

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, April 29, 2025
3:30 – 5:05 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

- Senators Present: T. Abel, M. Abou Alaiwa, A. Achenbach, L. Adams, R. Alambert, B. An, J. Barker, J. Bunch, E. Carlisle, R. Curto, E. Destruel, A. Dupuy, L. Durairaj, H. Dybevik, A. Estapa, A. Farag, C. Fox, S. Ganesan, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, D. Greenwood-Sanchez, N. Greyser, P. Groves, C. Grueter, B. G'Sell, C. Hamann, N. Hamzeh, C. Hogden, E. Johnson, A. Kalnins, M. Knight, J. Koch, M. Landsman, D. Langbehn, A. Lesch, P. McGonagill, M. McQuistan, B. Nottingham-Spencer, R. Peter, C. Pinnaro, T. Rietz, A. Ryan, R. Sakoda, M. Schroeder, D. Shane, J. Simmons, F. Solt, J. Staber, M. Swee, K. Thiel, E. Thomas, C. Turvey, A. Uc, K. Vogelgesang, T. Wadas, S. Warren, E. Welder, K. Whitaker, F. Williams, K. Worthington, B. Young.
- Officers Present: R. Curtu, E. Gillan, C. Just, C. Sheerin.
- Senators Excused: B. Ayati, J. Fiegel, J. Kline, D. Santillan, M. Santillan, A. Shibli-Rahhal, W. Story, D. Trusty, C. Vogel, M. Wald.
- Senators Absent: S. Abuhammoud, B. Andrews, C. Benson, C. Chan, M. Coleman, R. Cox, J. Gutierrez, N. Handoo, B. Li, V. Lira, C. McMillan, H. Mehdi, T. Midtrod, P. Nau, J. Nepola, A. Panos, K. Parker, J. Sa-Aadu, Y. Shi, A. Vikram, L. Zingman.
- Guests: M. Gardinier (Emeritus Faculty Council); B. Goetz (Athletics); A. Jung (Election Committee); A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez (Office of the President Review Committee, Graduate College); B. Thomas (Office of the Provost); S. Vigmostad (Election 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 Koch moved and Professor Langbehn seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Faculty Senate Minutes (March 25, 2025) – Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Nottingham-Spencer seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Faculty Senate and Council Election Results (Caroline Sheerin) – Professor McQuistan moved and Professor Nottingham-Spencer seconded that the 2025 election results be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- D. 2025-26 Committee Recommendations (Rodica Curtu, Chair, Committee on Committees) – Vice President Curtu presented the recommendations of the Committee on Committees for individuals to fill vacant positions on charter, university, and Faculty Senate committees beginning with the 2025-26 academic year. Professor Koch moved and Professor Durairaj seconded that the 2025-26 committee appointment recommendations be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- E. 2023-24 Motion Summary (Rodica Curtu) – Vice President Curtu presented the 2023-24 motion summary. This document describes the subsequent impact of substantive motions approved by the Senate. Professor Farag moved and Professor Kalnins seconded that the 2023-24 motion summary be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

III. New Business

- *Athletic Director Beth Goetz*

Ms. Goetz began her remarks by commenting that UI has seen a consistent level of success in athletics which she contributed to the university being a special place where everyone – alumni, faculty, students, fans, administrators – believes in each other. The mission of UI Athletics has three primary components, she continued. The first component is service to our approximately 650 student athletes, through supporting them in their academic endeavors as well as in helping them excel in their sports. The second component is service as a place of university engagement and pride, bringing together the campus community with fans across the state and beyond. The third component is service as a platform for sharing all the good things that happen at the institution (teaching, research, health care) with a wider audience.

Student athletes achieved an average 3.25 GPA this past fall; this is the highest GPA on record for UI student athletes, Ms. Goetz indicated. The graduation success rate is 88%, according to [NCAA metrics](#). UI student athletes come from across colleges and majors and include 28 graduate students. Student athletes are encouraged to engage in a wide variety of campus and community volunteer opportunities, as well. Ms. Goetz then gave a brief summary of this year's athletic successes. She added that athletic events have brought over one million visitors to campus this year. Television viewership for UI games has numbered about 60 million. In other athletics news, a new men's basketball coach has been hired and a search for a new softball coach will soon get underway. Work has been completed on a new gymnastics and spirit squad facility, while work progresses on a baseball facility. Both projects have been supported by philanthropic donations. Renovation possibilities for Carver Hawkeye Arena are currently being explored.

Turning to the changing national landscape for college athletics, Ms. Goetz noted that two major factors are impacting college athletics today, with financial considerations being the driver for both. These two factors are litigation, with related legislative action, and conference expansion. She referred to the [House v. NCAA](#) case, as one example of pending litigation. The

potential settlement of this lawsuit would require universities to share revenue with student athletes. Moving forward, this would allow for some structure to be imposed upon a newly-emerging system that currently lacks regulation. A formula has thus far been established that allows for universities to share an average of 22% of their athletic revenue with their student athletes. The 22% revenue sharing added to the average cost of an athletic scholarship equals about 50% support for student athletes. The 22% share equates to about \$20 million. It would be up to each institution to determine how to distribute the revenue to student athletes. Establishment of rules regarding revenue sharing would eliminate the need for third-party involvement and would allow for name, image, and likeness (NIL) to be what it was intended to be – a fair market payment for a student athlete’s personal brand. Some questions remain, particularly regarding potential Congressional action, employment status for student athletes, and the impact on Title IX. It may be some time before all these issues are settled.

Ms. Goetz emphasized that, although the UI intends to remain athletically competitive in this new environment, the university will continue to act in ways that are consistent with its values, such as its commitment to student athletes’ academic success. She added that football is responsible for 78% of athletic revenue generation. Thus, in order to sustain a financial model that includes 21 other sports, the university must ensure that the football program continues to have success. Brand visibility and engagement are becoming critically important, she continued. UI Athletics seeks to be intentional about how brand visibility is aligned with the university’s overall mission. The athletics department also strives to be a good steward of its resources, including those resources that come to it through philanthropic giving. UI Athletics works closely with university leadership and the UI Center for Advancement to ensure that decisions made align with long-term sustainable financial models that also allow for competitive success.

Noting the expansion of the Big Ten to both the east and west coasts, Professor Abel asked about the impact of extended travel time on the athletic and academic performances of our student athletes. Ms. Goetz commented that conference expansion is an issue decided upon by university presidents, who have seen mutual academic- and research-related benefits to their institutions from expansion. As for travel distances, UI has not seen a significant impact on our student athletes from increased travel time. Not all sports will need to travel to the west coast institutions and those that do may only need to travel west infrequently. Non-conference travel west is limited. The conference continues to work on identifying optimal travel times (e.g., whether it is better to travel back immediately following a game).

Professor Kalnins asked about plans for revenue sharing with student athletes, specifically, whether the revenue sharing would be equitable across all sports and all athletes. Ms. Goetz responded that current arrangements call for revenue sharing to be based on revenue generation. Thus, those teams (football, men’s and women’s basketball, and wrestling) that generate the most revenue would receive the most revenue in return. Within teams, revenue would be shared based on the individual’s contribution to the team’s success. Ms. Goetz acknowledged that this scenario presented some challenges. Professor Williams noted that recent reporting had indicated the existence of debt owed to the university by UI Athletics. She asked how that debt had been incurred. Ms. Goetz explained that the department had borrowed money from the university to make up for revenue losses during the pandemic, when

restrictions prevented fans from attending games. A payment plan is in place to return the borrowed money to the university.

Professor McQuistan asked about mental health resources provided to student athletes. Ms. Goetz observed that mental health is a concern for the entire student body. Student athletes have access to four mental health providers on campus, with resources also available about off campus providers. She noted that there has been an increase in the types of stressors that student athletes face, to include athletic performance issues, social media pressures, and gambling issues. In response to a question about the transfer portal's impact on graduation rates, Ms. Goetz indicated that UI transfer rates are relatively low, with about 75 last year and about 69 this year. The impact on graduation rates on our campus has not been significant. It would be helpful, however, for the transfer portal to align with the academic calendar, she added.

- *Office of the President Review Committee Report (Ana Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Chair, Office of the President Review Committee)*

Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez explained that university policy calls for periodic reviews of central administrative [offices](#) and [officers](#). In spring 2024, then Faculty Senate President Ed Gillan charged a committee with the review of the Office of the President. In addition to Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez, the committee included Professors Dawn Anderson (Law), David Hensley (Business), Craig Just (Engineering), Michelle McQuistan (Dentistry), and Michael Sauder (Liberal Arts and Sciences/Sociology), along with the external reviewer, Jon Steadland, Chief of Staff in the Office of the President, University of Minnesota. The review committee has now completed its work and the final report is posted on the Faculty Senate [website](#).

The review committee did not have a recent precedent to follow in reviewing the Office of the President, Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez indicated, because the last review of the Office took place in 2003, even though the Policy Manual calls for administrative reviews to take place every seven years. May 7, 2024, was the date of the first review committee meeting and the committee continued to meet via Zoom throughout the summer. As first steps, the committee reviewed the Office's self-study and developed a set of general questions which were customized by the chair for each individual and group to be interviewed for feedback about the Office. The committee also acquired from the Office a list of individuals with frequent contact with the Office. The committee then proceeded to interview not just these individuals, but also other individuals and groups with relevant feedback about the Office. At least two review committee members participated in each interview. The chair also attended each interview and took detailed notes which were shared with the entire committee. A total of 34 interviews were conducted in June and July 2024. A list of those interviewed can be found in Appendix 2 of the report. Writing and revision of the final report took place from September 2024 to February 2025.

Turning to the review findings, Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez commented that many of those interviewed about the Office frequently mentioned President Wilson herself because they viewed the current Office as a reflection of her values and attitudes. Common themes of the

interviews included appreciation for President Wilson's strong leadership and communication skills. The Office's use of the strategic plan as a guide, collaboration with other university units, and efforts to build trust across campus were highly regarded by the interviewees. Many interviewees also expressed the view that relations with internal and external stakeholders had improved greatly in the last few years, due in large part to the accessibility of and the communication from the Office of the President. Both Pete Matthes, Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations, and Laura McLeran, Senior Advisor to the President and Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs, were highly praised for their work, as well.

As for recommendations, the review committee urged the Office to take a deeper look into the budget model, which committee members were told has caused disparities between and competition among colleges, thus creating a sense of unfairness and a perception of "haves" and "have-nots" on campus. Interviewees also advocated for more communication about the budget and how it works. Another area for improvement identified by the review committee was internal communication. The colleges, especially, expressed a desire for more communication directly from the Office of the President. Perhaps the Office of Strategic Communication could be given more responsibility to expand internal outreach. Internal communication that emphasized the university's mission and values, as well as its leadership role throughout its history, would be welcomed by many interviewees. Lastly, interviewees urged that the long-term vision for the university be solidified on the basis of financial stability across the institution. As part of this vision, greater resources should be directed towards recruiting and retaining tenured and tenure-track faculty members. Concluding her remarks, Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez noted that the review committee urged for reviews of the Office of the President to be carried out, as intended, every seven years.

Professor Curto asked if the review committee had considered conducting a survey to gain further insight into perceptions of the Office of the President. Associate Dean Rodríguez-Rodríguez responded that the review committee had indeed considered conducting a survey, but decided against it because of the limited contact that faculty have with the Office. Instead, the review committee chose to focus its efforts on those individuals and groups, including student leaders, staff, and alumni leaders, who work closely with the Office. President Sheerin thanked the Office of the President review committee for undertaking this important component of shared governance work. She added that the next administrative office to be reviewed would be the Office of the Provost. Past President Gillan will chair that review committee.

- *Recreational Services Charter Committee Disbandment (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin explained that several years ago the leadership of the university-wide shared governance bodies (Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Undergraduate Student Government, and Graduate and Professional Student Government) had conducted a review of the [university charter committees](#). Charter committees are another component of shared governance; they bring together faculty, staff, and students to advise administrators on various aspects of the institution. The review had determined that, while most of the charter committees were functioning successfully, there were several that appeared to be struggling. The review report advocated for the disbandment of two of the charter committees. Thus far, the charter

committee on university safety and security has been dissolved, following votes in the shared governance bodies, including Faculty Senate, to disband it. That charter committee has been replaced by what eventually became the Campus Safety Improvement Board, which includes broad representation from across the university, thereby ensuring shared governance input on campus safety and security issues.

The review report also singled out the [Recreational Services Charter Committee](#) for disbandment. However, no new entity was proposed allowing for wide campus and shared governance input into the area of recreational services. At a meeting of shared governance leaders, representatives from the Office of the President, and staff members from Recreational Services, President Sheerin proposed that the charter committee be disbanded but be replaced by an annual advisory meeting between shared governance and Recreational Services leadership, thus continuing to allow feedback and information to flow between the two groups. She referred Senators to the handout describing this proposed annual advisory meeting and noted the provision that *this agreement is valid for three years and can be renewed or terminated at that time*. President Sheerin indicated that the Faculty Council had approved the disbanding of the Recreational Services Charter Committee in favor of replacing it with an annual meeting. The other shared governance groups have expressed approval for this new arrangement, as well. President Sheerin added that the Office of the President would retain the document describing the annual advisory meeting.

Professor McQuistan moved and Professor Koch seconded that the Recreational Services Charter Committee be disbanded in favor of replacing it with an annual meeting with shared governance leaders. The motion carried unanimously.

- *Executive Session: Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Values of Higher Education in the United States of America (Caroline Sheerin)*

Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Durairaj seconded that the Faculty Senate move into executive session, inviting newly-elected Senators to join current Senators. The motion carried unanimously.

Current and newly-elected Senators discussed the *Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Values of Higher Education in the United States of America*.

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

Professor Langbehn moved and Professor Koch seconded that the Faculty Senate endorse the *Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Values of Higher Education in the United States of America*. The motion carried with one opposing vote.

Professor Kalnins asked if the Senate would consider the Mutual Defense Compact, initiated by Rutgers University. President Sheerin indicated that the Mutual Defense Compact was not on the Senate's agenda today.

- *President's Report (Caroline Sheerin)*

President Sheerin provided an update on Policy Manual [III.10 Faculty](#), a revision of which the Senate voted to approve at the last meeting. Concerns had been raised at that meeting regarding interference by DEO's in the peer review process. Language was subsequently added to the policy to make clear that such DEO interference would be inappropriate. The proposed revised policy has now gone to President Wilson for consideration and final approval. President Sheerin thanked Senators for their attention to the revision of this important policy over the course of this academic year.

President Sheerin reported that Vice President Curtu, who would transition into the role of President during the second half of today's meeting, would be leaving the UI for another institution over the summer. Secretary Just, the sole candidate thus far for Vice President in the Senate elections later today, had indicated his willingness to step into the role of President upon Vice President Curtu's departure, assuming that he is elected Vice President. Current plans call for an election for a new vice president at the September 2025 Senate meeting.

IV. From the Floor – Professor Greyser moved that the Faculty Senate approve the following resolution in honor of President Sheerin:

WHEREAS Iowa faculty thrive in a university community that values and benefits from dedicated, skillful, collaborative leadership; and

WHEREAS President Sheerin has been an exceptional leader, serving tirelessly on the Budget Review Board, Legislative Group, and many other committees, as well as with unwavering dedication as Vice President, and President;

WHEREAS President Sheerin has educated our campus about shared governance – as a principle by organizing informative events -- but also as a practice, modeling collaborative decision-making and wise counsel;

WHEREAS President Sheerin has robustly and sensibly advocated for the rights and protections of faculty, across every single appointment type – persisting steadfastly in concert with others so that our faculty policy serves all faculty tracks at this university;

WHEREAS President Sheerin guided a group of highly independent, intelligent, and opinionated faculty with professionalism, good sense, and a widely appreciated sense of humor – including in tumultuous times;

WHEREAS President Sheerin has attended no fewer than fifty thousand urgent meetings in response to said tumultuous times;

WHEREAS President Sheerin as the first instructional-track faculty member to lead the Senate as President – has acted as a trailblazer, ensuring that future ITF colleagues can follow in her footsteps; and

WHEREAS President Sheerin has enacted genuine engagement and inclusivity, making this chamber a welcoming place for all to register their voices, as she strengthens shared governance as the lifeblood of the university

BE IT RESOLVED -- that we the Senate express our deepest gratitude to President Sheerin for her exemplary leadership and dedicated service to us all.

Professor McQuistan seconded that the resolution be approved. The resolution was approved unanimously via applause. Professor Greyser presented President Sheerin with the gift of a gavel in appreciation for her service as Faculty Senate President.

V. Announcements

- Faculty and Staff Awards Celebration, Tuesday, May 6, 4:00 pm, Hancher Auditorium
- President Wilson's Reception Honoring Members of the UI Faculty Senate, Thursday, May 8, 5:00-6:00 pm.
- Closing Remarks of the 2024-25 Faculty Senate President Caroline Sheerin

Prior to beginning her closing remarks, President Sheerin thanked all those Senators who were completing their terms today.

President Sheerin began by thanking Senators for the opportunity to serve as Faculty Senate President this past year. She commented that the year had been busy, interesting, educational, engaging, and, she repeated, busy. In her opening remarks last year, she had told Senators about her lifelong love for higher education, and that love had only grown stronger during her time as president. Highlights of the past year included hosting the Faculty Council retreat in August, when Councilors discussed perceptions of higher education with administrators, and shepherding through significant changes to Policy Manual III.10, a process in which the Senate was an instrumental part.

Some of the work that had been the most important to President Sheerin had been with respect to academic freedom. While she was serving as Senate Secretary, she had expressed concern that her fellow instructional-track faculty members might not fully understand the protections afforded to them. That concern led to the drafting of the [letter on academic freedom](#) that is transmitted to the campus community at least once a year and is co-signed by the President and Provost, as well as by the Faculty Senate President. It is a reminder that all faculty at this institution have the right to teach and research without interference from outside influences. Since President Sheerin believes that knowledge is power, she had turned this year's first Senate meeting over to Ann Byrd of the Office of the General Counsel and College of Law Professor Joe Yockey, who explained some of the nuances of free speech and academic freedom. Working with the Office of the Provost, President Sheerin then hosted a follow-up series for the whole campus on the same topic. As she stepped down from her role as Senate President, she hoped that the Faculty Senate would continue to work on educating and helping our colleagues understand these important protections.

President Sheerin expressed gratitude to Senators for their amazing work and stated that, as Past President, she would continue to do what she could to protect faculty members' right to do that work. She was also grateful to our administrators, who often must work quietly to do what they can to serve the university. She emphasized that administrators are working hard, adding that they are also respectful of the process of shared governance and have invited faculty, staff, and student leadership to the table, even when they are not required to do so. President Sheerin expressed gratitude, as well, to the committee members who do so much work to elevate the

voice of the faculty. In particular, the Faculty Policy and Compensation Committee had worked very hard this year under the leadership of Professor Witt, from whom she had learned so much.

The bulk of her gratitude and affection, President Sheerin continued, went to what her Outlook knew as the *FSO 2024 group*: Past President Gillan, Vice President Curtu, Secretary Just, and Faculty Senate Administrative Services Specialist Zaper, who have been advisors and friends that have never failed to support her. They offered praise but, even more importantly, they challenged her at times when she was going astray. Past President Ed Gillan is a “policy wonk” of the highest order and she has reaped the benefits of his vast knowledge of the Policy Manual. Past President Gillan has served in shared governance in many ways and, while he is stepping down as an officer, she was confident that he would find new ways to serve the university. Secretary Craig Just also supported President Sheerin in her role, most particularly with his work on the budget. She commented that he seems to know everyone at this institution (and, curiously, he’s known them all for 30 years), and he will not hesitate to speak up. Vice President Rodica Curtu has brought energy and enthusiasm to her role, and is not a person who should be underestimated. President Sheerin recently heard someone described as having “tiger blood” – and that describes Vice President Curtu. And, Administrative Services Specialist Laura Zaper has been a steadfast supporter of shared governance, from her meticulous minutes to her knowledge of institutional history.

President Sheerin concluded her remarks by thanking Senators again for the opportunity to serve as Faculty Senate President.

VI. Adjournment – Professor McQuistan moved and Professor Kalnins seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Sheerin adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.

FACULTY SENATE
2025-26 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
Tuesday, April 29, 2025
5:05 – 5:30 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

I. Call to Order – President Curtu called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

II. Election of Faculty Senate Officers (Election Committee)

President Curtu directed the new and continuing Senators to move into the center seating area of the Senate Chamber. Although outgoing Senators were free to leave, they were invited to remain, if they wished, but to be seated in the side areas.

President Curtu invited Election Committee members Professor Sarah Vigmostad and Professor Anita Jung to come forward to conduct the officer elections.

Professor Vigmostad announced that the candidate for Vice President was Craig Just (Civil and Environmental Engineering). She then announced that the candidates for Secretary were Roxanna Curto (French and Spanish) and Naomi Greyser (English, American Studies, Gender Studies). Professor Vigmostad asked if there were any nominations from the floor for Faculty Senate Vice President or Faculty Senate Secretary. No nominations were made from the floor.

Paper ballots were distributed, collected, and counted.

III. Opening Remarks of the 2025-26 Faculty Senate President Rodica Curtu

President Curtu began by welcoming all continuing Senators and newly-elected Senators. She asked that they accept her thanks for their willingness to serve as representatives of their colleagues at this quite busy and certainly consequential time. She also conveyed her gratitude to the outgoing Senators for their important work done after the pandemic years -- for bringing the academic life at UI back to new heights, discussing and approving policies that impact our faculty in the tenure, instructional, clinical, and research tracks. President Curtu commented that she was honored to assume the role of President of the Faculty Senate and that she looked forward to supporting the UI faculty in their mission to achieve excellence in teaching, research and service.

Noting that she came to fill the role of President in a very unconventional way, President Curtu observed that, typically, a faculty member would serve many years in committees before becoming a Senator. Next would come running for election as Secretary and then Vice President in order to assume the presidency role. This was not President Curtu's path. She became a Senator for the first time in 2023 – exactly two years ago. She added that she is a strong believer in shared governance and in establishing good communication channels and collaborations with the administration and other constituents on campus and beyond. She is also a strong

believer in fairness, practical approaches, and goal-oriented actions. So, last year – after just one year in the Senate – she decided to throw her hat into the ring and run for the Vice President position. She had wanted to take on this role to advocate for her UI colleagues, to highlight their excellent work that impacts our students, staff, the State of Iowa, the United States and our global partners alike. These were her driven goals at the time, and they are the same today.

During her journey from “just a faculty member” to a “one-year senator” to “Vice President and now to President of the Faculty Senate,” President Curtu continued, she had the privilege to meet wonderful UI faculty members who mentored, championed, and greatly supported her along the way. Her first acknowledgement went to former Senate President Rodríguez-Rodríguez, who had asked her to serve as a member of the review committee for the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). This was a turning point in her career and she learned a lot from serving on that committee. She encouraged newly-elected Senators to get engaged and join our Senate, charter and university committees; the experience may prove consequential down the road.

President Curtu further commented that, by serving on the OVPR review committee, she learned details about the underlying functions of the university and how many administrative decisions are made. She also became aware that, even when there are no statements or obvious actions taken by the university leadership to solve apparent (or real) crises, there is in fact much work done by them behind the scenes. She has seen how the UI leadership literally works around-the-clock, with very good intentions, to “keep the ship afloat,” to help faculty perform their roles, and to support and protect the higher education mission of this institution.

Through service on the OVPR review committee, President Curtu met former Senate President Marshall, to whom she is very grateful for her unwavering support during the past two years. Past President Sheerin has her deep gratitude as well; she gave President Curtu her full support when running for Vice President and she taught her important skills this past year, including how to assess policy changes proposed by the administration, how to negotiate good solutions, how to navigate complex situations that at first glance seem straightforward, and how to balance being flexible (when appropriate) with standing firm (when needed).

President Curtu also thanked her fellow officers former Past President Gillan and former Secretary Just, who have been great colleagues and friends; former chair of the Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC), Professor Witt; and Faculty Senate Administrative Services Specialist Laura Zaper. Lastly, she thanked the Faculty Councilors for their hard and very thoughtful work during the 2024-25 academic year.

After these remarks about her journey to becoming Faculty Senate President, President Curtu then briefly described her journey to becoming a faculty member at UI. President Curtu was born in Romania, where she grew up and received her undergraduate degree. She then moved back and forth several times between Romania and the United States while she completed her graduate education with a doctoral degree in Mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh. She eventually accepted a tenure-track assistant professor position with the UI in 2007. She has been at the UI for 18 years now, moving up through the ranks of associate and full professor in Mathematics, serving as director of Graduate Studies during the demanding

pandemic years, accessing external funds from NSF, working on interdisciplinary grants with many faculty members on campus, joining the Iowa Neuroscience Institute five years ago, teaching many undergraduate and graduate courses, mentoring numerous students, securing well-paid and prestigious internships for her PhD advisees, and serving on many committees at the department, college, and university level.

President Curtu emphasized that she is an eternal optimist. She believes in shared governance as an important part of university life; in continued dialogue and healthy compromises with the administration and other constituents on campus and from the State of Iowa; and in protecting the rights of faculty --- their rights to free speech, to debate, to teach inquiry-based and sometimes controversial topics, to ask scientific questions and research them “as they arise,” without external interferences. In her observation, we are living now --as a country, as a society and as faculty members at higher educational institutions - through changing and challenging times. But she remained hopeful. Growing up in a communist dictatorship in Romania, then coming to United States to live the American Dream taught her that perseverance, collaboration, group-support and optimism are key to success. Words like “opportunity,” “access,” and “immigration” have a profound meaning for her. Being able to come to study and work in the United States has been a huge opportunity for her. We can work together to continue sustaining such opportunities for a new generation of researchers. Access to top-notch research capabilities and environments has been another great contributor to her success as a citizen of this country. We can support our students and our junior faculty to have such access in the future, as well. In her academic life she has been through the stages of international student, international faculty member, and US citizen. She has been in the shoes that many of our students and faculty are in right now. She hoped that we all agree that the University of Iowa and the State of Iowa have benefited enormously during the last several decades from the smartness, curiosity, creativity and hard work of all faculty and students, including the international ones. We can encourage, assist, and advocate for our colleagues that rely on their visas to work at UI, during these unsettled times. Concluding her remarks, President Curtu urged Senators to continue to educate and research and be the best at what we do. As an eternal optimist, she believed that truth and reality would withstand any challenge we may face in the 2025-26 academic year, and that in the end we would all prevail.

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

V. Announcements

- Officer Election Results – Professor Vigmostad announced that the new Faculty Senate Vice President is Craig Just and that the new Faculty Senate Secretary is Naomi Greysen. All candidates were given a round of applause.
- 2025-26 Meeting Schedule – President Curtu reminded Senators that the Outlook meeting invitations for the 2025-26 Council and Senate meetings have been sent to their calendars.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Koch moved and Professor Farag seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Curtu adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.