

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, March 25, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

Senators Present: L. Adams, B. An, B. Andrews, B. Ayati, E. Carlisle, C. Chan, M. Coleman, R. Cox, R. Curto, A. Dupuy, L. Durairaj, H. Dybevik, A. Farag, J. Fiegel, C. Fox, S. Ganesan, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, P. Groves, C. Grueter, B. G'Sell, C. Hamann, J. Kline, D. Langbehn, A. Lesch, M. McQuistan, B. Nottingham-Spencer, C. Pinnaro, T. Rietz, R. Sakoda, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, A. Shibli-Rahhal, F. Solt, W. Story, M. Swee, E. Thomas, D. Trusty, C. Vogel, T. Wadas, M. Wald, E. Welder, K. Whitaker, K. Worthington.

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

Officer Excused: E. Gillan.

Senators Excused: A. Achenbach, J. Bunch, J. Gutierrez, A. Kalnins, J. Koch, T. Midtrod, D. Shane, J. Simmons.

Senators Absent: M. Abou Alaiwa, S. Abuhammoud, H. Azaiez, C. Benson, E. Destruel, A. Estapa, N. Greyser, N. Handoo, M. Landsman, B. Li, V. Lira, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, P. Nau, J. Nepola, A. Panos, K. Parker, J. Sa-Aadu, M. Schroeder, Y. Shi, C. Turvey, A. Vikram, F. Williams, L. Zingman.

Guests: T. Collier (Office of the Ombudsperson), A. Diaz-Arnold (Emeritus Faculty Council), M. G. Durham (Office of the Ombudsperson), L. Geist (Interim Vice President for Research and Office of the Provost), I. Martínez-Marrero (University Human Resources), P. Matthes (Office of the President), R. Napoli (University Human Resources), C. Pass (Office of the Ombudsperson), C. Reese (Office of the Ombudsperson), B. Thomas (Tippie College of Business), B. Walker (Governmental Relations 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 – Professor Ayati moved and Professor Shibli-Rahhal seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (February 18, 2025) – Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Shibli-Rahhal seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Committee Appointments (Rodica Curtu, Chair, Committee on Committees)
 - *None at this time*

III. New Business

- *Working at Iowa Survey Update (Isandra Martínez-Marrero, Senior Director, Campus Engagement and Rachel Napoli, Executive Human Resources Director, Organizational Effectiveness, University Human Resources)*

Ms. Napoli referred Senators to the [infographic](#) that had been distributed to them. She began her presentation by reminding the group that the Working at Iowa survey has been administered to faculty and staff every two years since 2006, with the most recent version having taken place in October 2024. This latest version featured five new questions, incorporating themes from the Campus Climate survey (which is no longer administered), in order to capture a holistic view of the employee experience. The intent of the Working at Iowa survey is to *provide insights that drive action to improve recruitment and retention, and measure progress against strategic initiatives around faculty and staff success.*

Turning to some highlights of the 2024 university-wide results, Ms. Napoli noted that the highest percentages of agreement with survey statements occurred with the three following items: *I know what is expected of me in my work* (96%), *my supervisor treats me with respect* (94%), and *my unit has a strong focus on providing excellent service to those we interact with* (94%). The lowest percentages of agreement occurred with the three following items: *the UI does a good job of recognizing accomplishments* (72%), *workloads are distributed fairly in my unit* (75%), and *I feel valued as an individual at the UI* (77%). Compared with 2022, the overall UI score was higher in 14 of 19 questions; however, the overall response rate to the survey was 63%, a drop of 6% from 2022. Five statements had agreement responses for faculty that shifted upward at least 5%. Among these statements were *the UI does a good job of recognizing accomplishments* and *I can speak about work-related concerns with my supervisor*. One statement saw a 5-7% drop in agreement for faculty: *I am encouraged to allocate time to my professional development*.

Ms. Martínez-Marrero explained that, for the purpose of analysis, the survey statements were grouped by focus and intent, leading to the emergence of four key themes: *goal clarity*, *supervisor-employee relationship*, *workplace culture*, and *institutional satisfaction*. Theme averages were then calculated based on overall agreement with the statements within each group. *Goal clarity*, with an average of 93% for its four statements, had the highest average agreement with its statements. The responses indicated that employees understand the purpose of their own and their unit's work, along with how that work fits into the UI mission. Agreement with statements in this group remained the same or had a slight upward trend compared to the 2022 results. The *supervisor-employee relationship* group of six statements had a theme

average of 87%. Agreement with most of the statements in this group remained the same or had a slight upward trend, with one statement, *my supervisor is open to hear concerns*, having a significant upward trend, while one statement had a downward trend, *my professional development is encouraged*.

Workplace culture, with a theme average of 84%, was the largest group of statements, comprising six statements from the previous version of the survey and the five statements carried over from the Campus Climate survey. Agreement with the original Working at Iowa statements in this group remained the same or had a slight upward trend. One new statement was taken verbatim from the Campus Climate survey, *I feel valued as an individual at UI*. Agreement with this statement remained the same, at 77%, as on the last Campus Climate survey. The *institutional satisfaction* group of three statements had a theme average of 79%. These statements measured employees' sense of connection to the university, its mission, and its values. Agreement with one of the three statements remained the same, one had a slight upward trend, and one had a particularly high upward trend, *I can pursue career goals at UI*. The wording of this statement, however, had been changed from previously emphasizing opportunities for promotion to now emphasizing opportunities to pursue career goals. Concluding her remarks, Ms. Martínez-Marrero referred Senators to the Working at Iowa [website](#), which provides resources on understanding and acting on survey results. Vice President Curtu asked about the availability of survey results from faculty only. Ms. Martínez-Marrero indicated that those results could be provided at a later date.

- *Office of the Ombudsperson Annual Report (Chanelle Reese, University Ombudsperson; Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Faculty Ombudsperson; Corey Pass, Senior Assistant Ombudsperson; Tijuana Collier, Assistant Ombudsperson)*

Ms. Collier, as the newest member of the Office of the Ombudsperson, introduced herself to Senators. Professor Durham then began the presentation on the FY24 [annual report](#). She noted that there were nearly 100 more visitors to the Office in FY24 than in FY23 (561 vs. 468). Visitors are coded in Office data according to the position they hold at the university. In FY24, faculty comprised 21% of visitors (118 individuals). This is a percentage similar to that in FY23. The remaining visitor categories are staff, students (undergraduate, graduate, residents, and postdocs), and other (patients, alumni, parents, etc.). The rest of the presentation focused primarily on the faculty visitors to the Office. Of these faculty visitors, the two largest groups were administrators (DEO's, deans, directors of graduate studies, etc.) and tenured faculty, both at 29% (34 individuals each). Other larger groups of faculty visitors included instructional-track faculty at 18% (21 individuals) and clinical-track faculty at 14% (17 individuals). Very few faculty visitors were tenure-track faculty (6%), research-track faculty (2%), fixed-term faculty (1%), and emeritus faculty (1%).

Turning to the types of concerns that faculty visitors brought to the Office, Professor Durham noted that each visitor could be coded for up to four concerns. The largest group of concerns related to *evaluative relationships* (35%), which could refer to one's own supervisor or to the individual(s) that one supervises. The next largest group of concerns related to *career (& academic) progression and development* (15%). This group of concerns covered promotion, tenure, coaching, mentoring, changes of assignment, etc. *Peer and colleague relationships*

represented 14% of concerns, while *violation of policy: legal, regulatory, financial, and compliance* was 12% of concerns. The latter group could refer to issues such as protected class discrimination and disability accommodations. Within those larger categories of concern, sub-concerns could be identified, Professor Durham continued. The majority of visitors in FY24 and FY23 came in for *consultation*, meaning that they were asking for advice and support in relation to a situation involving other people. Another pressing sub-concern in both FY24 and FY23 was *communication*; this could refer to the tone and impact of communication or to a lack of communication. *Respect/treatment*, another high-ranking sub-concern, was often linked to *communication*. *Compensation* was a sub-concern often brought up by faculty visitors, as well; lack of transparency around the process for merit raises seemed to be a significant component of this sub-concern. Faculty members contemplating the filing of *grievances* were also frequent visitors to the Office. Among faculty groups, the most common sub-concerns for administrators were *consultation*, *communication*, and *respect/treatment*. The most common sub-concerns for the clinical track were *consultation* and *discrimination/bias*; for the instructional-track, *compensation* and *involuntary transfer/change of assignment*; and for the tenured faculty, *grievances* and *administrative decisions and interpretation/application of rules*.

Professor Durham indicated that each year, the annual report highlights issues of particular concern that have arisen during the past year for *all* Office visitors. For FY24, one of these highlighted concerns was transparency around the process for determining merit raises. The other highlighted concern involved performance appraisals and the work environment for international students, scholars, and staff. Members of these groups have reported being the targets of disrespectful behavior. They also reported experiencing vulnerabilities related to their visa/immigration status. Comparisons with other institutions indicated that the latter concern is a nationwide trend. Several top themes for *faculty* visitors to the Office were identified for FY24; these included *interpersonal conflict*, *personnel review*, and *workplace dynamics*.

Mr. Pass continued the presentation, addressing faculty *risk* categories. He indicated that types of risk to the university and to the visitor are determined for each visit to the Office. *Loss of productivity* has frequently emerged as the most prevalent risk category for the majority of faculty visitors and it did so in FY24, as well. The rates for risks related to *turnover* and to *potential for internal/external grievance* both rose in FY24. There was also a slight uptick in the number of visits that did not present an identified risk. The Office analyzes each case for *complexity*, as well. Mr. Pass indicated that complexity refers to the amount of work required by a situation in order to arrive at a resolution. The majority of situations in FY24 fell into the *green* category, meaning that the situations were relatively straightforward, usually consisting of interpersonal conflicts with fewer than four people. About 33% of situations were in the *yellow* category, with more people involved, a greater number of issues, and increasingly serious consequences. Highly complex, long-lasting situations with high stakes and potentially impacting numerous units fell into the *red* category, about 14% of situations.

The Office engaged in a variety of *actions* in support of faculty visitors, Mr. Pass continued. The most commonly-employed, at 41% of actions, was *consultation/problem solving*. Office staff helped faculty visitors to see their situation from many different angles, thus allowing visitors to make the best decisions possible for their circumstances. *Coaching* made up 16% of

actions on behalf of faculty visitors last year. Mr. Pass commented that he enjoys coaching a range of individuals, from undergraduates to administrators, as they seek solutions for the issues they bring to the Office. He indicated that, at times, Office staff are *unable to proceed* because a *formal process*, in which the Office cannot participate, is needed. Mr. Pass also pointed out the service of *listening*; although Office staff listen to all visitors, there are some who clearly *only* need to be heard by someone. *Listening* comprised 10% of the actions taken on behalf of faculty visitors last year. The Office provided several *services* last year to faculty. Mr. Pass commented that the most-commonly used and perhaps the most important of these services was *safe space*, at 35% in FY24. *Conflict/Dispute resolution* comprised 32% of services provided, meaning that Office staff undertook actions to help resolve situations. Provision of *information* by Office staff comprised 33% of services. Turning to faculty *outcomes*, Mr. Pass noted that 77% of situations were *informally managed*; this is the Office's preferred outcome. In 16% of situations, a *formal process* was chosen by the visitor. The provision of *information only* was the outcome in 5% of situations.

Ms. Reese then presented the results of the Office's satisfaction survey. She indicated that a four-question anonymous survey is sent out to *all* visitors about four or five months after their visit (because the survey is entirely anonymous, results for faculty only cannot be broken out). In FY24, 134 of the total 561 Office visitors responded to the survey. In response to the question, *How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the Office of the Ombudsperson?*, 47% indicated that they were *very satisfied*, 28% *satisfied*, 14% *neutral*, 8% *dissatisfied*, and 3% *very dissatisfied*. There were various available responses for the next question, *If you had not contacted the Office of the Ombudsperson, what would you have done?* *None of the options*, at 28%, was the top choice; Office staff have sought to identify additional choices to determine what visitors who choose this response might be doing. The other options were *not talked to anyone about the issue* at 20%, *brought the issue to a formal channel* at 18%, *would not have brought the issue up as quickly as possible* at 13%, *left the university* at 13%, and *looked to transfer to another program/department within the university* at 8%. Ms. Reese added that visitors are asked early in their visit to the Office, *As of now, are you thinking of leaving the university if your concern is not resolved?* Five choices are offered, with the following response rates: *not applicable* (for patients, parents), *yes – the institution*, *yes – the department or program*, *unsure*, and *no*. The *no* response had the highest response rate, at 42%. Ms. Reese commented that this would seem to indicate that generally people do not want to leave the university; they just want their problem to go away.

Continuing to the next question, *If the need arose in the future, would you contact the Office of the Ombudsperson for help?*, Ms. Reese indicated that the responses were as follows: *strongly agree* at 53%, *agree* at 25%, *no opinion* at 13%, *disagree* at 5%, and *strongly disagree* at 4%. Lastly, in response to the question *Would you refer others to the Office of the Ombudsperson for assistance?*, respondents indicated *strongly agree* at 55%, *agree* at 25%, *no opinion* at 11%, *disagree* at 5%, and *strongly disagree* at 4%. Ms. Reese concluded her presentation with a display of complimentary text responses that the Office had received from visitors.

President Sheerin recounted a conversation she had had with a staff member who expressed reservations about contacting the Office out of concern that the staff member's supervisor would be notified. Ms. Reese confirmed that the Office's services are confidential and that visitors' supervisors are not contacted. She added that there have been situations in which two people involved in the same conflict contact the Office independently around the same time. If one of those people requests that the Office take action, it can be confusing for the other person.

President Sheerin then observed that the Office's percentage of visitors from the instructional track (18%) seemed high in relation to that track's percentage of the campus community overall. She asked what percentage of instructional-track faculty had visited the Office. She also wondered what percentage of the other tracks had visited the Office. Ms. Reese commented that she did not see a cause for concern in this relatively high percentage. She noted that instructional-track faculty are more likely to visit the Office because of the types of concerns that they often encounter in their work at the university. Professor Rietz suggested that data on faculty track numbers be obtained from the Provost's Office so that comparisons across faculty tracks on Office visits can be made.

Professor Ganesan commented that his college has used the Office's services in the past and found them very helpful. He asked if there was any way to determine whether faculty members whose issues are resolved through the Office remain at the university or still decide to leave. Ms. Reese responded that, although she would like to track such data, the Office is unable to do so. She explained that the Office's purpose is to help those who seek out its services. Once the Office staff have done all they can to assist the visitor, their work is complete and they cannot then reach out to former visitors to see how things turned out. Professor Langbehn affirmed, from personal experience, that the services of the Office are very useful. He added that, at one point in his career at UI, he approached Office staff for assistance and they dealt with his concern effectively, discretely, and fairly.

- *Executive Session: Update from Faculty Senate Governmental Relations Committee Chair Beth Walker and Pete Matthes, Vice President for External Relations and Senior Advisor to the President*

Professor Langbehn moved and Professor McQuistan seconded that the Faculty Senate move into executive session, inviting Professor Walker and Mr. Matthes to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilors discussed legislative and other governmental issues of concern to the university with Professor Walker and Mr. Matthes.

Professor Vogel moved and Professor Ayati seconded that the Faculty Senate move out of executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

- *Faculty Policy Revision (Caroline Sheerin; Doris Witt, Chair, Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee)*

President Sheerin indicated that today, following several Senate meetings during which the group had heard detailed presentations regarding proposed changes to the university's [Faculty policy](#), the proposed policy revision would be put forward for a vote by the Senate. She explained that the Faculty policy governs faculty on all tracks, including the tenure, clinical, research, and instructional tracks, and provides policies at the university level for faculty activities involving academic freedom, tenure, promotion, review, rank criteria, etc. Each college also has its own policies on these matters, but the collegiate policies must align with the university policy. President Sheerin noted that in the past several years, the Council and Senate have approved changes to portions of the Faculty policy, primarily affecting the specialized tracks (clinical, research, and instructional). The focus of the most recent proposed revisions has been mainly on the tenure track. The Faculty policy has been written and modified at various points over the last fifty years, President Sheerin continued, leading to numerous instances of internal inconsistencies, repetition, and outdated language, which have been remediated in the current proposed revision, as well.

The same faculty/administrator work group that had successfully created revisions to the [Faculty Dispute Procedures](#) reconvened to work on revisions to the Faculty policy, President Sheerin indicated. Representing the faculty were Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC) Chair Witt, Past President Gillan, and President Sheerin. Representing the Office of the General Counsel were Deputy General Counsel Lukas, Deputy Counsel Byrd, and Deputy Counsel Shust. And, representing the Office of the Provost was Associate Provost for Faculty (and Interim Vice President for Research) Geist. Senior Director of Faculty Human Resources Hanson, also from the Office of the Provost, attended to provide implementation procedure expertise. Tippie College of Business Executive Associate Dean Thomas began sitting in on meetings, as well, in preparation for assuming the role of Associate Provost for Faculty in July.

The timeline for this latest revision began last May, when the work group started meeting every two weeks. Throughout this timeframe, the faculty members of the work group had continually updated FPCC on policy revision progress and had sought feedback from FPCC to inform the work group's discussions. Reports had been made to and feedback obtained from Council and Senate, as well. Feedback from FPCC, Council, and Senate played a significant role in shaping proposed revisions to the policy. President Sheerin then reviewed the timeline in more detail. The work group first met on May 8 and made progress throughout the summer months. On September 6, FPCC was notified that changes were coming to the Faculty policy. On October 16, FPCC was given a more detailed presentation of revisions in progress. Council was notified on November 19 that changes were coming to the policy. Senate received its first notice of proposed policy changes during executive session on December 3. FPCC then engaged in intensive review of drafts of the proposed policy changes, beginning with the first four sections of the policy on December 9. Review of the initial policy section and a preliminary discussion of proposed changes to the post-tenure effort allocation and review portions occurred on December 19. FPCC then reviewed in depth the proposed revisions to the post-tenure effort

allocation and review sections on January 21. Council had the opportunity to preview the proposed changes on January 28 and Senate on February 18. FPCC held its last discussion of the post-tenure effort allocation and review sections on February 26, when committee members were joined by the administrators from the work group. Additional changes were made as a result of that meeting, and then the proposed revision was judged to be in its final form. It was presented to FPCC for a vote via email. FPCC voted to approve the proposed revised policy. At its March 11 meeting, Council also voted to approve the proposed revised policy.

President Sheerin then gave a brief overview of the proposed revisions to the Faculty policy, noting that much of this information was familiar to the Senate from updates at previous meetings. She indicated that the policy introduction, written in the 1970's, prior to the establishment of the specialized tracks, was revised to account for the important roles that specialized-track faculty play at the university. The revised introduction also emphasizes that faculty protections, privileges, and responsibilities, such as academic freedom, apply across the tracks. Structurally, the policy sections were reorganized to make the policy more streamlined and cohesive. The proposed revised policy now clarifies that tenure and promotion decisions must be based on unit written standards. Updates were also made to the post-tenure review process; these were the components of the proposed revision that precipitated the most discussion within FPCC, Council and Senate.

Turning to the proposed changes made to the post-tenure review process, President Sheerin reminded the group that, upon receiving tenure, in addition to annual reviews with the unit head, faculty members also undergo peer reviews every five years. The proposed policy revision introduces an out-of-cycle peer review, which can only be triggered when two consecutive annual reviews following a peer review identify significant and ongoing performance issues that have not been remediated. The out-of-cycle peer review might lead to the implementation of a development plan. Any adjustment to effort allocation can only occur if the development plan does not result in improved performance.

President Sheerin emphasized that protections for faculty members have been built into the out-of-cycle peer review process, so that improvement remains the goal of the process. She then described protections that occur at specific points in the out-of-cycle peer review process. She reiterated that the out-of-cycle peer review can *only* be triggered after one five-year post-tenure review is followed by two sequential unit head annual reviews. The performance issues identified by the annual reviews must be *significant and ongoing*. Remediation must have been *attempted and failed*. The faculty member can *appeal* the composition of the peer review committee to the dean and provost. The unit head will provide the committee with the relevant annual reviews, *along with* any faculty response. The faculty member can submit *additional materials* to the committee. Review materials will be *consistent* with the regular five-year peer review process. Recommendations from the peer review committee will be designed to *facilitate and encourage* professional vitality. The development plan *cannot* entail effort allocation changes *unless* the faculty member agrees to them. If the faculty member does not agree to any part of the development plan, they can *appeal* to the dean and the provost. Effort allocation can *only* happen if the faculty member fails to make significant progress in meeting the milestones of the plan. General protections for faculty embedded into the policy permit faculty members to

file a grievance at any time under the Faculty Dispute Procedures process and require a review of the policy after five years.

Professor Ayati raised concerns about some practices he had observed in regular peer reviews. These practices included the appointment of all departmental faculty members (at the same or higher rank as the person reviewed) to the peer review committee and the participation of the unit head in the peer review committee's deliberations. President Sheerin commented that neither of these practices appeared to adhere to the current policy and could be grounds for an appeal. Professor Ayati urged that this be communicated to colleges. Professor Witt added that FPCC members had encouraged administrators to ensure that the post-tenure review process is working effectively and consistently across campus.

Professor Curto moved and Professor Adams seconded that the proposed revised Faculty policy be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- *President's Report (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin reminded the group that Faculty Council elections would begin on Friday.

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

V. Announcements

- Regents Award for Faculty Excellence

President Sheerin announced that the following individuals had been selected to receive the 2025 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence: Sandra Daack-Hirsch (Nursing), Tori Forbes (Chemistry), Hans Joachim Lehmler (Occupational & Environmental Health), Alison Lynch (Psychiatry), Aliasger Salem (Pharmacy), Tom Schnell (Industrial & Systems Engineering)

- Michael J. Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service

President Sheerin announced that the following individuals had been selected to receive the 2025 Michael J. Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service to the University and the State of Iowa: David Cwiertny (Civil & Environmental Engineering), Steve Duck (Rhetoric), and Travis Kraus (School of Planning & Public Affairs)

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, April 8, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, April 29, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol. Election of officers will take place.

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