

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

MINUTES

- Senators Present: L. Adams, A. Aji, B. Andrews, B. Ayati, H. Azaiez, E. Carlisle, K. Carter, R. Curto, L. Durairaj, A. Estapa, A. Farag, J. Fiegel, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, N. Greyser, P. Groves, C. Grueter, B. G'Sell, A. Guernsey, J. Gutierrez, N. Handoo, A. Kalnins, J. Koch, A. Lesch, V. Lira, T. Midtrod, A. Panos, T. Rietz, J. Sa-Aadu, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, M. Schroeder, D. Shane, Y. Shi, A. Shibli-Rahhal, J. Simmons, F. Solt, W. Story, M. Swee, E. Thomas, D. Trusty, C. Vogel, T. Wadas, M. Wald, E. Welder, F. Williams, K. Worthington.
- Officers Present: R. Curtu, E. Gillan, C. Just, C. Sheerin.
- Senators Excused: M. Abou Alaiwa, A. Achenbach, J. Bunch, M. McQuistan, B. Nottingham-Spencer, C. Pinnaro, K. Whitaker.
- Senators Absent: S. Abuhammoud, B. An, C. Benson, C. Chan, M. Coleman, R. Cox, E. Destruel, A. Dupuy, H. Dybevik, S. Ganesan, J. Kline, M. Landsman, D. Langbehn, B. Li, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, P. Nau, J. Nepola, K. Parker, C. Turvey, A. Vikram, L. Zingman.
- Guests: M. Gardinier (Emeritus Faculty Council), J. Troester (University Human Resources), J. Urmie (Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee), D. Witt (Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee), 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 – President Sheerin noted that a slight change to the agenda was made after it was sent to Senators. President Sheerin would present the update from the Faculty Senate Election Committee rather than Professor Vigmstad, chair of the committee. Professor Shibli-Rahhal moved and Professor Farag seconded that the revised agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Faculty Senate Minutes (October 29, 2024) – Professor Farag moved and Professor Kalnins seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Committee Appointments (Rodica Curtu, Chair, Committee on Committees) – Professor Curtu moved and Professor Kalnins seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- Amy Fletcher (Health & Human Physiology) to replace David Stewart (Mathematics) on the Council on Teaching, Spring 2025
 - Brian Andrews (Otolaryngology) to fill the unexpired term of Ali Jabbari (Dermatology) on the Faculty Senate, 2024-26
 - Hela Azaiez (Otolaryngology) to fill the unexpired term of Sarina Martini (Obstetrics/Gynecology) on the Faculty Senate, 2024-25
 - Jessica Goetz (Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation) to fill the unexpired term of Samuel Young (Anatomy & Cell Biology) on the Faculty Senate, 2024-25
- D. Faculty Senate Elections 2025 Vacancy Tally – President Sheerin 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 Kalnins seconded that the vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

III. New Business

- *Faculty Senate Election Committee Update (Caroline Sheerin, on behalf of the Election Committee)*

President Sheerin explained that the Election Committee would soon be soliciting nominations for vice president and for secretary of the Faculty Senate. The secretary serves a one-year term. Although the vice president serves only one year in that office, the vice president then moves on to serve one year as president and then one year as past president; thus, election to vice president is a three-year commitment. The Senate constitution states that *Any newly-elected, continuing or departing member of the Senate, or any person who has served at least three years in the Senate at any time, shall be eligible to be elected as an officer.*

Senate officer positions are not compensated, President Sheerin continued, but service as an officer is nevertheless very rewarding. Officers participate in shared governance at the highest levels of the university. They interact often with the university president and provost and occasionally with members of the Iowa Board of Regents. The officers also frequently provide input on university-wide policy changes. Service as an officer allows for making connections with colleagues across the institution, as well as for acquiring deep knowledge about how the university works. Several former Senate officers have gone on to hold administrative positions throughout the university. Aside from the leadership opportunities inherent in serving as an officer, numerous Senate vice presidents have been invited to participate in the [Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program](#). Some Senate presidents have negotiated a reduced teaching load, but this is dependent on the college. Tickets to all home football games in President Wilson's stadium box are a bonus of serving as Senate president, along with the opportunity to attend football bowl games. All of the officers receive a university-wide parking pass to facilitate their service across campus.

President Sheerin requested that anyone interested in becoming a candidate for Senate officer contact one of the current officers or Professor Vigmostad, sarah-vigmostad@uiowa.edu, chair of the Election Committee.

- *Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee Update (Julie Urmie, Faculty Co-chair, Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee and Joni Troester, Senior Assistant Vice President and Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer, Total Rewards, University Human Resources)*

Professor Urmie explained that one of the annual tasks of the Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee (FRIC) is to consider whether to recommend insurance premium rate increases. Until recently, this recommendation was made at the committee's September meeting, but now that the recommendation must receive approval from the Iowa Board of Regents, it occurs at an August meeting. FRIC recommended insurance premium increases for calendar year 2025, but these increases have been held to 5% or less. Professor Urmie noted that the dental insurance premium had held steady for many years, but for CY2025, there will be a 4% increase. A \$15 deductible was implemented for the dental plan, as well, but the deductible can be avoided by seeking dental care within the provider network. There was also a slight increase to the out-of-pocket maximum amounts for prescription drugs. FRIC continues to monitor prescription drug cost increases, which are a nationwide concern.

Plan coverage for GLP-1 prescription medications in the treatment of obesity has been a topic of FRIC discussion for several years, Professor Urmie commented. The committee has now recommended implementation of a two-year GLP-1 pilot program, beginning January 1, 2025, for a subset of UI employees. The pilot program will allow for the testing of processes, such as physician support and weight loss management support, to maximize the benefits of the GLP-1 medications. The pilot program will also allow for the costs of covering the medication to be monitored.

The selection of a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) by central administration was a significant university task completed this year. Professor Urmie explained that historically, the university had simply used Wellmark's PBM; however, administrators wanted to explore utilizing a separate PBM and therefore issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQL). Finding a new PBM was not a FRIC assignment, but two FRIC members served on the committee involved in the review of vendor applications and kept FRIC apprised of progress. A vendor has been selected and final negotiations are underway, with implementation expected on January 1, 2025. Utilization of a separate PBM is expected to contribute to significant cost savings for the university, Professor Urmie added.

FRIC receives periodic updates on a number of issues. Professor Urmie indicated that one of these issues is the transition process for recently-acquired Mercy Hospital, which has now become University of Iowa Health Care Downtown. This transition has implications for UI employees' benefits, especially related to health care provider levels. Access and capacity at UI Health Care facilities is the focus of ongoing updates, because the university incentivizes use of these facilities by UI employees. FRIC also hears periodic updates from the Retirement Fund Investment Committee (RFIC), which this year selected an institutional investment

management consultant through an RFQL process. The management consultant will help ensure that the university is offering the best selection of funds for our employees' retirement investments.

As for the coming year, Professor Urmie anticipated that FRIC would focus on a number of topics and tasks. Routine annual FRIC activities include reviewing our plan benefits and learning about any new regulations impacting our benefit programs. FRIC will continue to monitor our benefit design to balance costs and access. Pharmacy benefits are an area of particular concern because of recent large growth in costs. Access and capacity for Level One providers will also remain a focus. The university will explore the feasibility of offering additional voluntary benefits; results of an employee survey on potential additional voluntary benefits revealed that short term disability insurance and pet insurance ranked high among options that employees would like to have available to them. Professor Urmie reminded Senators that the university does not commit resources to voluntary benefits. And, FRIC will monitor the GLP-1 prescription medication pilot program described earlier.

In response to a question, Professor Urmie explained that pet insurance would function similarly to health insurance for people. For example, if a pet dog was hit by a car and needed surgery, the insurance would cover all or a portion of that surgery, depending on the provisions of the policy. Professor Greyser asked about options regarding fund selection for retirement investments. Senior Assistant Vice President Troester responded that plans are underway for implementation of a system in which employees could remain with the funds in the UI plan, or could take advantage of a brokerage window to invest in outside funds. In response to a question about how to share feedback or questions about the FRIC discussion of pharmacy benefits, Professor Urmie indicated that feedback and questions could be submitted to her and/or to Senior Assistant Vice President Troester.

- *Small Group Discussions Regarding University Budget*

President Sheerin invited Secretary Just to provide context for small group discussions regarding the university budget. Secretary Just commented that, in his observation, there is a widespread lack of detailed understanding of university finances. On behalf of the Senate officers, he had reached out to central administrators to request that they create a presentation that would address concerns that faculty might have about the university's budgetary situation, particularly in light of the impending "[enrollment cliff](#)" that is projected to impact higher education within the next few years. It turned out that administrators in the Office of Finance and Operations had recently been charged with creating an updated presentation about the budget that could be shared with the campus. Secretary Just has been able to provide feedback during the development of the updated presentation.

In order to advise administrators regarding what budget information is important to faculty, the Senate officers planned to collect feedback from Senators today. Secretary Just requested that Senators gather in small groups and discuss responses to these two questions: *What question(s) would you like to have answered about the UI budget?* and *What are your primary concerns about the UI budget?* Senators could then submit their responses via a Qualtrics survey during the meeting. Secretary Just added that he was also curious to know what format

(slide show, video, or other method) would be most effective in conveying financial information. Given the magnitude of the university budget, perhaps links could be included in the presentation to direct viewers to online resources.

Following the small group discussions, several Senators shared thoughts generated during their conversations. Professor Mark Santillan commented that a high-level description of the university budget along with an explanation regarding how the university budget interacts with collegiate budgets would be very helpful. Professor Williams suggested that an administrator from the Office of Finance and Operations present to the Senate, so that Senators could ask questions. She added that there doesn't seem to be sufficient transparency around issues such as the model for distributing tuition dollars to the colleges, collegiate debt projections, and the distribution of overhead funds. Professor Curto expressed an interest in understanding how debt works within the university. She also wondered whether shared governance and faculty consultation could play a role in budget development.

- *Executive Session: Faculty Policy Revision Process Update (Doris Witt, Chair, Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee)*

Professor Koch moved and Professor Shibli-Rahhal seconded that the Faculty Senate move into executive session, inviting Professor Witt, chair of the Senate's Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee, to remain in the room.

Professor Witt gave a presentation on proposed revisions to faculty policies. She and the Senate officers then engaged in discussion with Senators regarding these proposed revisions.

Professor Gutierrez moved and Professor Koch seconded that the Faculty Senate move out of executive session.

- *President's Report (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin encouraged Senators to consider serving on [university and Faculty Senate committees](#). Faculty members will be notified when the committee recruitment drive begins in the spring.

President Sheerin reminded Senators that calls for nominations have been going out for various awards for both faculty and staff. The Faculty Senate sponsors the [Michael J. Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service to the University and the State of Iowa](#). Staff Council sponsors a number of [awards for staff](#). Please consider nominating colleagues for awards.

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, January 28, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, February 18, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

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