

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, September 16, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

Senators Present: T. Abel, S. Abuhammoud, A Achenbach, L. Adams, R. Alambert, B. Andrews, B. Ayati, J. Barker, A. Bassuk, M. Bhatti, K. Carter, C. Chan, R. Curto, A. Estapa, A. Farag, A. Goedken, J. Goetz, B. Gonzalez, D. Greenwood-Sanchez, P. Groves, B. G'Sell, C. Hamann, N. Hamzeh, A. Hasan, C. Hogden, E. Johnson, M. Knight, J. Koch, S. Larson, A. Mangalam, P. McGonagill, H. Metcalf, N. Mohr, B. Nottingham-Spencer, A. Panos, R. Peter, T. Rietz, A. Ryan, M. Schroeder, D. Shane, A. Shibli-Rahhal, F. Solt, J. Staber, J. Streeter, J. Sukalski, M. Swee, K. Thiel, D. Tranel, D. Trusty, A. Uc, K. Vogelgesang, M. Wald, E. Walker, S. Warren, E. Welder, J. Wilde, F. Williams, B. Young.

Officers Present: N. Greyser, C. Just, C. Sheerin.

Senators Excused: M. Abou Alaiwa, Z. Aminzare, J. Bermick, J. Bunch, E. Carlisle, J. Kline, A. Miers, M. Ohl, J. Radley, M. Santillan, J. Simmons, C. Vogel, K. Whitaker, K. Worthington.

Senators Absent: C. Benson, E. Destruel, C. McMillan, N. Pagedar.

Guests: S. Ashida (Committee on Elections), D. Cwiertny (Brody Award Recipient), D. Dickerson (*Daily Iowan*), A. Flaming (Center for Teaching), E. Gillan (Rules and Bylaws Committee), T. Kraus (Brody Award Recipient), S. Reddy (*Daily Iowan*), B. Thomas (Office of the Provost), C. Thomas (Committee on Elections), B. Wilson (President), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate Office).

I. Call to Order – President Just called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm. Prior to the call to order, Senators posed for a [photograph](#) with President Wilson on the steps of the Old Capitol.

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Rietz moved and Professor Farag seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- B. Faculty Senate Minutes (April 29, 2025) – Professor Koch moved and Professor Welder seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Committee Appointments (Craig Just, on behalf of Committee on Committees) – Professor Shibli-Rahhal moved and Professor Farag seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- Hope Metcalf (Law) to fill the unexpired term of Alison Guernsey (Law) on the Faculty Senate, 2025-27
 - M. Asghar Bhatti (Civil & Environmental Engineering) to fill the unexpired term of Jennifer Fiegel (Chemical & Biochemical Engineering) on the Faculty Senate, 2025-26
 - Knute Carter (Biostatistics) to replace William Story (Community & Behavioral Health) on the Faculty Senate, Fall 2025
 - James Wo (Sociology & Criminology) to replace Frederick Solt (Political Science) on the Faculty Senate, Spring 2026
 - Patricia Groves (Nursing) to the Conflict of Interest in Employment Committee, 2025-28
 - Joshua Lens (Health, Sport, & Human Physiology) to the Presidential Committee on Athletics, 2025-30

III. New Business

- *President Barbara Wilson*

President Wilson began her presentation by observing that higher education is clearly in a disrupted mode right now, for various reasons. There are changes in priorities within the government that impact processes inside the governmental offices with which the university works closely. The decreasing number of high school graduates is anticipated to depress enrollment throughout higher education. Public opinion has grown increasingly skeptical of institutions in general and the value proposition of higher education is being questioned. Many of UI's peers are facing significant financial challenges. In spite of this difficult environment, President Wilson continued, our university remains focused on the missions of education, research, and scholarship.

Turning to finances, President Wilson explained that the university's general education fund is filled by three revenue streams, all of which face constraints on long-term growth. Tuition and fees, primarily from undergraduate students, account for 67% of the fund. Growth in this area is limited by future demographic challenges, the size of the campus, and pressure to hold tuition down. State appropriations account for 26% of the fund. Competing state priorities limit growth in appropriations. The proportion of funding derived from tuition vs. appropriations has reversed over recent decades, not just in Iowa but nationwide, leading to a shift in the university's sensibilities and commitments. A student focus must now guide decisions related to expenditures from the general education fund. Research cost support accounts for 8% of the fund, with changes at the federal level limiting future growth.

The university continually makes efforts to create efficiencies and to drive resources as much as possible to academics. Results from the [Transparent, Inclusive Efficiency Review](#) (TIER), initiated by the Iowa Board of Regents in 2015, have included reduced duplication and greater staff empowerment to contribute to the university's missions. President Wilson pointed out that the UI spends 12 cents/dollar on administration, compared to the BIG10 average of 17

cents/dollar. Meanwhile, the university's research mission continues to grow, receiving a boost of \$15 million annually from our [public-private partnership](#) (P3) to fund strategic initiatives, such as the [Jumpstarting Tomorrow](#) and [Seeding Excellence](#) seed grant programs. Funds have also been made available to colleges to recruit and retain faculty members through the [High Impact Hiring Initiative](#) (HIHI). Newly-arrived Vice President for Research Schwebel is eager to get started on grant proposal development for large-scale interdisciplinary research projects. External research awards dipped to \$117 million in FY25, but are expected to rebound to \$151 million in FY26.

The UI is well-positioned to succeed in the current environment, President Wilson continued. She credited our enrollment management team with recruiting the university's second largest incoming class in its history. Of these 5,561 new students, nearly one in five is a first generation student and nearly one in four comes from a rural background. They represent 93 of Iowa's 99 counties. There has also been double digit growth in enrollment from non-contiguous states. President Wilson noted that numerous factors set UI apart from its competitors. Although the university excels in many disciplines, UI has unique strengths in three cross-disciplinary areas: writing and communication, brain sciences, and cancer research and care. An outstanding communications team maintains the university's presence on social media and attracts the interest of prospective students across the country. Once on campus, students are impressed by the university's strong and connected community, an important aspect of which is robust shared governance. Our highly-ranked health care system is also well integrated into the university, unlike at some other institutions.

President Wilson emphasized that, although the university's budget situation is currently stable, we must nevertheless focus proactively on increasing revenue and efficiencies. A new work group, the [Revenue and Efficiencies Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee](#) (reSPARC), has been launched to explore opportunities in these areas. Tactic teams have been formed for both growing revenue (corporate sponsorship and philanthropy, new academic programs, non-academic programs, student enrollment mix, and student retention) and creating efficiencies (academics, financial operations, human resources, information technology, marketing and communications, and other opportunities). President Wilson pointed out that the university reached its original five-year goal of 90% first-year student retention in just three years and is now striving toward a goal of 91%. Many initiatives have been key in improving our retention rates, among them First Gen Hawks, curriculum innovation in STEM, and Learning @ Iowa. Improving retention rates is the right thing to do for our students. It also leads to additional revenue for the university. Concluding her remarks, President Wilson thanked our amazing faculty for the valuable work they do every day.

Professor Curto asked if President Wilson meets with her counterparts from other institutions on a regular basis and if so, what topics they discuss. President Wilson responded that she does meet with other university presidents, particularly through the Big10 and the [Association of American Universities](#) (AAU). In relation to many of these peer institutions, the UI, in President Wilson's view, is in good shape. We have a supportive board and the university is small and nimble enough to manage change and accomplish its goals.

- *Election of Faculty Senate Vice President (Committee on Elections)*

President Just directed Senators to move into the center seating area of the Senate Chamber and others to move to the side seating areas.

President Just explained that three candidates were on the ballot for the office of Vice President. The Senate constitution requires that the winning candidate receive a majority of votes cast. Therefore, if no candidate were to receive a majority of the votes in the initial round of voting, the Senate would proceed to a runoff election with the top two candidates.

President Just invited Committee on Elections Chair Professor Christie Thomas and Committee on Elections Member Professor Sato Ashida to come forward to conduct the Vice President election.

Professor Thomas announced that the candidates for Vice President were Roxanna Curto (French and Spanish), Anthony Panos (Cardiothoracic Surgery), and Sarah Vigmostad (Biomedical Engineering). He then asked if there were any nominations from the floor for Faculty Senate Vice President. No nominations were made from the floor.

Paper ballots were distributed, collected, and counted.

While the ballots were being counted, President Just spoke briefly about himself and his career at the university. A native Iowan, he indicated that he was in his 33rd year at the UI. He worked for 18 years as a staff member and then entered the tenure track about 13 years ago. Last summer, he became a full professor. As a staff member, he had served on the collegiate shared governance organization, so he has a long familiarity with shared governance. Echoing President Wilson's earlier remarks, President Just commented that shared governance is alive and well at the University of Iowa, and should be cherished and nurtured. He added that one of his goals for his presidential year is to increase engagement both at Senate meetings and with the faculty at large. To do this, we must enhance our internal communication. In particular, the Senate must be able to convey the concerns of faculty to administrators. President Just encouraged Senators to engage in informal conversations with their colleagues to gather as much feedback as possible.

Professor Christie announced Roxanna Curto as the new Faculty Senate Vice President.

- *Presentation of 2025 Michael J. Brody Awards for Faculty Excellence in Service to the University and the State of Iowa (Caroline Sheerin)*

Past President Sheerin explained that the [Michael J. Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service to the University and the State of Iowa](#) was established by the Faculty Senate in 1990 to recognize outstanding faculty members for their sustained service contributions. Brody Award recipients receive commemorative prints created by graduate students in the Printmaking Department of the UI School of Art, Art History, and Design. Past President Sheerin indicated that this year's recipients are David Cwiertny, Steve Duck, and Travis Kraus.

David Cwiertny is the William D. Ashton Professor of Civil Engineering and a professor in the Department of Chemistry. Since joining the university in 2011, he has led several public health initiatives to improve the quality of Iowa’s drinking water—including the Iowa Get the Lead Out water-testing program and the development of public data platforms like Iowa Trust Your Tap and the Iowa Well Forecasting System. Past President Sheerin indicated that Professor Cwiertny would receive the print “16 ounce claw hammer” by Kurt Tomerlin. She then requested that Professor Cwiertny stand up and acknowledge a round of applause.

Steve Duck is the Daniel and Amy Starch Distinguished Research Chair and professor of rhetoric in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He has served in several leadership roles during his 38-year career, including as DEO of the Department of Rhetoric from 2010-2022. In addition to his dedication to teaching and mentorship of both students and faculty, Professor Duck is a long-time member of many national and international professional associations. Past President Sheerin indicated that Professor Duck would receive the print “Noam Chomsky’s “Knowledge of Language’ ” by Savannah Bustillo. Professor Duck was unable to attend the Senate meeting today.

Travis Kraus is professor of practice in the School of Planning and Public Affairs and director of the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities, where he has supported over 300 community engagement projects across the state of Iowa. As an educator, Professor Kraus facilitates course-based engagement projects that connect Iowa students with small communities across the state to collaborate on quality-of-life improvement projects. Past President Sheerin indicated that Professor Kraus would receive the print “Pea Shoots” by Sophie Rogers. She then requested that Professor Kraus stand up and acknowledge a round of applause.

- *President’s Report (Craig Just)*

President Just thanked Senators for volunteering to attend a joint shared governance event planned for September 30 and hosted by the Undergraduate Student Government. He also thanked Senators interested in attending a home football game in the Kinnick Stadium President’s Box. The Kinnick events allow for conversation with administrators and elected officials.

President Just had earlier sent individual messages to all Senators with some additional items to report: an Advancement Partnership Workshop will be held on Thursday, November 13, at the Levitt Center for University Advancement; the deadline for [2026 Brody Award nominations](#) is October 24; a review of [Policy Manual III.15 Professional Ethics and Academic Responsibility](#) is underway, as is the Faculty Senate’s [administrative review](#) of the [Office of the Provost](#); and the UI Federal Policy Task Force is very active – please reach out to President Just if you would like more information about the task force’s activities.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, October 7, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, October 28, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Abel moved and Professor Koch seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Just adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.