

FACULTY SENATE
Tuesday, December 9, 2025
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Senate Chamber, Old Capitol

MINUTES

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

- I. Call to Order – President Just called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.
- II. Approvals
 - A. Meeting Agenda – President Just noted that a change had been made to the order of agenda items, so that the executive session would occur near the end of the meeting. Professor Farag moved and Professor Walker seconded that the revised agenda be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Faculty Senate Minutes (October 28, 2025) – Professor Walker moved and Professor Panos seconded that the minutes be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Committee Appointments (Roxanna Curto, Chair, Committee on Committees) – Professor Panos moved and Professor Ayati seconded that the committee appointments be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- Joel Geerling (Neurology) to fill the unexpired term of Ted Abel (Neuroscience & Pharmacology) on the Faculty Senate, 2026-28
 - Matthew Arndt (Music) to fill the unexpired term of John Wadsworth (Rehabilitation & Counselor Education) on the Faculty Staff Parking Appeals Committee, Spring 2026
 - Erik Krohn (Computer Science) to fill the unexpired term of John Wadsworth (Rehabilitation & Counselor Education) on the Parking and Transportation Committee, Spring 2026
 - Julie Koch (Psychological & Quantitative Foundations) to fill the unexpired term of Sarah Vigmostad (Biomedical Engineering) on the Committee on Elections, Spring 2026
- D. Faculty Senate Elections 2026 Vacancy Tally (Craig Just) – President Just explained that Faculty Senate approval of the vacancy tally is necessary before we can move ahead with our election process in the spring semester. Professor Panos moved and Professor Farag seconded that the vacancy tally be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

III. New Business

- *Kevin Kregel, Executive Vice President and Provost*

Provost Kregel observed that most of the Big Ten institutions, as well as many flagship campuses across the country, have been seeing strong enrollment numbers recently. Also, the retention and graduation rates at UI continue to rise. Provost Kregel gave credit to many individuals across campus for their efforts directed toward student success. He also acknowledged the challenges faced and overcome by faculty members as they strive to educate increasingly large classes of first-year students. Nevertheless, higher education nationally finds itself experiencing financial and other types of strain, he continued, with furloughs, budget cuts, travel restrictions, and state and federal funding losses common throughout the sector. Drops in international enrollment nationwide have not impacted UI significantly, however, unlike many other institutions, because of our much lower undergraduate international enrollment than our peers. Public perceptions of higher education continue to be an area of concern. Provost Kregel cited statistics showing that, in 2010, 75% of survey respondents considered a college education to be very important, while in 2025, that percentage had dropped to 30% of survey respondents.

The [Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee](#) (SPARC) and its numerous work groups have been active since 2022, Provost Kregel reminded Senators, carrying out aspects of the university's strategic plan. In order to address new campus initiatives related to revenue and efficiency, the [Revenue and Efficiencies Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee](#) (reSPARC) has been formed. The university's general education fund for FY2026 is approximately \$870 million; 26% comes from state appropriations and 67% comes from tuition and fees. Given that growth in either of these two revenue streams faces limitations, it is imperative for the university to seek out additional sources of income. Expenses continue to rise,

Provost Kregel continued, so we must also seek ways to blunt these increases, through improved efficiencies. The Investment and Finance Committee of the Iowa Board of Regents has recently been [charged](#) with leading a comprehensive review of new additional revenue streams and cost efficiencies across all three institutions, as well.

Professor Trusty noted that a [new president](#) of the Iowa Board of Regents has been elected. Provost Kregel observed that President Cramer has served on the Board for several years, so he and university administrators are well acquainted with each other. President Just commented that he recently had a positive interaction with President Cramer. In relation to the university's efforts to reduce expenses, Professor Ayati asked about expenditures on software licenses and similar products. Perhaps the university could use open sourced software in order to save money. Provost Kregel responded that one of the reSPARC teams is exploring savings to be found in the IT arena. He noted that the university's cybersecurity needs are extensive, adding considerably to our IT costs.

Central administrators are in frequent contact with the Senate officers, Provost Kregel continued. He meets monthly with President Just, while the Senate officer team meets monthly with President Wilson and Provost Kregel together. A frequent topic of conversation is communication. Administrators are always interested to hear from the Senate officers about faculty members' concerns and questions, which they try to address at the meetings. He encouraged Senators to let the officers know if faculty members need any resources or information, so that the officers can pass these requests on to administrators. Administrator communication to faculty members takes place in a variety of ways, for example, through email and also through *Iowa Now*, the university's weekly digital newsletter, which often highlights individual faculty members. The [website](#) of the Office of the Provost contains a wealth of information for faculty, including about the [High Impact Hiring Initiative](#) (HIHI), established to support faculty recruitment and retention. Funding for the HIHI program comes from the [P3](#) agreement, which provides up to \$15 million annually to invest in strategic initiatives. Since FY21, \$23 million has been committed to the HIHI program, involving 79 recruitments and 34 retentions across 11 colleges. Deans have been particularly happy with the HIHI program, which does not seem to have counterparts at our peer institutions.

By next April, the university's digital content must conform to new accessibility standards established by the federal government. Provost Kregel acknowledged that the work required to meet these standards is extensive and he expressed gratitude to faculty and staff across campus who are engaged in these important efforts to ensure that UI digital content is accessible. [Many resources](#) are now available. Concluding his remarks, Provost Kregel noted that the Regents have undertaken a [workforce alignment review](#), with a preliminary report presented at the November Regents meeting. A low enrollment threshold of 25 was established for undergraduate majors and of 10 for graduate majors. Provost Kregel pointed out, however, that numerous factors could cause low enrollment in certain majors. For example, accreditation standards could require small class sizes. Students may be choosing these programs for second majors. He added that some low enrollment majors are in fields for which there is high demand in Iowa. The three universities are continuing to work with the Board office on this issue, with a new report due to the Regents in February.

Professor Metcalf commented that Indiana University has been going through a similar workforce alignment process. She asked if Provost Kregel saw any significant similarities or differences with the IU experience. He observed that the Indiana process arose out of a legislative directive, whereas in Iowa, it is a Regents initiative that is clearly focused on the state's workforce needs. Professor Staber commented that the Regents institutions may be the only options for some Iowa students. If low enrollment majors are closed, then those students would have no opportunity to pursue those fields of study. Provost Kregel indicated that this issue is being taken into consideration.

- *Brent Gage, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Strategy*

Dr. Gage indicated that his intention in speaking to the Senate today was to provide information about changes planned for the university's process for determining English-language proficiency levels of new international students. English-language proficiency requirements for general admission of new students are set at the institutional level, he noted. Along with their applications, prospective international students submit their scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Recently, the TOEFL has compressed its 120-point scoring scale into a 6-point scale. As a result, UI must modify its admission requirements for international students in order to accommodate the new scale. A committee was assembled with representatives from the English as a Second Language program, the modern languages departments, advising, athletics, admissions, the registrar, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In addition to reviewing the new scoring scale, the committee took this opportunity to evaluate the university's entire process for evaluating English-language proficiency levels. The committee has now proposed a new process, which Dr. Gage was presenting to the Senate today for feedback. The Council of Deans will also have the opportunity to provide feedback. The process will then be presented to the Provost for approval.

In January, Dr. Gage continued, the university will begin receiving TOEFL scores in the new format. Four sub-scores (reading, speaking, listening, writing) will constitute the total score. The current process calls for international students to submit their TOEFL scores with their application. Once they are admitted and arrive, they are given an additional placement test; depending on their scores, they could be required to take up to 12 semester hours of English language training. Some students are understandably not happy about this extra coursework. With the new process, if students score below a certain threshold on the TOEFL, they will be notified at the time of admission which, if any, of the four components of the TOEFL would require remediation once they arrive. Upon arrival, students would have the opportunity to test out of remedial language classes through the university's English-language proficiency test. Thus, students would be motivated to continue improving their English-language skills even after they have taken the TOEFL (some students apparently abandon their English-language studies after taking the TOEFL and therefore have lost some language skills by the time they arrive here). Dr. Gage emphasized that these positive changes to the language evaluation process are expected to lead to enhanced international student success. He also noted that during the pandemic, students had the option to demonstrate English-language proficiency through scores from the Duolingo online program, but the university is considering eliminating that option, because students using Duolingo have been less rigorously prepared for university study. Vice

President Curto asked how teaching assistants in the modern language departments would be affected by the new proficiency standards. Dr. Gage responded that the committee had not anticipated a significant impact on teaching assistants, because the changes contemplated are related only to the admission cycle. Professor G'Sell asked if virtual options for the placement test were still being considered, so that the test could be offered before students arrive on campus. Dr. Gage commented that there is a general consensus that offering these tests virtually presents significant challenges, but that some faculty members are studying online options.

Turning briefly to the current UI application cycle, Dr. Gage noted that about 27,000 applications have come in thus far. There has been a 24% growth in undergraduate applications in the last three years. A rolling admissions process is therefore becoming less feasible except for Iowa students with standardized test scores. Already, 1700 prospective students are on a deferred list. The number of Iowa applicants has remained flat, but the number of out-of-state applications has grown considerably. These applicants are coming from all the contiguous states, along with Texas, Colorado, California, and New York. Last year, we had the second largest first-year class (5561) in the university's history. At this rate, the university is quickly approaching capacity for instruction. There comes a point when growth in tuition revenue is offset to a loss by the costs of accommodating so many students, Dr. Gage observed. Going forward, the university will aim for a target first-year enrollment between 5300 and 5500.

- *Ethics in Research Policy (Craig Just)*

President Just referred Senators to the supplementary document describing the rigorous shared governance process undertaken by the Faculty Senate's Faculty Policies and Compensation Committee (FPCC) to review proposed revisions to Policy Manual [II.27.6 Ethics in Research](#). The [Research Council](#), one of the university's charter committees, played an important role in reviewing the draft revised policy, as well. The supplementary document also described some substantive changes suggested by FPCC and accepted by Mike Andrews, Director of Research Integrity and Security, and Research Integrity and Research Security Officer, who has been leading the administrative efforts to revise the policy. The proposed revisions were comprised of two components, mandatory changes required by the federal government and discretionary changes drafted by the UI Research Integrity and Security Office (a unit of the Office of the Vice President for Research). The deadline for submission of the revised policy to the federal government is January 1. Faculty Council approved the proposed revision on November 18. Procedures documents for several regulatory agencies have also been revised; FPCC will review them in the spring. President Just thanked Professor Marshall, chair of the FPCC, as well as the committee's members, and the Research Council for their dedicated and careful work on this proposed policy revision.

Professor Metcalf moved and Professor Ayati seconded that the proposed revised Ethics in Research policy be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- *Executive Session: Senator Discussion with Pete Matthes, Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations*

Professor Staber moved and Professor Shane seconded that the Faculty Senate move into executive session, inviting Vice President Matthes to join them. The motion carried unanimously.

Senators discussed the upcoming legislative session and other issues of academic importance with Vice President Matthes.

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

- *President's Report (Craig Just)*

President Just had earlier sent individual messages to all Senators with these news items:

- Faculty Senate Officer nominations for the 2026 election are requested. Please send nominations to a current officer and/or Julie Koch (julie-koch@uiowa.edu).
- The [committee](#) charged with conducting the Faculty Senate [administrative review](#) of the Provost's Office has nearly completed the confidential administrator review report and plans to finalize and deliver it to President Wilson before winter break. A second, public-facing Provost's Office review report is expected to be available in February 2026. I am very grateful to this committee, and to Chair Ed Gillan, for advancing this significant work in a thorough and timely manner.
- The Center for Intellectual Freedom held its inaugural event December 5 and 6.
 - o <https://intellectualfreedom.center.uiowa.edu/>
 - o <https://www.press-citizen.com/story/news/education/2025/12/08/center-for-intellectual-freedom-reforming-universities-summit-inauguration/87625792007/>
 - o <https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/whats-wrong-higher-ed-panelists-intellectual-freedom-center-blame-liberals>
- The Faculty Senate participation in the review of Chapter III.15 "[Professional Ethics and Academic Responsibility](#)" continues.

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

V. Announcements

- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 27, 3:30-5:15 pm, Executive Boardroom (2390), University Capitol Centre.
- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, February 10, 3:30-5:15 pm, Senate Chamber, Old Capitol.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Staber moved and Professor Farag seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried unanimously. President Just adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.