Because the Office is impartial, the ombudspersons cannot advocate for a visitor, but they can try to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that policies are applied uniformly. The Office assists visitors trying to resolve an issue *informally*. If a visitor chooses to pursue a formal process of complaint or a lawsuit, then the Office steps away from involvement. The Office is not affiliated with any other unit on campus and reports only to the university president, thereby maintaining its independence and avoiding conflicts of interest. In response to a question, Professor Durham explained that, as Faculty Ombudsperson, she is not restricted to working only with faculty members, but can assist staff, students, and other visitors, as well. The Office has a broad scope of visitors, including patients, community members, parents of students, and alumni. The ombudspersons help visitors clarify their goals, choose among the options open to them, and identify courses of action. Among groups, they can facilitate discussions, mediate conflicts, and conduct shuttle diplomacy.

The number of visitors that the Office has received has risen from a total of 256 in FY2006 to 661 in FY2022, Professor Durham indicated. For FY2022, 46% of visitors (304) were staff, 22% were faculty (148), 27% were students (177), and 5% were “other” (32). By far the biggest category of visitor concern has been evaluative relationship issues (55% of concerns, for a total of 1045). For example, a faculty member may have difficulty with a student in a class, a graduate student may have difficulty with a mentor, or a faculty member may have difficulty with a DEO. Other common types of visitor concerns relate to peer relationships, career/academic progression, policy violations, services/administration, and safety/health/environment. The leading types of evaluative relationship concerns involved communication, respect/treatment, departmental climate, and supervisory effectiveness. Turning to top concerns by visitor category, Professor Durham noted that in FY2022, the top five for faculty were communication-evaluative, respect/treatment-evaluative, departmental climate, consultation, and supervisory effectiveness. Preliminary data for FY2023 indicate that consultation was the top faculty visitor concern. Consultations are requests for help in dealing with an issue generally with two or more individuals that the visitor supervises or teaches. Consultation was followed by communication-evaluative and administrative decisions & interpretation/application of rules. The latter is new on recent lists of faculty visitor concerns and involves the impact of disciplinary decisions,

decisions about requests for academic or administrative services (such as the calculation of leaves), and decisions on promotion and compensation. Respect/treatment-evaluative and assignments/schedules rounded out the list of the top five faculty visitor concerns in FY2023. The Office tracks perceived risks to the university, Professor Durham continued. Loss of productivity continues to be the top risk to campus, at 36%, followed by turnover (18%), policy violations (14%), grievance (11%), litigation (4%), negative publicity (3%), and safety (2%). Professor Durham concluded her presentation by noting that the Office receives good evaluations from their visitors.

Professor Kline asked if the number of visitors who go on to a formal process is tracked. Professor Durham responded that the Office does track this number, which is low, but that the ombudspersons do not always know if a formal process is later pursued. Vice President Sheerin asked how visitors find out about the Office. Professor Durham indicated that visitors find out via word-of-mouth or through Office presentations. The Office is also referred to in policies associated with grievances or investigations. Vice President Sheerin urged Councilors to spread the word about the Office's services and important function on campus. Observing that few faculty visitors move on to initiate formal processes, President Gillan asked whether faculty members visit the Office primarily to seek information. Professor Durham commented that often visitors are not seeking action but are just happy to have someone listen to their concerns. She added, however, that if many visitors come in from a particular unit and a troubling trend is identified, the ombudspersons can alert administrators to look into working conditions there.

President Gillan then asked what precipitated Professor Durham to apply for the position of Faculty Ombudsperson. She responded that she was looking for a new challenge and an opportunity to acquire new skills. She added that she has learned a lot about administrative and other processes across campus. Vice President Sheerin asked if the Office has considered some proactive programming to prevent conflicts before they arise, for example, presentations on difficult conversations or on community and other policies. Professor Durham responded that the Office does not conduct trainings, but that [Organizational Effectiveness](#), a unit within University Human Resources, does provide these types of presentations and trainings. Professor Gutierrez asked whether, once a toxic workplace has been identified, the members of that unit can be compelled to visit the Office for discussion facilitation or mediation. Professor Durham indicated that the Office's services are entirely voluntary and that the ombudspersons must obtain consent from all parties with which they interact.

- *Lois Geist, Associate Provost for Faculty*

Associate Provost Geist commented that she has been at the university for 36 years. She began as a faculty member in the Carver College of Medicine and then served as the Associate Dean for Faculty in the College for 18 years. She recently marked her fourth-year anniversary as Associate Provost for Faculty in the Office of the Provost. Associate Provost Geist indicated that she would use the current UI [strategic plan](#) to frame her descriptions of Office of the Provost programs to support faculty. Although there is not a separate pillar for faculty within the strategic plan, the plan does contain numerous faculty-related initiatives, especially within the [holistic well-being and success pillar](#). A working group under the [Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee](#) (SPARC) has been formed to focus on faculty success, she explained. The

working group has been divided into four teams, focusing on different aspects of the faculty life cycle: recruitment, development, retention, and recognition.

The team working on recruitment has developed a survey that seeks to find out “Why Iowa?” That is, what led new faculty members to choose UI? The survey also strives to discover what aspects of the recruitment process went well and what aspects did not. Eventually, a list of best practices will be assembled and shared across colleges. A toolkit for faculty onboarding is under development, as well. We would also like to know why people who are the top pick for a faculty position ultimately do not choose UI, Associate Provost Geist continued. Because employment opportunities for spouses/partners of faculty recruits can be a challenge, funding has been secured through the [P3](#) process to engage an outside firm to assist with identifying employment opportunities outside of the university for spouses/partners. The [P3 High Impact Hiring Initiative](#) (HIHI) provides resources to assist with start-up costs and salaries in order to recruit high-level faculty members. Those resources can also be used for retention purposes. Thus far, about 20 faculty members have been recruited and 10 faculty members have been retained under this program.

Moving on to retention, Associate Provost Geist noted that focus groups have been conducted with department chairs, who were asked about barriers to retaining faculty members. The most common reasons stated were lack of job for spouse/partner and salaries. The focus group meeting was also a useful opportunity for chairs to share with each other best practices for retention. Further development of stay and exit interview scripts is underway, so that we can determine exactly why some faculty members leave the institution while others ultimately remain. The purpose of the exit interview is to determine the real reasons people leave, so that the university can improve. In response to a question, Associate Provost Geist indicated that the local Human Resources staff, who are among the first to learn of an impending departure, conduct the exit interviews. Department chairs are also encouraged to visit informally with their faculty members to enquire how things are going and to offer support, if possible, and recognition, thereby preventing potential exits before they occur, Associate Provost Geist continued. She noted that approximately 35% of tenure-track, pre-tenure faculty members leave the university, often in or near their fourth year on campus. This group is particularly being targeted for exit interviews. Some may have been advised that they would not receive tenure, but others are being lured to other institutions. This startlingly high percentage is actually not uncommon among Big Ten institutions and has been consistent on the UI campus for at least the past five years. In response to a question, Associate Provost Geist indicated that the next biggest loss occurs within the five years following the receipt of tenure. Faculty members who leave after these first five post-tenure years are often moving to leadership positions.

Turning to faculty development, Associate Provost Geist commented that focus groups were conducted with about 300 faculty members across all ranks and tracks, to elicit suggestions regarding what supports faculty members needed and what barriers should be removed in order to enable them to become successful academicians. Mechanisms for successful mentoring across the entire faculty life span are also being developed. Professor Megan Gilster, who served as a faculty fellow in the Office of the Provost last year, led an effort to survey mid-career faculty members regarding what could be done at the departmental, collegiate, and university levels to

help them succeed. Associate Provost Geist noted that many faculty members struggle during the five- to eight-year post tenure period. Funding from the P3 initiative has been secured to assist these struggling mid-career faculty members. About 25 grants have been awarded thus far. Associate Provost Geist reminded the group that grants in the [Investment in Strategic Priorities](#) program are available; a call for proposals is scheduled to go out soon. The relatively small sums awarded can assist with hiring a graduate student, traveling to a conference, etc. There are also funds available to support travel to external leadership programs, via the [Faculty Leadership Initiative](#). On-campus leadership training opportunities exist, as well. The Faculty Fellow program has brought faculty members into the Office of the Provost and related offices. A newly-established faculty book club has provided a way for faculty members to make connections with each other. Lastly, on recognition, Associate Provost Geist noted that the university is seeking to raise the profile of faculty members who have received external awards, with the inaugural Highly Prestigious Faculty Award Investiture held last year. The first cohort of the Mid-Career Faculty scholars, which includes Secretary Charlton, is now in its second year in the program, which includes the opportunity to present their work to the campus. The UI Distinguished Chairs program is welcoming their fourth cohort. Associate Provost Geist concluded her presentation by noting that policy creation and revision is also an important aspect of her activity. She works with faculty members on various policy revisions, including, currently, of the faculty dispute procedures. A policy allowing for consideration of misconduct in prior employment was recently implemented.

Professor Curto asked about the process for colleges to adjust their instructional faculty track policies now that revisions to the university-wide policy have been made. Associate Provost Geist anticipated that colleges might need to entirely rewrite their policies or make extensive revisions; the former might be the more sensible path. Collegiate faculty would then vote on the new/revised policy. The revised university-wide policy will be published on January 1. Secretary Charlton commented that the topic of the challenges of spousal/partner hires for recruitment came up recently in a faculty meeting in her college. Associate Provost Geist reminded the group that most spouses/partners want jobs at the university. The university's new contract with an external firm will allow for robust assistance to those who seek employment outside the university. Deans and collegiate and departmental administrators could benefit from access to more information about assistance available to dual career couples. In response to several questions, Associate Provost Geist indicated that there was no time limit for the use of these services. The services could also be used an additional time in the case of a new partner. Professor Fox commented that the Investment in Strategic Priorities grants have been a big morale boost for faculty in her department.

- *President's Report (Ed Gillan)*

President Gillan noted that an Iowa Board of Regents study group has issued a [report with recommendations](#) regarding efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at UI, ISU, and UNI. The draft report will be reviewed by the full Board at its meeting later this week. Plans now call for task forces on each campus to review and evaluate all DEI-related activity and submit a report with recommendations for implementation to the Regents in April.

The Faculty Senate is responsible for conducting reviews of central administrative offices. A review of the Office of the Vice President for Research is currently underway, while a review of the Office of the President will begin later this semester. President Gillan urged Councilors with an interest in serving on the review committee to contact him.

A unanimous Senate email vote has confirmed the appointment of Kristine Zayko from the law firm Husch Blackwell as the new Investigating Officer for the Faculty Judicial Commission. Ms. Zayko will be under contract with the university to provide these services on an as-needed basis. After two years, this arrangement will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness.

A work group comprised of faculty and administrators continues review and preliminary revision of the [Faculty Dispute Procedures](#). The Faculty Senate's Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee has had the opportunity to discuss these preliminary efforts and provide feedback to the work group. Relatedly, the UI Operations Manual has been renamed the Policy Manual, to better reflect its purpose. This name change has not impacted any content.

President Gillan briefly reviewed scheduled and potential guests for spring Council and Senate meetings. Confirmed guests include the entire Office of the Ombudsperson staff to the Senate on February 13 and new Vice President for Medical Affairs and Carver College of Medicine Dean Denise Jamieson to the Council on April 16.

- *Executive Session: Faculty Dispute Procedures Update (Ed Gillan)*

Professor Kline moved and Professor Curto seconded that the Faculty Council move into executive session, inviting Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee Chair Professor Witt to remain in the room. The motion carried unanimously.

Along with Professor Witt, President Gillan updated the Council regarding proposed revisions to the dispute procedures for all four faculty tracks (tenure, clinical, research, and instructional).

Professor Mangum moved and Professor Kline seconded that the Faculty Council move out of executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 5, 3:30 – 5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 23, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Kline moved and Professor Mangum seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Gillan adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.