

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, October 29, 2024
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

Senators Present: A. Achenbach, B. An, B. Ayati, K. Carter, M. Coleman, R. Curto, A. Dupuy, H. Dybevik, A. Estapa, A. Farag, A. Goedken, N. Greysen, P. Groves, J. Gutierrez, A. Kalnins, M. Landsman, D. Langbehn, A. Lesch, M. McQuistan, T. Midtrod, B. Nottingham-Spencer, C. Pinnaro, T. Rietz, J. Sa-Aadu, M. Schroeder, D. Shane, Y. Shi, A. Shibli-Rahhal, F. Solt, M. Swee, E. Thomas, D. Trusty, C. Vogel, M. Wald, E. Welder, K. Whitaker, F. Williams.

Officers Present: R. Curtu, E. Gillan, C. Just, C. Sheerin.

Senators Excused: L. Adams, J. Bunch, E. Carlisle, L. Durairaj, J. Fiegel, C. Grueter, B. G'Sell, J. Kline, W. Story.

Senators Absent: M. Abou Alaiwa, S. Abuhammoud, A. Aji, C. Benson, C. Chan, R. Cox, E. Destruel, S. Ganesan, A. Guernsey, N. Handoo, J. Koch, B. Li, V. Lira, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, P. Nau, J. Nepola, A. Panos, K. Parker, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, J. Simmons, C. Turvey, A. Vikram, T. Wadas, K. Worthington, L. Zingman.

Guests: L. Geist (Office of the Provost and the Vice President for Research), W. Jacobson (Office of the Provost), K. Kregel (Provost), C. Lang (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), M. McDermott (College of Education), K. Nabhan-Warren (Office of the Vice President for Research), A. Salem (Office of the Vice President for Research), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

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

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Shibli-Rahhal seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (September 17, 2024) – Professor Kalnins moved and Professor Langbehn seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Committee Appointments (Rodica Curtu, Chair, Committee on Committees) – Professor Nottingham-Spencer moved and Professor Curto seconded that the committee appointment be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- Knute Carter (Biostatistics) to replace Cara Hamann (Epidemiology) on the Faculty Senate, Fall 2024

III. New Business

- *Executive Vice President and Provost Kevin Kregel*

Enrollment was the first topic that Provost Kregel addressed in his presentation. He noted that the current first-year class is the third largest incoming class in the university's history, with 5,208 new undergraduate students coming from 92 Iowa counties, 46 states, and 31 countries. One in five of these new undergraduates are first generation students. The ratio of resident to non-resident students is 54% to 46%. We currently have 1,085 transfer students, a number that has been holding steady in spite of a nationwide dip in the number of community college students. The total enrollment for Fall 2024 is 30,779. The university is in the midst of a five-year growth plan to reach and maintain a total enrollment of 33,000 students. Recruitment will play a role in attaining this goal, but so will increased retention. Currently, the university's first-year retention rate stands at 90.4%, with the five-year strategic plan goal of 90% having been exceeded in three years. Each percentage point increase reflects approximately 50 more students retained, along with about \$1 million in tuition revenue. Numerous programs, such as First Gen Hawks, and initiatives, such as curriculum innovation in STEM courses to reduce DFW rates, are driving the increase in retention rates. Provost Kregel emphasized that some of our peer institutions with even higher retention rates also have very low acceptance rates; UI has been able to attain a retention rate of 90% even with an acceptance rate of about 85%.

The impending "enrollment cliff" has been a source of concern across higher education recently, Provost Kregel continued. The "cliff" originates in the drop in the national birthrate following the financial crisis of 2008. College campuses will begin feeling the impact of the drop in 2027, when the number of students graduating from high school will fall across the majority of states. Not all colleges and universities will be affected similarly, however, Provost Kregel commented, drawing enrollment projections from Carleton College Professor Nathan Grawe's published research. Elite four-year institutions would simply reach farther down in their waiting lists to maintain class sizes. National four-year institutions with established reputations would likely rebound quickly due to strong student demand. Regional four-year, along with two-year, institutions would probably suffer the most from decreased demand during the downturn.

Turning to faculty trends, Provost Kregel reminded Senators that comprehensive, publicly-available, quantitative information about various aspects of the university (students, faculty, budget) can be found in the [UI Data Digest](#). He displayed a chart showing the numbers of three categories of UI faculty, tenured/tenure-track, clinical track, and other non-tenure track (research track, instructional track), over the past ten years. While the tenured/tenure-track group continues to make up the largest group, that number has dropped by 170 since 2014. The clinical track, meanwhile, has grown by 348 over that same time period. There was an increase of 25 in the other non-tenure track category. Overall, the combined number of faculty increased by 203 in the past ten years. Decisions about faculty hiring are made at the collegiate level, not the university level, he pointed out. The hires are predicated on a variety of factors. Deans are encouraged to be very intentional as they plan their faculty hiring over the next few years and to take into consideration these factors: collegiate budget, instructional demands, strategic areas

of growth, needs in specific tracks, and retirements and replacements. Provost Kregel then briefly spoke about the university's general education fund budget. He indicated that tuition and fees accounted for 63.9% of revenue for FY2024. State appropriations accounted for 27.2%. The final 8.9% was made up of reimbursed indirect costs, interest (the university has some funds that accrue interest), and other income. State appropriations have been flat for the past seven years; combined with inflation, the university is actually losing ground on appropriations. The university also lost ground with tuition and fees during the pandemic years, but has been making up that loss in the last two years with strong enrollments, particularly of non-resident students. Revenue growth in the general education fund thus derives primarily from tuition, fees, and reimbursed indirect costs from external research funding.

Provost Kregel then described some faculty success initiatives that are underway as part of the strategic plan's emphasis on faculty recruitment, retention, development, and recognition. More detailed information about these programs can be found [here](#). Provost Kregel credited Associate Provost for Faculty Geist with launching and maintaining many of these initiatives. Programs focused on recruitment and retention include the [Dual Academic Career Fund](#), to support the hiring of a qualified spouse/partner into a faculty position; the [Investment in Strategic Priorities Fund](#), to assist faculty members in completing projects; the [Faculty Leadership Initiative](#), to fund external leadership training opportunities; the [Provost Faculty Fellow Opportunities](#), to provide faculty members with project and program development administrative experience; and the [Iowa Faculty Onboarding Resources](#), to ease new faculty members' orientation to and integration into the university. The [High Impact Hiring Initiative](#) (HIHI), funded through the P3 project, continues to support colleges' strategic recruitment and retention of faculty. About \$21 million has been distributed through one-time, non-recurring, readily-accessible awards thus far, supporting 71 recruitments and 30 retentions. Collegiate deans have been extremely pleased with this program that allows for the swift mobilization of resources to recruit or retain faculty members.

One of the primary criteria that the Association of American Universities (AAU) uses to evaluate membership in the organization is the quantity of honorific awards among faculty members of an institution, Provost Kregel commented. In an effort to boost faculty recognition, the [External Awards and Recognition Office](#) has been formed within the Office of the Provost to support faculty in the pursuit of awards and honors from external organizations such as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). Services of the Office include helping with the utilization of [Academic Analytics](#) (AcA) as a resource for identifying faculty for honorific awards, partnering with colleges and units to host events and initiatives that promote external award opportunities, and providing nomination support and resources. UI faculty members who are already members of the National Academies have been eager to support this effort, particularly by identifying promising mid-career faculty members.

Another important recognition effort relates to named chairs and professorships. Provost Kregel noted that the UI has over 400 endowed professorships and chairs, with a total of \$17.9 million of support annually. The UI Center for Advancement Comprehensive Campaign has made endowed professorships and chairs a focus of philanthropic engagement. When endowed funds go toward supporting the salaries of faculty members, general education funds are freed

up for the department's use. In order to retain faculty members with established national and international reputations who are in danger of being recruited away to other institutions, as well as to recognize their outstanding achievements at this stage of their careers, the [Iowa Mid-Career Faculty Scholar Award](#) was established several years ago, he continued. Recipients receive \$25,000 annually for three years. There have been 13 awardees over three years. The Office of the Provost also sponsors the [Transformational Faculty Hiring](#) program, which provides central funding to help colleges attract outstanding faculty members in key areas of innovation and interdisciplinary strength. The two most recently hired faculty members are Professor Burkard, recruited from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as the new director of the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center and Professor Martin Grace, recruited from Temple University, as the new faculty director of the Vaughn Institute of Risk Management and Insurance in the Tippie College of Business. Provost Kregel then noted that UI has recently added experienced leadership from across the nation to the UI Carver College of Medicine/Health Care enterprise: Professor Pettker, recruited from Yale University, as chair of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Professor Singh, recruited from Stanford University, as chair of the Department of Internal Medicine.

Provost Kregel concluded his presentation by explaining that the university has identified three distinctive areas of excellence for campus collaboration. These new Distinctive Collaborative Opportunities are cancer research and patient care, brain science and mental health, and writing and communication. The categories were developed through a data driven process that considered faculty and staff expertise, student interest, research funding, potential for societal impact, and philanthropic opportunities among other factors. The Distinctive Collaborative Opportunities will be the focus for future strategic university investments, cross-campus partnerships, and strategic plan initiatives.

Professor Langbehn asked what relation, if any, the growing number of clinical-track faculty in the health science colleges had to the decline in the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty at the university. Provost Kregel responded that most colleges, not just the health science colleges, were experiencing declines in the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty. The rise in clinical-track faculty has occurred primarily in the Carver College of Medicine. A Senator asked what causes the 9% of students who are not retained between the first and second years to drop out of the university. Provost Kregel answered that financial issues are one cause of students not returning after the first year. The university is making efforts to close the gaps between cost and financial aid that arise for some students. He noted that the next point at which students often drop out is between the second and third years. If students return for their third year, they are very likely to graduate. Our graduation rates have been rising, he added.

- *Kristy Nabhan-Warren, Associate Vice President for Research and Ali Salem, Associate Vice President for Research*

Associate Vice President Salem, who oversees research and support in the natural sciences, began the presentation by recognizing Associate Provost for Faculty Geist, who has now taken on the role of Interim Vice President for Research until a new Vice President for Research is appointed. He then gave an overview of the activities of the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). He noted that total external funding for FY2024 was over \$800 million and

exceeded that of FY2023. An upward trajectory is anticipated for the coming years. The majority of our federal funding last year came from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with a total of \$177 million. Other major federal funding sources are the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), the Department of Education, NASA, the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation. Overall external funding comes from a broad mix of sources. The largest component is federal funding at \$314 million, followed by business and corporations at \$158 million, and state and local governments at \$153 million. Individuals, foundations and associations, and hospitals and other universities are among the remaining sources of funding. In comparison to our Big 10 peers, UI has a much greater share of its federal funding coming from the NIH and HHS – 80% for UI compared to 52% for the others. UI also has a more significant share of its federal funding coming from NASA compared to the others.

The OVPR provides support for research, scholarship, and creative activity. It is also responsible for research ethics and compliance. The OVPR assists with finding funding, developing proposals, routing and submitting proposals, setting up projects, managing projects, and communicating project results. Facilitating collaboration and interdisciplinary research is another focus of the OVPR, which can support research teams through identifying funding opportunities and collaborators and by assisting with proposal development and review. Speed networking, networking surveys, and ideas/micro labs are some of the methods used to foster collaboration. A wide variety of societal challenges have been addressed by UI interdisciplinary research teams. Associate Vice President Salem then cited numerous statistics regarding the OVPR [Division of Sponsored Programs](#), including awards and agreements processed (5,866) and grant proposals submitted (2,363).

Turning to other offices under the oversight of the OVPR, Associate Vice President Salem indicated that three institutional review boards are supported by the Human Subjects Office, which currently has 4400 open studies and averages 10,000 annual transactions. The UI Research Foundation facilitates technology transfer, providing a process and pathways for “bench to market.” He explained that early-stage discoveries need support for strong patent protection and company interest, while faculty start-ups need support for entrepreneurial talent and investment. Numerous cores and centers support faculty research throughout the university by providing necessary equipment and expertise. Some report directly to the OVPR, while others are housed in the colleges but are accessible to a wide range of faculty. The [Office of Undergraduate Research](#) is a central resource to support and promote undergraduate research through funding support, curriculum and tracking, mentorship resources, and professional development.

Associate Vice President Nabhan-Warren, who oversees research and support in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, began her remarks by noting the appointments of new directors for two centers on campus, Luis Martín-Estudillo for the [Obermann Center for Advanced Studies](#) and Mark Berg for the [Center for Social Science Innovation](#). Then turning to a discussion of the [Writing for the Public Good](#) program, she commented that she and her staff had long been discussing how to build a scaffolded system of writing for the public. Not only had faculty members been expressing an interest in making their work accessible to the public, but the university’s campus-wide strength in writing made this program a natural fit. Funding from

the [P3 Program](#) supports the four components of the program: the Alan Alda science communication workshops, the op-ed writing workshops, the Inkwell writing retreat, and a membership to [The Conversation](#). Associate Vice President Nabhan-Warren explained that The Conversation is *a nonprofit, independent news organization dedicated to unlocking the knowledge of academic experts for the public good*. About 24 pieces by UI faculty members were published in The Conversation during the university's first year of membership. Faculty members who have recently published there include [Viridiana Hernández Fernández](#) and [Oluwafemi Atanda Adeagbo](#). Many of the stories featured in The Conversation get republished in major news outlets. Associate Vice President Nabhan-Warren cited statistics indicating that 57% of The Conversation contributors are contacted by media for interviews in radio, print, or television; 36% receive opportunities for academic collaboration; and 24% see increased citations for scholarly articles. She encouraged those interested in participating in any of the Writing for the Public Good programs to fill out the form linked at the bottom of the main webpage.

The Arts and Humanities Initiative (AHI) is an ongoing program sponsored by the OVPR, Associate Vice President Nabhan-Warren continued. The program provides seed grant funding for visits to archives, field work, travel abroad, etc. The Fall application deadline was October 22, and the selection committee will meet in December to make decisions. Zoom informational meetings were begun last year and have contributed to an increase in the quality of the applications. Individual grants are available for up to \$7,500, major conference grants are available for up to \$10,000, and major project grants are available for up to \$30,000. Outside collaborators are allowed for the conference and major project grants.

Celebrating the accomplishments of our students and faculty members is another focus of the OVPR. One component of the [Dare to Discover](#) campaign is the hanging of banners featuring student researchers throughout downtown Iowa City. The [Book Matters](#) program recognizes faculty writers across all disciplines. Informal discussions with faculty authors in the program have been held at Prairie Lights. Plans are underway for a spring celebration of all faculty books published in the last two years. Associate Vice President Nabhan-Warren urged those faculty members who have published a book within that time frame to fill out the form on the Book Matters webpage, in order to be recognized at the celebration event.

- *Updates to Teaching Evaluation Process (Wayne Jacobson, Director, Assessment, Office of the Provost; Cornelia Lang, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and Mark McDermott, Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Student Services, College of Education)*

Dr. Jacobson reminded Senators that early in the semester Provost Kregel had sent a memo to faculty regarding progress made on the strategic priority of excellence in teaching and learning. One aspect of this strategic priority is the alignment of our policies and practices for recognizing and rewarding teaching excellence. A new framework for assessment of teaching has emerged from this alignment. This new framework emphasizes that UI is a leading research university dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning that provides a learning-centered campus culture supporting student success at every level. Teaching assessment will now be based on evidence demonstrating the following characteristics: *learning-centered teaching*

practices that are engaging and inclusive; integration and alignment of learning goals, course materials, assignments, activities, and assessment strategies; responsiveness to feedback from students and peers related to supporting student learning; and commitment to ongoing growth and professional development as an instructor. Dr. Jacobson commented that the traditional practice of having students fill out an evaluation at the end of every semester has not proven to be the most effective method of gathering valuable feedback. The new framework calls for the assessment of teaching to be based on at least two sources of evidence, as well as on the instructor's narrative self-assessment.

The effort to develop a new teaching effectiveness framework began in Spring 2018, when a task force was convened by the Office of the Provost and charged with addressing student ratings software issues, low response rates, and concerns about bias, Dr. Jacobson explained. In Spring 2019, a new ratings survey was created, based on input from students, faculty, and academic leadership, and piloted in two colleges in Fall 2019. The new ratings survey was not sufficient for a thorough assessment of teaching effectiveness, however, and procedures for systematic peer observation were also piloted. In Spring 2020, the task force prepared its recommendations on creating a culture and infrastructure to support the holistic assessment of teaching and planned to launch campuswide dialogues. Unfortunately, the pandemic put a temporary end to this work.

Efforts resumed during the 2021-22 academic year, Associate Dean Lang continued, with the task force seeking additional input from a wide range of campus community members, including deans, associate deans, departmental leaders, and instructors from various tracks. These interviews yielded surprisingly widespread agreement. Points of agreement included *recognition that the campus lacks a shared understanding of teaching effectiveness, agreement that current practices do not capture the depth or quality of faculty work related to teaching, uncertainty about how student feedback was being used or how it should be used, and dissatisfaction with the status quo but also widespread perception that others on campus would oppose change.* Associate Dean McDermott added that the conversations that the task force held with various campus community members were very enthusiastic and engaging, and they allowed for the sharing of information and ideas across colleges. He noted that last Spring, a conference on connecting the K-12 system with higher education was held to further bring together parties interested in promoting teaching effectiveness.

Dr. Jacobson pointed out that the first objective listed in the 2022-27 UI Strategic Plan is *Enhance support, incentives, and structures that facilitate teaching excellence and student learning.* In 2022-23, the task force moved forward with reviewing and implementing the recommendations from 2020. As part of this process, the task force members consulted with peer institutions; many of our peers have similar efforts underway to improve teaching assessment. They also reviewed policies and practices in place in colleges, departments, and the UI Policy Manual. In 2023-24, the task force worked with Information Technology Services to create a "homegrown" product for end-of-course student feedback. Supporting materials, such as resources for instructors on preparing different types of evidence and uniform guidance on sound usage of self-reported student perceptions survey data, were developed. An oversight committee was also created to review and, if necessary, update the survey instrument and the

supporting materials on an annual basis. The new Framework for Assessment of Teaching was then ready to be announced to campus in Fall 2024. Implementation of the Framework is now underway.

While the new end-of-course survey instrument, [Student Perceptions of Teaching](#) (SPOT), is only one component of the Framework, it is the component that will soon impact all faculty members. Some aspects of the survey have not changed from the previous version. The student questions remain the same, as does the timeline for end-of-course survey administration. The automated student invitation system with the option of sending your own additional reminders in the system is still in place, as well. Dr. Jacobson then described what has changed. SPOT is accessed through ICON. Modifications, based on instructor input, have been made to reporting data (e.g., reporting to a single decimal place only). The comparison function has been eliminated for individual instructors because comparison data is only legitimate when very similar courses are compared. Uniform guidance on interpreting and using SPOT data, including comparison data, has been provided to DEO's and deans' offices. An optional midterm feedback form (with the SPOT questions in present tense) has been built into the system. The feedback obtained will remain entirely confidential and will be accessible only to the instructor. Associate Dean Lang commented that when instructors solicit feedback during a course, and then acknowledge the feedback and act on it in some way, student satisfaction with the course improves greatly and this satisfaction is reflected in end-of-course evaluations.

During feedback sessions with students to test the ease of use of the new SPOT survey format, students also revealed some misperceptions they held about teaching evaluations. For example, some students did not know that responses are anonymous; they did not know when or to whom their responses are reported; they did not know for what purpose their responses are used; they did not know their instructors see their responses; and they had not realized that previous students' feedback may have shaped their courses. Dr. Jacobson commented that it is no surprise that response rates can be low when students are so unclear about the reasons for end-of-course evaluations. An explanation addressing these issues is included in the SPOT form, but students will only see it after opening the form. It is up to instructors to emphasize the relevance and impact of evaluations; those instructors who do so often see very high response rates.

Professor Kalnins raised a concern about the length of the timeframe in which the SPOT form is open. Dr. Jacobson welcomed the feedback and indicated that some changes are still being worked out, especially for off-cycle courses. Professor Greyser thanked the task force for their years of work and especially for their focus on elevating teaching as a practice. Associate Dean Lang emphasized that departments will need to go through a thoughtful, lengthy process to determine for themselves what an inclusive, multi-faceted portfolio of teaching looks like. Dr. Jacobson added that these departmental conversations are a crucial step in maintaining this transformation of teaching assessment.

A senator appreciated the effort to compare courses that are similar to each other in terms of enrollment. Dr. Jacobson commented that other legitimate similarities, such as courses for majors vs. courses for non-majors, have also been factored into comparisons. Associate Dean

Lang added that comparisons are available in a dashboard accessible only to deans and DEO's. Instructors will still be able to see data for themselves over time, however. The SPOT format will place emphasis on distributions and medians, focusing on how most students in the course respond to the survey questions. Context (e.g., majors vs. non-majors) will be crucial in the interpretation of survey results.

- *President's Report (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin indicated that due to the lack of time, the small group discussions on the university budget would be postponed until the next meeting. She requested that, in the meantime, Senators consider what aspects of the budget they would like to learn more about.

Recruitment for candidates for Faculty Senate officer positions will soon get underway. Please reach out to the current Senate officers for further information if you are interested.

The Senate officers and the Senate's Governmental Relations Committee will host a reception to thank our local elected officials for their work on Wednesday, November 20, 4:00-5:30 pm in the South Room (179) of the Iowa Memorial Union. All Senators are invited to attend.

President Sheerin noted that the university is partnering with United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties to support critical social services and safety net programs in our community. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to give back to our community. Two key events to support the campaign are coming up: a Heartlanders "Hawk-eye" hockey game on Friday, November 15, at 7:00 pm at the Xtream Arena and the UI campus kickoff event on Monday, November 18, at 5:00 pm at the Old Capitol Museum.

The next Faculty Senate [newsletter](#) will come out this week. President Sheerin urged Senators to share the newsletter with their colleagues.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 19, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 3, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Schroeder moved and Professor Shibli-Rahhal seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Sheerin adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.