FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, October 28, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

Senators Present:	S. Abuhammoud, A Achenbach, L. Adams, R. Alambert, Z. Aminzare, B. Andrews, B. Ayati, J. Barker, J. Bermick, M. Bhatti, J. Bunch, E. Carlisle, K. Carter, E. Destruel, A. Estapa, A. Farag, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, B. Gonzalez, D. Greenwood-Sanchez, P. Groves, C. Hamann, N. Hamzeh, A. Hasan, C. Hogden, E. Johnson, J. Kline, M. Knight, S. Larson, P. McGonagill, C. McMillan, H. Metcalf, A. Miers, N. Mohr, B. Nottingham-Spencer, M. Ohl, N. Pagedar, A. Panos, R. Peter, T. Rietz, A. Ryan, D. Shane, J. Simmons, J. Staber, J. Streeter, M. Swee, K. Thiel, D. Trusty, A. Uc, C. Vogel, K. Vogelgesang, E. Walker, K. Whitaker, J. Wilde, F. Williams, K. Worthington.
Officers Present:	R. Curto, N. Greyser, C. Just, C. Sheerin.
Senators Excused:	T. Abel, A. Bassuk, B. G'Sell, J. Koch, J. Radley, M. Santillan, M. Schroeder, A. Shibli-Rahhal, F. Solt, M. Wald, B. Young.
Senators Absent:	M. Abou Alaiwa, C. Benson, C. Chan, A. Mangalam, J. Sukalski, D. Tranel, S. Warren, E. Welder.
Guests:	E. Gillan (Rules and Bylaws Committee), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office), P. Zebrowski (Emeritus Faculty Council).

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

II.   Approvals
   A.   Meeting Agenda – President Just noted that a change had been made to the presenters for the second item of new business. Professor Mohr moved and Professor Walker seconded that the revised agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
   B.   Faculty Senate Minutes (September 16, 2025) – Professor Farag moved and Professor Panos seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
   C.   Committee Appointments (Roxanna Curto, Chair, Committee on Committees) –
   •   *None at this time*

III.   New Business

- *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)*
  Professor Urmie indicated that one of the important tasks that the Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee (FRIC) undertakes each year is to review potential premium rate increases and plan design changes. For calendar year 2026, the committee has recommended premium rate increases of under 6%. This is notably lower than the premium rate increases anticipated by many other employers. Regarding plan design changes for calendar year 2026, there will be increases to out-of-pocket maximum amounts for both UIChoice and UISelect. The dental plan will see an increase in the deductible amount.

  A two-year pilot program for GLP-1 prescription medications in the treatment of obesity began on January 1, 2025. Five hundred employees are currently enrolled. The committee will use data from the pilot program to make future recommendations regarding coverage for these types of medications, Professor Urmie explained. Also new this year is a three-year agreement with a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM). Wellmark/CVS was selected from among several candidates. Although this is the PBM that the university has been working with for years, much better terms were negotiated for this new agreement, which is projected to provide considerable cost-saving to the university.

  Professor Urmie noted that FRIC receives periodic updates on a variety of issues, including access and capacity at UI Health Care for UI plan members and the specialty pharmacy at UI Health Care. The Retirement Fund Investment Committee also provides updates to FRIC. This committee was recently involved in the modernization of retirement plans administered through TIAA that was implemented in September 2025. In the coming year, FRIC anticipates monitoring access and capacity for Level One providers, receiving updates on the GLP-1 pilot program, and reviewing any new regulations impacting benefit programs. Professor Urmie added that two new voluntary benefits (for which the university does not provide funding) will become available in 2026: short-term disability and pet insurance.

- *Accessible Iowa Initiative (Maggie Jesse, Executive Director, ITS Office of Teaching, Learning & Technology and Erin Feltes, Deputy Counsel, Office of the General Counsel)*
  The university is in the midst of ongoing efforts to comply with a 2024 federal ruling on digital accessibility under [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), Ms. Jesse explained. She is the co-chair of the UI Accessibility Task Force. Tiffini Stevenson Earl, Senior Director of the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and ADA Coordinator, is the other co-chair. The UI Accessibility Task Force was formed to ensure that the campus is compliant by April 24, 2026, with new federally-mandated digital accessibility rules. The UI is required to ensure that our digital platforms and content are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. This includes websites, mobile apps, and other digital tools and content. Compliance with accessibility standards not only avoids legal issues for the institution, but also enhances the user experience for everyone. The task force supports this culture change across campus because it is the right thing to do, Ms. Jesse commented, and she expressed confidence that the campus

community could carry out the required modifications by the deadline; much progress has already been made.

As we create content and share digital files, she continued, we must think of everyone in our campus community and beyond. The task force is creating resources and building structures to help us meet that deadline and create sustainability that will last far into the future. The campus is being charged to consider this change as a change for the better and as a positive evolution of our campus culture. All types of digital content are impacted, including websites and web applications, such as MAUI, admissions, human resources servers, MyChart, and UI athletic ticket sale platforms. Video and audio must be captioned and/or transcribed. Email and other digital communication, especially to large audiences, must be made accessible. Learning management systems such as ICON and others used across campus, as well as social media, need to be brought into compliance. The areas of the university impacted include academics, administration, athletics, healthcare, and research.

Since it was formed in January, the task force has launched https://accessibility.uiowa.edu, developed new contract language for vended products, and completed a digital inventory of software and applications. Individuals are being trained at the college or administrative unit level to serve as accessibility liaisons, who will provide resources or answer questions as needed. New tools have been created in ICON and other areas to assist with remediation. Task force members have made numerous presentations to units and groups across campus to get the word out. Since January, the task force has focused primarily on instruction and administrative systems. In the next phase of its work, the task force will turn to better understanding the needs of the research community.

The campus accessibility website, https://accessibility.uiowa.edu, not only provides information about digital accessibility, but also about physical accommodations and navigating campus. Ms. Jesse encouraged Senators to visit this website often for news and resources. Questions can be posted to the website, as well. The task force is tracking data towards our goals. Regarding the 1,591 known university websites, 45% have attained a Siteimprove score of 92.6 or better. She encouraged anyone with a website to post the website in Siteimprove; this service scans websites to identify accessibility issues and provides information to the web developer on how to remediate those issues. The known university websites contain 42,028 non-compliant public PDFs. This non-compliance could consist of small, easily-remediated problems or such extensive issues that the presentation of the document should be reconsidered. Anthology Ally is being used to track accessibility in ICON. For the fall semester, there are 5,335 course sites in ICON; these course sites include 585,818 files. The overall weighted score across all the course sites is 62.2%. The HTML front pages currently have a score of 95.1%; uploaded content has a current score of 47.2%. Ms. Jesse noted that there are currently 326 faculty members using Anthology Ally. These faculty members have seen their average scores on uploaded files move from 27% to 94%. Both in-person and online training are available for Anthology Ally.

Ms. Jesse emphasized that everyone on campus has a role to play in achieving accessibility in our digital content. Small changes in habits can go a long way. For example, we can use

accessibility checkers in content creation tools (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), add automatic captions in our Zoom and Teams sessions, and turn on captioning in our PowerPoint presentations. Adobe Acrobat Pro is licensed and available to all UI faculty and staff; it includes accessibility checking and all the remediation tools needed. We can also participate in training, remind one another about accessibility, and encourage our colleagues to check accessibility on their shared files and communications. The Accessibility 101 course, which includes short modules to be done at your own pace, is available through My Training on the HR Self-Service website. There are also instructor-led trainings for faculty members. Ms. Jesse indicated that we can use the 3Rs framework, developed by the BTAA Accessibility Peer Group, to prioritize our accessibility work. First, **remove** any content that you do not need to share right now and delete content no longer needed. Next, **revise** any digital content that you need to share. Then, **right first**, i.e., create new content with digital accessibility in mind.

Various resources are available specifically for faculty and instructors. Course Accessibility for Everyone (CAFÉ) is a training program that focuses on key components of ICON course content. A fully accessible ICON template can be downloaded to create front-end pages. In addition to Anthology Ally, the TidyUP tool is also available to eliminate duplicate files and improve Ally scores. And, this year's Student Instructional Technology Assistants (SITA) are entirely focused on providing PDF remediation advice. Data on institutional progress toward accessibility is being tracked by the task force and is available on the campus data portal. Task force members are meeting with departmental chairs to help them understand how to encourage their faculty members to make progress.

The task force's newest initiative is the Accessibility Liaison Program, Ms. Jesse continued. This program provides local representatives to answer questions and find solutions for your accessibility concerns. Colleges and units nominate individuals for this role. The list of liaisons can be found here. The liaisons participate in regular training. Information about the Accessible Iowa initiative has gone out to campus in numerous ways, including through May and September messaging in Iowa Now and from the Office of the Provost. Resources were provided in all of those communications. There has also been messaging about training opportunities. More communication is planned for the coming months. Ms. Jesse concluded her presentation by urging faculty members to take steps to partner with the university in this effort. Faculty members can take advantage of and help promote training, familiarize themselves with the Accessible Iowa website, follow accessibility best practices when creating content, leverage accessibility tools within apps and use Siteimprove, help raise awareness about your accessibility liaison, and provide feedback to the task force.

President Just requested that Senators take the information they had acquired today back to their departments. He added that faculty input into the accessibility initiative has been provided through the Academic Technology Advisory Council (ATAC), which is chaired by a faculty member and includes faculty representatives from each college. ATAC has been in frequent communication with the task force. Professor Barker observed that his collegiate colleagues have noticed a considerable discrepancy between the accessibility scores given by the Microsoft Office products and those given by Anthology Ally. He asked which scores were to be considered more reliable. Ms. Jesse commented that the discrepancies arise from different standards that the

tools use to measure accessibility. She added that the Ally scores measure against the federal standards for compliance and can thus be considered more reliable. The task force is working on understanding the discrepancies and then getting that information out to campus. In the meantime, it would be helpful to post documents in both Office document format and PDF format, as the Office documents tend to be more accessible than PDF's. Professor Nottingham-Spencer asked if there was an expectation that all digital content would be 100% compliant by the April deadline. Ms. Feltes commented that it did not seem to her that this was the expectation of the law. There is an allowance for minor discrepancies. Our goal is certainly 100% compliance, but it is more important that people be able to access the digital content, even if that access is slightly lower than 100%. Our best efforts are requested. Professor Ayati asked if content that is particularly difficult to make accessible should simply be removed. Ms. Jesse responded that instructors should continue to provide content to students that is helpful for their learning. She added that the task force is looking into making challenging content such as math equations and difficult visualizations more accessible.

- *Executive Session*

Professor Farag moved and Professor Vogel seconded that the Faculty Senate move into executive session, inviting Bylaws Committee Chair Ed Gillan to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

Senators discussed Faculty Senate election rules and the Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education.

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

- *President's Report (Craig Just)*
President Just had earlier sent individual messages to all Senators with these news items:

  - The *Faculty Support & Guidance* resource is designed to assist the campus community in responding to situations in which faculty members are targeted by individuals or groups outside of the university based on the content of the faculty member's scholarship, teaching, clinical care, and/or service.
  https://provost.uiowa.edu/sites/provost.uiowa.edu/files/2025-03/Faculty%20Support%20Guidance_.pdf
  - This Center for Teaching resource outlines strategies for instructors to navigate controversial or challenging subjects in the classroom and productively manage difficult situations.
  - The Associate Provost and Faculty Council collaborated to produce the *University of Iowa Guidelines for Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Faculty Reviews*: https://faculty-senate.uiowa.edu/news/2025/10/ui-guidelines-responsible-use-artificial-intelligence-ai-faculty-reviews
  - Shared Governance leaders have been active with the *Campus Safety Board*: https://studentlife.uiowa.edu/initiatives/reimagining-campus-safety/campus-safety-board

- The Campus Threat Awareness Roundtable (CTAR) is designed to increase communication around high-risk situations, which enhances the university's ability to address concerning behaviors and prevent violence. See the inset image at the link below for CTAR membership: https://policy.uiowa.edu/sites/policy.uiowa.edu/files/2025-07/CampusSafety.pdf
- The *J.J. Neiman-Brown Memorial Fund* supports child or other caretaking costs for faculty and postdoctoral researchers as they engage in professional and academic development opportunities, for example, traveling to attend conferences, presenting work, or collaborating on projects. https://hr.uiowa.edu/livewell/work-life/family-services/childcare/jj-neiman-brown-academic-caretaking-fund
- Kristine Zayko has been reappointed as the UI Administrative Officer as defined under the *Faculty Dispute Procedures* https://policy.uiowa.edu/human-resources/faculty-dispute-procedures
- The *Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC)* provided feedback on proposed revisions to Chapter 27.6 Ethics in Research policy. https://policy.uiowa.edu/community-policies/research#EthicsinResearch. This feedback was provided in coordination with the Research Council https://research.uiowa.edu/research-council.
- The Faculty Senate review of Chapter III.15 "Professional Ethics and Academic Responsibility" continues.
- The Faculty Senate administrative review of the Provost's Office continues.

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

V.   Announcements
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 18, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 9, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

VI.   Adjournment – Professor Staber moved and Professor Estapa seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Just adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.