

**FACULTY COUNCIL**  
**Tuesday, November 16, 2021**  
**3:30 – 5:15 pm**  
**Zoom**

**MINUTES**

- Councilors Present: D. Andersen, D. Anderson, C. Bradley, N. Brogden, J. Buckley, M. Cunningham-Ford, L. Erdahl, L. Glass, K. Hegarty, B. Janssen, M. Kivlighan, A. Merryman, N. Nisly, M. Pizzimenti, E. Welder.
- Officers Present: M. Lehan Mackin, T. Marshall, A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, J. Yockey.
- Councilors Excused: A. Curtius, L. Joseph.
- Councilors Absent: None.
- Guests: L. Geist (Office of the Provost), E. Gillan (Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee), K. Perez (*Daily Iowan*), J. Wicks (*Daily Iowan*), D. Witt (Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

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

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Pizzimenti moved and Professor Brogden seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Council Minutes (October 12, 2021) – Professor Glass moved and Professor Pizzimenti seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- C. Draft Faculty Senate Agenda (December 7, 2021) – Professor Hegarty moved and Professor Pizzimenti seconded that the draft agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. Committee Appointments (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Chair, Committee on Committees)
  - Debra Trusty (Classics) to fill the unexpired term of Gregory Shill (Law) on the Parking and Transportation Charter Committee, Spring 2022  
Professor Glass moved and Professor Hegarty seconded that the appointment be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- E. Faculty Senate Elections 2022 Vacancy Tally (Teresa Marshall) – President Marshall indicated that Senate approval of the vacancy tally is necessary before we can move ahead with the Senate election process in the spring semester. Professor Glass moved and Professor Hegarty seconded that the vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

### III. New Business

- *COVID Mitigation Issues (Teresa Marshall)*

President Marshall reported that enforcement of President Biden's [executive order](#) requiring federal contractors to mandate COVID vaccination for their employees has been delayed until January 4. Board of Regents, State of Iowa (BOR) President Richards has been given authority to act on behalf of the Board of Regents in COVID-related matters. In this capacity he has requested voluntary reporting of vaccine status by university employees. This may be an effort to proactively begin data collection prior to the future implementation of a mandate. Currently, about half of UI employees have disclosed their vaccination status. This high number is likely a result of the many healthcare employees who have obtained their vaccinations through UIHC, which has automatically uploaded the data.

At this point, President Marshall continued, several lawsuits opposing the mandate have been filed by various states. These lawsuits have the potential to put the mandate on hold. Our current understanding of the vaccine mandate for employees of federal contractors is that the faculty and staff within the department that holds the contract are required to be vaccinated or to opt out for health or religious reasons. The mandate is now being implemented across campus as departments sign contracts. The deadline for compliance is January 4. Regarding the vaccine mandate for employees at healthcare facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid programs, President Marshall noted that this mandate could impact the Carver College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry, and the College of Nursing. All faculty and staff in those colleges would likely be affected, as well as students (considered visitors to those facilities). The deadline for compliance with this mandate is also January 4. Because the university is covered by the two rules described above, it probably will not be subject to the rule issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that companies with 100 or more employees must require their employees to be vaccinated or to test negative weekly. President Marshall further explained that the probable impact of these federal rules on the university is that non-healthcare faculty, staff, and students who are not part of a federal contract will not be subject to a vaccine mandate.

Professor Glass commented that a faculty member in his department, in his building receives federal money from a national grant. He asked if the vaccine mandate would then apply to his department and/or his building. Associate Provost Geist, who was attending the meeting, responded that the mandate only applies to contracts, not to grants. Professor Glass then requested more transparency from the BOR regarding COVID-related decisions. He suggested that a frequently-updated webpage be created on the BOR website, so that the entire university community can follow the latest developments. At this point, very little information is available from the Regents. President Marshall indicated that she would pass along this suggestion to the President's Office. Associate Provost Geist added that the COVID situation is not static. Circumstances change daily and it would be difficult to keep a webpage updated. Professor Glass further commented that the university's COVID policies (e.g., no mask or vaccine mandate) are impacting recruitment. He requested that the Senate gather data so that this impact can be reported to administrators.

Through the chat, Professor Erdahl asked how vaccine exemption requests would be handled and whether a large number were anticipated. President Marshall explained that University Human Resources has set up a system for employees to provide their vaccination information easily. The system also allows for a response indicating a request for a vaccine waiver on religious grounds. Professor Anderson asked for clarification regarding HIPAA privacy requirements and the importation of vaccination status data from UIHC. Professor Erdahl explained that a variety of information from healthcare workers is tracked, so there is a precedent for collecting this data. The information is not publicly available but is visible to supervisors.

- *Suggestions for Initiatives to Support Faculty Morale (Melissa Lehan Mackin)*

Secretary Lehan Mackin explained that the Senate leadership has heard concerns this fall, and even earlier, about low faculty morale and high stress across campus. The Senate officers have conveyed these concerns to administrators, but no clear strategies have evolved to address the situation. Therefore, the officers would like to reach out to Councilors for suggestions of strategies they can employ that would contribute to improving our faculty morale.

Professor Nisly commented that at a recent Women in Medicine (WIM) meeting, coping with stress was the topic of discussion. Coping strategies suggested included the creation of a sense of community and of a feeling of empowerment. Flexibility by supervisors is also appreciated. For example, if work can be performed successfully at home, it should be valued just as much as work done in the office. The need to find meaning at work was a concern brought up at the WIM meeting, as well. Regarding the creation of community, Professor Lehan Mackin noted that, in the past, the Senate has hosted social events at Hancher for faculty, but that might not be feasible yet because of COVID. Professor Nisly commented that Megan Hammes, from UI Wellness, had indicated at the WIM meeting that UI employees could sign up for a daily messaging service that sends positive, evidence-based affirmations. Also, simply gathering online for social interaction could be very helpful.

Professor Brogden asked if any data were available regarding factors contributing to low morale. Strategies could then be more narrowly targeted to specific factors. Secretary Lehan Mackin responded that no data had been collected and that evidence was primarily anecdotal. President Marshall noted that burnout over the past year seems to be a common feeling across campus. Among the contributing factors is the inability to return to pre-pandemic life, combined with constant uncertainty about the future. And, working-from-home parents who had children also at home all day needing supervision and assistance found the experience exhausting. Via the chat, Professor Buckley commented that regular childcare continues to be disrupted for many families. Professor Kivlighan observed that we are facing racial and political unrest, in addition to a pandemic that has been going on for almost two years. Faculty in his college are also seeking ways to build community and alleviate stress. The University Counseling Service has provided some helpful advice, which is simply to acknowledge that “it is okay not to be okay right now.” Messaging such as this may be more impactful than Zoom activities, because people are tired of Zoom by now. He added that this fall has been more difficult than last fall, because this fall there is an attitude that everything is back to normal when in fact it is not. Secretary Lehan Mackin requested that Councilors send additional suggestions to her via email.

- *Council Roundtable (All Councilors)*

Several Councilors shared news and concerns from their colleges. Professor Cunningham-Ford noted that the College of Dentistry has just finished interviewing four dean candidates. Regarding the Carver College of Medicine, Professor Nisly commented that one of the big concerns among faculty is a new compensation model that puts everyone's salary at risk. She added that while units are held to a particular standard, the College and the hospital are not. For example, units do not have control over certain operational aspects, such as scheduling and no-shows. Professor Nisly's clinic treats many vulnerable patients and no-shows are not uncommon, but this is held against her in salary evaluations. Many of her colleagues are holding extra clinics to make up for their own no-shows and thereby preserve their salary levels.

Professor Welder, also from Medicine, concurred that the new compensation model is very distressing for faculty. Also weighing heavily on faculty is the widespread shortage of healthcare personnel, including nurses, medical assistants, and schedulers. She emphasized that healthcare workers are burned out from COVID and experiencing compassion fatigue. Professor Welder added that she feels grateful, nevertheless, that she works in an environment in which everyone is required to wear a mask. She expressed appreciation for the bravery of her faculty colleagues who do not have this protection. The lack of paid parental leave and the burdens of establishing a new practice (especially with higher rates of no-shows for new patients) are prime concerns for junior faculty in the College. On a more positive note, Professor Welder commented that her department, Family Medicine, continues to expand primary care services, adding additional clinics and evening hours, thus benefitting a growing number of patients.

Professor Anderson reported that the College of Law this year accepted the academically strongest class in its history. The third-year class moot court competitors just won a regional contest and are moving on to the national level. This success aligns well with marketing the "writing law school." Also, the College is home to a federal defense law clinic, which is expanding the number of women in the federal defense bar. Past President Yockey added that the College is recruiting new faculty to replace several faculty members who have retired. Professor Kivlighan indicated that there are about 15 faculty searches currently underway in the College of Education. The new [Iowa Center for School Mental Health](#), a collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education, is seeking to partner with faculty members from across campus in order to serve schools throughout the state.

- *President's Report (Teresa Marshall)*

President Marshall indicated that University Human Resources and the Division of Student Life are creating a well-being and mental health campus collaborative to promote optimal health, personal connectedness, meaningful experiences, and a purposeful life. This initiative is evidence that administrators are aware of the mental well-being challenges across campus and are striving to meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students. Professor Jun Xu has agreed to represent faculty on this committee.

It had been brought to President Marshall's attention that the IRS has increased the benefit amount for dependent and flex spending from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year in 2021. University Human Resources chose not to offer this increased benefit to employees because our aging

information technology system could not accommodate the change. A new IT system may be in place by 2023; however, this is another instance in which it appears to faculty and staff that the university is choosing not to be supportive of them, thus impacting morale.

President Marshall indicated that the Instructional Faculty Track Review Committee has been busy surveying the instructional-track faculty to gather their input for the committee's report. She praised the work of the committee, co-chaired by Professor Caroline Sheerin (Law) and Anne Stapleton (CLAS/English).

In closing her remarks, President Marshall noted that she had just received a request for a faculty member to serve on the search committee for the new University Ombudsperson. She invited anyone interested in serving to contact her following the meeting for additional information.

- *Executive Session: Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee Update (Teresa Marshall)*

Professor Pizzimenti moved and Professor Nisly seconded that the Council move into executive session, inviting Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee chair Doris Witt and member Ed Gillan to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

The Council discussed potential revisions to several Operations Manual policies.

Professor Brogden moved and Professor Pizzimenti seconded that the Council move out of executive session. The motion carried unanimously.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, December 7, 3:30 – 5:15 pm, via Zoom.
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 25, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Glass moved and Professor Anderson seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Marshall adjourned the meeting at 5:20 pm.