

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, February 18, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

- Senators Present: A. Achenbach, L. Adams, B. Andrews, B. Ayati, H. Azaiez, J. Bunch, R. Cox, R. Curto, A. Dupuy, H. Dybevik, A. Estapa, S. Ganesan, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, N. Greyser, P. Groves, C. Hamann, D. Langbehn, A. Lesch, V. Lira, T. Midtroed, B. Nottingham-Spencer, A. Panos, C. Pinnaro, R. Sakoda, D. Shane, Y. Shi, A. Shibli-Rahhal, J. Simmons, M. Swee, E. Thomas, D. Trusty, M. Wald, E. Welder, K. Whitaker F. Williams.
- Officers Present: R. Curtu, E. Gillan, C. Just, C. Sheerin.
- Senators Excused: M. Abou Alaiwa, E. Carlisle, L. Durairaj, A. Farag, J. Fiegel, C. Fox, C. Grueter, B. G'Sell, J. Gutierrez, A. Kalnins, M. McQuistan, T. Rietz, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, M. Schroeder, W. Story, C. Vogel.
- Senators Absent: S. Abuhammoud, B. An, C. Benson, C. Chan, M. Coleman, E. Destruel, N. Handoo, J. Kline, J. Koch, M. Landsman, B. Li, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, P. Nau, J. Nepola, K. Parker, J. Sa-Aadu, F. Solt, C. Turvey, A. Vikram, T. Wadas, K. Worthington, L. Zingman.
- Guests: A. Flaming (Center for Teaching), M. Gardinier (Emeritus Faculty Council), L. Geist (Interim Vice President for Research and Office of the Provost), A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez (Graduate College), A. Thein (Graduate College), S. Vigmostad (Election 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 Nottingham-Spencer moved and Professor Williams seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Faculty Senate Minutes (December 3, 2024) – Professor Panos moved and Professor Nottingham-Spencer seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - C. Committee Appointments (Rodica Curtu, Chair, Committee on Committees) – Professor Adams moved and Professor Langbehn seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- Matthew Geneser (Pediatric Dentistry) to fill the unexpired term of Todd Pettys (Law) on the Presidential Committee on Athletics, 2025-26
- Ed Gillan (Chemistry) to fill the unexpired term of Roxanna Curto (French & Italian) on the Committee on Elections, 2024-27
- Erin Johnson (Management & Entrepreneurship) to the Judicial Commission, 2025-28

III. New Business

- *Faculty Senate Election Committee Update (Sarah Vigmostad, Chair)*

Professor Vigmostad explained that elections for the new Faculty Senate secretary and vice president would be held during the April 29 Senate meeting. The Election Committee is responsible for developing a slate of candidates. The committee members have identified some candidates, but are still soliciting more names, even from individuals who might want to be considered in a future year, rather than this one. Professor Vigmostad indicated that 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.*

Anyone interested in becoming a candidate for Senate officer should contact Professor Vigmostad, sarah-vigmostad@uiowa.edu, or one of the current officers.

- *Graduate College Update (Amanda Thein, Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean, Graduate College; Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Success, Graduate College)*

Associate Provost Thein began her presentation by noting that most people in Iowa, the United States, and globally do not have graduate degrees. She asked that Senators think of people they encounter in their daily lives who do not have graduate degrees and then consider how these individuals might respond to these questions: *Who goes to graduate school? What kind of support (if any) do they need as graduate students? What kinds of careers do they pursue? In what ways (if any) does their success matter to others?* After Senators shared reactions and perceptions, Associate Provost Thein went on to explain that UI student enrollment in Fall 2023 was 70% undergraduate, 19% graduate, 6% professional, and 5% postgraduate. As for demographics, 54% of graduate and professional students were women, 16% were minorities, 18% were international students, and 44% were Iowa residents. Associate Provost Thein added that among these individuals are veterans, parents, caregivers for elderly parents, rural residents, urban residents, etc.

Turning to degree type, Associate Provost Thein indicated that the majority (55%) of our graduate students are enrolled in Master's degree programs, with 40% enrolled in Doctoral degree programs. Among professional students, 36% are enrolled in medicine, 27% in law, 20% in pharmacy, and 18% in dentistry. While enrollment in graduate programs has risen over the

last several years, this growth has been fueled by Master's programs, with enrollment in Doctoral programs shrinking somewhat, particularly in PhD programs. This imbalance may be a result of job market incentives. When asked to speak about why graduate education matters, Associate Provost Thein commented that she often emphasizes that it is not just a means for an individual to succeed, but that graduate education is a national asset and a public good. Graduate education drives innovation, advances scientific research, and prepares students for diverse careers. As for why Doctoral research matters, she continued, R1 public institutions like UI generate cutting-edge research and scholarship that addresses national and international problems, as well as the needs of our state and local communities.

Associate Provost Thein briefly described the [3MT competition](#), which challenges graduate students to articulate complex research to non-specialist audiences. The contestants represent a diverse array of disciplines and reflect the passion for discovery. The students become ambassadors for the value of graduate education and develop communication skills, take pride in their work, and have the opportunity to compete for prizes. Associate Provost Thein highlighted the work of 2023 Environmental Engineering PhD student Moala Keshe Bannavti, now a postdoc at MIT, whose presentation entitled “No more PCBs in school air” was a people's choice winner at the 2023 3MT competition. Dr. Bannavti's interest in the topic arose from her childhood experiences in urban schools with PCBs in the air. Graduate and professional students also participate in Hawkeye Caucus, an event at the Capitol building that brings legislators together with UI faculty and students. Associate Provost Thein highlighted the encounter of Ben Kreitlow, a student earning a PhD in neuroscience, with Representative Timi Brown-Powers, with whom he discussed his research on sudden unexpected death in epilepsy.

Turning briefly to the topic of Master's education, Associate Provost Thein indicated that 80% of graduate degrees awarded nationally in 2020-21 were Master's degrees. This level of education has the fastest growth of any education level. Entry level jobs requiring Master's degrees are expected to grow by 17% through 2026. Among the fields for which Master's degrees are commonly obtained are health care, computers/cybersecurity, K-12 public education, museums and cultural institutions, and advanced manufacturing. At UI, Master's degree students are able to acquire hands-on experience related to their areas of study in programs such as the [Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities](#).

Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez commented that the Graduate College supports graduate education in numerous ways, including by looking for opportunities to share the value of graduate education with prospective students, encouraging holistic approaches to admissions, and supporting a wide array of graduate students in success at Iowa. Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez oversees the Graduate College [Academic Affairs Office](#), which is responsible for supporting graduate students' academic progress and success, including by overseeing degree progress and completion, student records, and thesis and dissertation support and examination. The Office also coordinates with departments to manage the rules and standards for graduate education. The [Graduate Council](#), which is the executive committee of the graduate faculty, works with the Graduate College to create and revise policy. The Office collaborates with the [Graduate Student Senate](#), the representative body of graduate students on campus, as well. Each year, graduate students from all disciplines are invited to present at the [Jakobsen Research](#)

[Showcase](#), scheduled this year for March 29. Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez also oversees the Graduate College [Grad Success Center](#), which supports graduate students' professional, academic, and personal success. The Center assists graduate students in honing their teaching skills, finding financial support, and exploring career options. The Center also hosts numerous workshops on, for example, resumes and cover letters, networking, finding funding, and working with mentors. Another Graduate College program to support graduate students involves [peer mentoring](#). Not only is peer mentoring helpful for new students to learn about the campus and the community, but it also provides a leadership experience for returning students. Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez concluded her remarks by indicating that the Graduate College is preparing a manual of best practices for departmental directors of graduate studies, along with a document with guidance and resources for international students and postdocs. She invited faculty members to reach out to the Graduate College with any questions, concerns, or suggestions for advocating for and supporting graduate education at both the Master's and Doctoral level.

Professor Trusty asked where graduate students might be going for additional training once they leave the UI. Are they seeking degrees or credentials in areas of study that the UI does not currently have? Associate Provost Thein responded that the UI is generally responsive to trends in employment. She noted that the Tippie College of Business has been particularly agile in adapting to new job trends. Graduate students are entering a wider array of fields than previously, such as industry and non-profits. She observed that there has been a national culture shift regarding career plans for Doctoral students, who no longer see an academic job as their only goal, particularly given the dwindling number of academic positions in some fields. Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez added that the Grad Success Center helps graduate students prepare themselves to search for non-academic jobs. Professor Ganesan asked about the existence of national advocacy groups for graduate student research. Associate Provost Thein encouraged faculty members to send the Graduate College stories of graduate students' research activities, so that those stories can be publicized. She commented that she is a member of a national graduate education advocacy group that has sought support for a number of initiatives, such as using Pell grants for graduate education.

- *Center for Teaching Update (Anna Flaming, Director)*

Dr. Flaming presented an overview of the activity of the Center for Teaching. She began by indicating that, in addition to herself, the staff of the Center includes two associate directors and two assistant directors, along with several graduate and undergraduate assistants. The Center's mission statement is *The Center for Teaching advances teaching and learning excellence at Iowa and develops a collaborative university culture that supports, values, and rewards effective teaching. The Center is an advocate for evidence-based, reflective teaching and a leader in instructor professional development, responsible for sparking and shaping transformative conversations about teaching and learning on campus and beyond.* Dr. Flaming explained that the Center is a support unit and open to anyone on campus who teaches. She added that the Center is also responsible for the thinking about the ecosystem that supports teaching on campus. Dr. Flaming then invited Senators to share an effective teaching strategy that they have used or that they have learned about from someone else, on the website, <https://padlet.com/annaflaming/CFT2025>. After reviewing Senators' responses, Dr. Flaming

asked Senators to indicate with a show of hands where they go to get ideas about teaching and learning. She provided numerous choices, such as departmental meetings, faculty beyond the program or department, and disciplinary associations.

Continuing her description of the Center's activities, Dr. Flaming explained that the Center's clients are faculty members and teaching assistants seeking to improve their teaching skills. The Center provides confidential and voluntary 1:1 consultations, campus-wide workshops and institutes (e.g., Course Design Institute and New TA Orientation), reading groups, faculty communities, graduate teaching fellowships, and early-career faculty support. Some of the Center's key areas of expertise include course and curriculum design, scholarship of teaching and learning, assignment and assessment design and grading, instructional teams, active learning, mentorship, and pedagogical partnership/students-as-partners.

Dr. Flaming then highlighted several of the Center's programs. The [Scholarly Teaching Program](#) is a learning community designed to support a cohort of teaching-focused faculty from across the disciplines who discuss teaching and learning for about six months and then attend a teaching conference. Participants share with their home departments the information they learned from each other and from the conference. The [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\) Scholars Program](#) brings together a small cohort of faculty from various disciplines who receive ongoing support from the Center to design, implement, and disseminate their SoTL studies. Participants undertake a methodologically sound inquiry into a particular aspect of teaching. Opportunities exist to access financial support for the SoTL study. [Fellowships](#) are available for graduate students to develop their teaching skills and portfolio by collaborating with teaching assistants from across the university on a range of pedagogical issues and to gain practical experience in the field of educational development through collaboration with Center staff. The Center has partnered with the Graduate College to offer graduate student instructors the opportunity to participate in online asynchronous events and earn certifications through the [Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning \(CIRTL\)](#).

Center campuswide events can be found [here](#). A digital events calendar is also produced each semester and sent out to departments with the request to forward it on to faculty members, Dr. Flaming noted. Among the upcoming events is a collaboration with the College of Education to bring together educators from the university and K-12 systems to learn about each other's teaching practices. A panel on *Cultivating Success: International Teaching* will take place on Wednesday, April 2, 3:00-4:30 pm, in 1117 UCC. The annual [Course Design Institute](#) is scheduled for May 19-23. Applications are due on March 28. In conclusion, Dr. Flaming urged Senators to subscribe to the Center's newsletter to keep up with the many events and programs at the Center for Teaching, <https://apps.its.uiowa.edu/dispatch/subscriptionLists/1225443212/signup>.

- *Conflicts of Commitment (Effort) Policy Revision and Conflict of Interest in the Workplace Policy Revision (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin indicated that these two existing policies, the [Conflicts of Commitment \(Effort\)](#) policy and the [Conflict of Interest in the Workplace](#) policy, affect both faculty and staff. She then explained that in December, the Senate officers had received proposed revisions to the

policies from two administrators, Lois Geist, Interim Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Faculty, and Jan Waterhouse, Assistant Vice President for Employee Relations and Inclusion, University Human Resources. A quick turnaround for review of the revisions was requested. The Senate officers, along with the Senate's Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC) Chair Doris Witt, sent initial feedback to the administrators in early January. On January 21, FPCC met and discussed the revisions. Feedback from that discussion was also sent to the administrators. The Faculty Council discussed the revisions at the January 28 meeting and feedback from that meeting was provided to administrators, as well.

The Conflicts of Commitment (Effort) policy addresses the time and effort that faculty and staff give to external commitments, President Sheerin indicated. The policy reflects a concern with the ability of faculty and staff to complete their job duties for the university, while balancing the legitimacy of faculty and staff using their talents outside of their employment with the university. The Senate officers, as well as the FPCC and Council members, had raised several questions with administrators about the proposed revisions to this policy and administrators recently responded with explanations. The revised policy referred to "potential conflicts;" it was unclear what a *potential* conflict might be. Administrators responded that employees are not responsible for determining what constitutes a conflict; that decision is up to the university once administrators have been alerted to a situation that might trigger a conflict. A management plan might then be instituted. The definition of "external activities" was also unclear, as was the definition of "central university offices." Administrators responded that "external activities" were very fact specific, although such activities did not include summer activities for those faculty members on nine-month contracts. "Central university offices" was intentionally vague because the responsible offices might change over time. The Conflict of Interest in the Workplace policy addresses the potential for having a financial or other consideration that would compromise the professional judgment of a faculty or staff member, President Sheerin continued. She noted that this policy does not address nepotism, which is covered by a different policy. No significant issues with this proposed policy revision were raised. President Sheerin then asked if Senators had any concerns about either policy.

Professor Welder expressed concern about the continuing vagueness of the proposed revised Conflicts of Commitment (Effort) policy's reference to "external activities," which could seem to apply to almost anything a faculty member does outside of university employment. She also found vague a phrase in section e. Implementation of Policy. (1) (c) "*...if engaging in the activity requires a **substantial commitment of time**...*" Perhaps it could be re-worded to say something like "*...if engaging in the activity **significantly impacts the time needed to do the employee's university job**...*" President Sheerin noted that the Senate officers had raised the concern about "external activities" early on, but the response had been that this concept was very fact specific. Also, if there was a chance that the activity could present a conflict in the future, then it would be good to raise the issue with one's supervisor. A Senator asked if administrators took Senate officer, FPCC, and Council feedback into consideration and made changes to the proposed revisions; President Sheerin indicated that they had.

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

President Sheerin reminded Senators that the proposed revision of the [Faculty](#) policy has been in process for months, with the drafting carried out by a working group that included faculty members Professor Witt, President Sheerin, and Past President Gillan and administrators Associate Provost for Faculty Geist, Deputy General Counsel Lukas, Deputy Counsel Byrd, and Deputy Counsel Shust, with Senior Director of Faculty Human Resources Alaina Hanson sitting in to provide implementation procedure expertise. A similar process was successfully used to create revisions to the [Faculty Dispute Procedures](#) policy last year. Senators have been receiving periodic updates on work on the Faculty policy, most recently at the December 3 Senate meeting, during which Senators provided significant feedback that was incorporated into the drafting efforts.

Past President Gillan explained that the Faculty policy defines key university level policies, rules, definitions, and rights for faculty on all tracks (tenure, clinical, research, instructional, fixed-term). The policy also provides guidance for faculty issues including academic freedom, rank criteria, tenure, promotion, and review. He noted that the Faculty policy had its origins in the early 1970's, when only the tenure track existed. Since that time, numerous other sections and stand-alone policies were incorporated into the original policy, causing some repetition, stylistic differences, and a lack of cohesion. In addition to revising sections of the policy, the working group has also re-structured the policy. Past President Gillan reminded Senators that last year, revisions were made to the sections of the Faculty policy related to the specialized tracks (clinical, research, instructional). This year, the policy's original introductory section, previously describing only the tenure track, was significantly revised, to recognize the contributions of the three newer tracks. A new introduction to the policy section on the specialized tracks was also created. Additional work focused primarily on the tenure track. Many portions of the policy relating to the tenure track were not changed, but rather updated to reflect current practice. Clarifications were added stating that faculty reviews and evaluations are based on written departmental and unit standards and norms.

As previously indicated to Senators, the policy sections on Post-Tenure Effort Allocation and Review of Tenured Faculty Members were a major focus of attention by the working group. A significant update in language to the Post-Tenure Effort Allocation section now indicates that individualized faculty portfolios (effort allocation) may be implemented based on faculty interests or motivation, or as the outcome of a failed post-tenure development plan. Past President Gillan reminded the group that the Review of Tenured Faculty Members policy allows for both annual reviews conducted by the dean or DEO and peer reviews conducted every five years. In the new proposed revised version of the policy, the section on Review of Tenured Faculty Members now allows for an out of cycle peer review. The out of cycle peer review would be activated by two consecutive unsatisfactory annual reviews conducted by the dean or DEO following a post-tenure peer review, when the concerns identified in the annual reviews have not been remediated. Based on the results of the out of cycle peer review, the dean or DEO would determine if a development plan would be appropriate to improve the faculty member's performance. Past President Gillan commented that the out of cycle peer review seemed to be a good compromise between no action taken after the negative annual reviews (the current

situation) and the possibility of a dean or DEO moving ahead with a development plan immediately following several negative annual reviews without any peer feedback.

Professor Curto asked for clarification regarding when the effort allocation change would be activated. Past President Gillan indicated that this could occur after an unsuccessful outcome to the development plan. The development plan would not have a specific time frame but progress would instead be evaluated during the annual reviews. He added that the grievance procedures would be available to a faculty member who wished to dispute any administrative action. Professor Curto commented that she had initially been disappointed that the language prohibiting a faculty member from being compelled to accept an effort allocation change would likely be removed from the policy. Past President Gillan observed that the Post Tenure Effort Allocation policy had been written prior to the Review of Tenured Faculty Members policy. The latter policy does include language indicating that a change to effort allocation could be an option during a development plan. The option of filing a grievance would remain, however. Professor Curto expressed the view that a reasonable compromise had been negotiated. Professor Witt added that the out-of-cycle peer review might not agree with the dean or DEO's negative assessment, but the dean or DEO might still try to proceed with a development plan. In that case, if the faculty member chooses to pursue the dispute procedures, the positive out-of-cycle peer review could be pointed to for evidence of satisfactory performance.

Professor Witt indicated that next steps for the proposed policy revision call for the FPCC to discuss the proposed revisions with the working group administrators at a meeting next week. The FPCC members will then likely determine whether to recommend the proposed revised policy to the Faculty Council for a vote. If the outcome of that vote is positive, then the proposed revised policy will advance to the Faculty Senate for a vote. President Sheerin praised Past President Gillan and Professor Witt for their extraordinary advocacy for faculty throughout this policy revision process. She added that the faculty/administrator working group has been a successful collaboration and an excellent example of shared governance. Senators expressed their appreciation through applause.

- *President's Report (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin addressed the recent developments at the federal and state level with the following statement: *Things are moving fast and we are feeling the effects on campus, whether directly or indirectly. I am not going to comment on the substance of any particular piece of legislation or order, but I do want to say this to you. You, the faculty, have been, are, and will remain the heart of this institution. The work you do, whether it is research, teaching, or clinical, or some combination of all three, is so valuable. We, the officers, know that you are here, not because you want money, or wish to push a partisan agenda. You are here to teach our students and to contribute to the health and well-being of the citizens of this state and nation. Know that the officers are doing what we can to keep you informed, field your questions, and protect your right to academic freedom and due process. We see you, we hear you, and we appreciate you.*

President Sheerin reminded Senators that the [committee recruitment drive](#) is underway. The deadline to apply is March 7.

Proposed revisions to the [Criminal Background Check at Point of Hire](#) policy have been made. The Senate officers were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed revisions, which would allow the university to utilize the Threat Assessment Team to gather additional background information on a candidate's criminal history if there is a concern for campus safety.

The [42nd annual Presidential Lecture](#) will take place on March 5.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, March 11, 3:30-5:15 pm, Seminar Room (2520D), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, March 25, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Williams moved and Professor Trusty seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Sheerin adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.