



## 2021-2022 Faculty Senate Minutes Wednesday, October 13, 2021

**Present:** Ammons, Benenson, Bragg, Carroll, Circo, Clinkinbeard, Cliver, Feng, Fox, Gandhi, Garcia-Murillo, Germonprez, Gift, Harbour, Jawed-Wessel, Jenkins, Jones, Kole, Melanson, Nero, Ostler, Perkinson, Rech, Robinson, Sample, Schulz, Shafer, Shaw, Sim, Siy, Steed, Strasser, Vnuk, Wessling, Wisneski

**Absent:** Chalecki, Hernandez, King, Krause, Maher, Moore, Park, Podariu

**I. Official Call to Order** by President Wessling at 2:16 p.m.

**II. The Minutes** of September 8, 2021 were approved as submitted.

### **III. Officers' Reports**

#### **A. President's Report:** President Wessling

1. Dr. Jeanne Surface - Christine Cutucache will be the voice of the AdHoc committee for changing the teaching evaluation instrument. Please direct future communications to her.
2. Health and Safety Protocol Updates. The situation is still evolving. Chancellor Li is bringing all faculty opinions back to the President's Council for discussion. Dr. Sarah Edwards is planning classrooms for Spring to be in full-capacity stating the current 3 ft social distancing is currently happening in most classrooms based on a spreadsheet from facilities that compared capacity this fall with 3 ft social distancing and full capacity (pre-covid capacity). I asked administration to confirm spacing is 3 ft this semester versus using spread sheet numbers citing Senator Rech's experience in her room this semester. I also asked that it is clearly communicated whether 3 ft social distancing is expected in the classrooms in Spring and how faculty may get assistance in correcting any classroom situations that do not meet that standard. No further updates on Spring guidelines.
3. Kristina Hoffman - More nominations are needed for the KUDOS award. The President and the Board of Regents have established the Kudos Awards to recognize the accomplishments of outstanding employees from across the four University of Nebraska campuses. These awards are particularly intended to spotlight employees that deserve special recognition for going above and beyond the call of duty. Speak with your teams and nominate worthy Mavericks. Here is the website that provides the nomination guidelines. [https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/docs/board-of-regents/misc/kudos\\_guidelines.pdf?la=en](https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/docs/board-of-regents/misc/kudos_guidelines.pdf?la=en)
4. Faculty Senate Website. Katrina Jenkins is updating website committee member lists. She is waiting on some committees to supply her with their chair. Some of the functions we have on the webpages aren't supported by ITS. For example, the accordion tabs on the Minutes page. She realized this when she went to start a new tab for the 2021-2022 minutes and was unable to do so. She reached out to UComm and they her that accordion tabs- or collapsible tabs are not supported by ITS and therefore isn't a selectable option. There is a workaround for this, but it involves digging directly into the website coding and adding a tab there. Katrina is going see if she can work with IT on changing the website layout so that all its

functions are supported by ITS.

5. Board of Regents Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> meeting update

**B. Secretary's Report on EO&A Meeting: Senator Siy**

1. Attendees: Kopp, Smith-Howell, Batton, Meza, Pettid, Edwards, Steed, Nero, Ostler, Shaw, Siy, Wessling
2. COVID testing. H&K provides testing services for those who think they have been exposed, as well as close contacts. Testing also continues to focus on residential students. It is noted that H&K's service is mostly for surveillance testing. Anyone with symptoms should go see a healthcare provider such as the Nebraska Health Center on campus, or get tested at places like Walgreens and CVS. The importance of having clear messaging on when and where to get tested was also underscored, as among faculty themselves, there is confusion about guidelines for deciding whether or not to get tested. Charley Steed will work with Dir. Meza and AVC Pettid on the proper messaging.
3. COVID vaccination campaign: Douglas County Health Department had 5 sessions before and during the first week of class. A weekly vaccine clinic was also set up outside the Library every Wednesday 11-2 till the end of September (before the weather turns cold). Office of Health Security can arrange for more clinics (indoor locations) after that if there is more demand. A vaccine clinic that provides Pfizer boosters (when they are available) is in the works, possibly November. A potential communication challenge may occur as this coincides with the annual flu shot campaign as well. The university is working closely with Nebraska Medicine on the proper messaging and coordination. Vaccination rates in the residence halls are being tracked closely. 60% of residents are now fully vaccinated. Residential students who have not submitted proof of vaccination have to get tested every 2 weeks. The administration is still discussing the proper way to handle non-compliant students.
4. Chief Diversity Officer. The nationwide search for a Chief Diversity Officer has started, with a profile expected to be posted in a few days. The CDO is expected to organize the multiple DEI efforts on campus and to lead in developing a DEI strategic plan. The chancellor emphasizes that this is a national search. This will be her first major hire and she sees it as her top priority. The search committee involves multiple stakeholders based on inputs from faculty, staff, and deans. SVC Kopp will lead the search process.
5. Winter Weather Committee. Reviewing an Executive Memorandum from President Carter, which suggests that we should endeavor to keep the university operating during snow days, based on faculty and student experience with remote learning. The loss of teaching days has become even more acute with the implementation of the 3-week J-session. For remote learning, the university has over 300 laptops and hotspots that students can borrow for such purposes. Snow days will be announced in advance so students can get to borrow the necessary equipment. The committee is preparing guidelines for remote teaching days and will share them with the Faculty Senate when available.
6. Faculty Honors Convocation. The convocation will be held in October to recognize endowed chairs, teaching awardees, etc.

7. Faculty Recognition event on September 22. To recognize promoted faculty and those who have been awarded special distinction, such as Senior Lecturer and Distinguished Professor.
8. Campus priority message on retention. SVC Kopp emphasized the importance of paying attention to students who are struggling. 30% of students don't come back for a variety of personal and academic reasons. There are 3 areas of focus: (1) examining courses with high DFW rates, (2) improved planning of course offerings to eliminate registration bottlenecks, (3) utilizing the J-session as opportunity to remediate students who struggled in the fall. Anything we can do to help students to persist in their studies will speak well of us as a campus.
9. Clarifying the current social distancing policies. There appear to be inconsistencies in interpretation of social distancing policies. Some places still require 6 feet social distancing while classrooms are 3 feet. SVC Kopp and President Wessling will start a conversation Sarah Woods to have a consistent policy.
10. Faculty parking spaces. Faculty are reporting the loss of faculty-only parking areas. While some parking changes were done last year, it is desired to bring parking spaces (e.g., faculty-only levels in the parking garage) back to what they were prior to the pandemic. Denise Kjeldgaard (director of auxiliary services in Business & Finance) and David Peterson (parking/transit manager) are the best contacts for this query.
11. Gap in new faculty health insurance. Health insurance for new faculty does not start till September, leaving a few weeks in August when they are uninsured. SVC Kopp responded that the NU Counsel's office is looking into changing the contract with UMR to enable mid-month starts for new faculty.

Res.#	Date Senate Passed	Title	Admin Accept	Status
4442		University Committees (a-c)		In Progress

**C. Vice President's Report: Senator Shaw**

1. Ratified the changing of the AF&T ballot done
2. Change to January Meeting Date - FS meeting Jan. 12 will now be Jan. 19 due to MOU between AAUP and Admin regarding 3-week January Session. Location TBD
3. FS review of the Winter Weather Policy-bring comments to Oct. Standing Committee Meeting (Attachments 2-3)

**IV. Standing Committee Reports**

**A. Committee on Academic and Curricular Affairs: Senator Circo**

1. The committee met on September 29th, working on projects, no report.

**B. Committee on Educational Resources & Services: Senator Shaw**

1. No meeting; no report.

**C. Faculty Personnel & Welfare Committee: Senator Gandhi**

1. Committee goals for this year:
  - a. Develop a consolidated webpage with a list of grievance resources for faculty.
    1. Get feedback from key stakeholders
    2. Identify an appropriate place for hosting the information and keeping it updated.
  - b. Discuss issues related to start dates for insurance benefits.
    1. How are new faculty informed?
2. Updates for prior meeting topics:
  - a. Insurance Coverage Start Dates: The following information has been collected from key stakeholders.
    1. The effective date of coverage is mentioned in the University medical plan information: [https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/faculty-staff/health-benefits/benefits\\_medical\\_2019.pdf?la=en](https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/faculty-staff/health-benefits/benefits_medical_2019.pdf?la=en)
      - a. Coverage is effective on the first day of the month following the employee's date of hire or eligibility.
      - b. On the other end of the spectrum, benefits are effective until the end of the month in which an employee's last day occurs.
      - c. This is a system-level policy that is consistent with HR best practices for hiring staff.
    2. Faculty are provided a link to the benefits policy in their letter of offer and also at the time that they enroll for benefits.
    3. Each college is generally involved in the communication regarding the start date for benefits eligibility. Each college or unit has their own process since we have a decentralized approach to hiring.
    4. The Central Administration website provides extensive information for new employees related to benefit enrollment. This information is located at <https://nebraska.edu/faculty-and-staff/health-benefits/new-employee-benefit-enrollment>
    5. HR has developed a new letter template for future offer letters. These new letters will include a paragraph regarding benefits as standard language. The templates have not formally been rolled out for campus use, but they will be this fall for all future faculty hires.

**D. Committee on Goals and Directions: Senator Jones**

1. The Faculty Senate was notified about complaints/issues with faculty having to share formerly faculty only levels in parking garage, leading to lack of available parking in time to meet work obligations. In researching what if any changes would be made for AY 2021-2022, the Chair was informed by David Peterson, Parking/Transit Mgr. that current parking designations would stay as they are. The Committee discussed the issue and feel more communication re: where faculty may park might be necessary. We also have seen anecdotally that parking issues traditionally resolve after the 3rd or 4th week of classes when there is

- typically an increased awareness of parking rules via experience.
2. The Committee was also informed of safety concerns in the East Parking Garage. Pedestrians were reported to having had close calls with vehicles speeding through the garage. We would like to recommend the following statement to UComm:
    - a. “Given the return to in-person activities on the UNO Campus, please be aware of your speed while driving on campus and especially in parking lots. As pedestrians, please be very aware of your surroundings, especially when in proximity to vehicles. We all must be alert to be safe.”
  3. As the Committee works toward the appropriate wording and completion of research for items in this resolution,  
 Resolution for Adjunct Faculty Support  
 Be it resolved that: The UNO Faculty Senate submits for consideration, the University of Nebraska at Omaha Office of Academic Affairs explores options to improve support for part-time instructors, including, but not limited to: waiving or reduction of parking fees; reduced fees for access to the athletic facilities and events; formal faculty mentoring relationships for part-time instructors who desire such, with potential workload assignment for the full-time faculty that provide significant mentoring; designating funds for an adjunct faculty teaching grant (akin to UCAT); creating Community of Practice in which adjuncts could participate.
    - a. The Chair will make inquiries of appropriate Academic Affairs staff to get specific information on how the Liaison-Advisory Group for Part-Time faculty (suggested by the passage of FS Resolution 4429) could:
      1. Communicate their existence and roles/responsibilities to adjuncts (especially to those working in a variety of modalities, not limited to in-person, at night, online settings, etc.), utilizing chairs/directors, staff advisory council, and other groups that encounter adjuncts regularly;
      2. Meeting (scheduled or as needed as per adjunct/s needs)
      3. Serving mainly/solely as an objective and independent body seeking to achieve justice for adjuncts with complaints or will it also include taking action on support issues in the resolution on Adjunct Faculty Support.
  4. The Committee is working on a creating a method to gather focused, compelling data from both students and faculty on the new “Study Days” policy. We hope to discover whether this data shows, whether the continuation of the current Study Days policy, a variation of the policy, or removing it to bring UNO in line with a universal calendar for the Nebraska system.

**E. Professional Development: Senator Rech**

1. Present: S. Ammons, S. Jawed-Wessel, W. Melanson, D. Volkman, J. Rech (Chair)
2. The committee will follow up with Dr. Kopp on the motion passed by the Senate last year regarding training for directors/chairs regarding maternity/paternity leave. Dr. Kopp has agreed to come to the 10/27 meeting to have conversations

- with the committee.
3. The committee would like to meet with Dr. Ken Bayles (ORCA) to discuss how our committee can work with ORCA to support faculty. An email was sent to Dr. Bayles and he will be attending a future meeting of the committee (likely November).
  4. The committee would like to meet with Dr. Connie Schaffer to discuss how the PD committee can work with the Office of Faculty Excellence to support faculty. An invitation to the December meeting will likely be extended.
  5. The committee discussed the variability in the course releases given new faculty in the colleges and departments. The committee is considering means for the chairs and directors to have discussions and share information regarding course reductions during the past 3 years.

**F. Committee on Committees: Senator Nero**

1. **Attendees:** Derrick Fox, Rose Strasser, and Derrick Nero
2. Meetings moved to 9:00 am on last Wednesday of the month per committee majority vote
3. Discussed solicitation and appointments of faculty to committee members' assigned committees. Committee members will submit full records of 2021-2022 committee members' confirmations by October 13, 2021 (to ensure accuracy between committees, committee webpages, and eHarmony)
  - a. Solicited faculty who confirmed interest to serve in 2021 but was not appointed to respective committees will be encouraged to update eHarmony with their interest (if not indicated so).
4. Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee election

Votes cast for the Committee on Committee's two nominees to elect one tenured faculty to serve three-year terms to October 2024, on the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee were: Phani Tej Adidam (CBA) – 55 votes, Guoqing Lu (CAS) – 77 votes.

Votes cast for the Committee on Committee's two nominees to elect one untenured faculty to serve three-year terms to October 2024, on the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee were: Eddie Panton (CEHHS)– 50 votes, Isak Kim (CEHHS) – 76 votes.

**Resolution 4442: Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee election**

In accordance with Article VIII.B.1 of its bylaws, the UNO Faculty Senate has elected by ballot vote from the two tenured nominees brought by the Committee on Committees Guoqing Lu (CAS) to serve a three-year term from October 13, 2021, to October 9, 2024.

In accordance with Article VIII.B.1 of its bylaws, the UNO Faculty Senate has elected by ballot vote from the two untenured nominees brought by the Committee on Committees Isak Kim (CEHHS) to serve a three-year term from

October 13, 2021, to October 9, 2024.

*The resolution was approved unanimously.*

**VI. Non-Senate Committee Report(s)**

**A. Ad Hoc Committee to Inform Teaching Evaluation Practices (Attachment 4)**

**B. AAUP**

**VII. Adjourned at 3:25 p.m.**