

Senate Steering Committee Minutes

August 20, 2020

3:00 p.m.

Via Zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/95812495639?pwd=OTc4M2NuVlFUcmQ3Nkx5ZkRVN1hXdz09>

*Represents an *actionable item*, as deemed by the Faculty Senate Chair.

Present: Angela Lindner, David Bloom, Sylvain Doré, Hans Van Oostrom, Juan Nino, Kent Fuchs, Keith Rambo, Patricio Munoz, Richard Scholtz, Sarah Lynne, Rick Stepp, Laurie Bialosky, Paul Duncan, Taylor Rose, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Joe Glover, Jodi Gentry, Ray Thomas, and Keith Diem.

Call to Order

Sylvain Doré, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approve [April 30, 2020 Minutes](#)

Sylvain Doré, Chair

The minutes were approved.

Reports

• **Chair's Report**

Sylvain Doré, Chair

- The Chair thanked office staff for completing fall Faculty Senate preparations.
- The UF Campus Reopening Plan was reviewed by the Welfare Council in an emergency June council meeting. UF presented this plan to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Board of Governors (BOG). Immediately after, to keep the faculty informed, the Faculty Senate hosted a town hall on this topic on July 14, and more than 2600 participated. [Answers to representative town hall and university re-opening inquiries](#) are posted on this [Faculty Senate web page](#), and through various FAQs on UF websites.
- As a new trustee, the Faculty Senate Chair gave an update about the faculty during the the June BOT meeting. The BOT members recognized the heroic efforts made by the faculty and support staff during this COVID-19 crisis period, and offered assistance on diversity and race issues.
- The Chair highlighted a few new Faculty Senate items for this year:
 - There will be a standing agenda item devoted to diversity, with a primary focus on Black and African American issues through December. *A possible related resolution may be generated by the Welfare Council this academic year.
 - At each Faculty Senate meeting, two College Deans will each present two slides highlighting two successful projects combining two colleges or more. The presentations will highlight the success of ongoing collaboration efforts among colleges.
 - The former and past College Council and Assembly Chairs will meet for one hour prior to the first Senate meeting. Subsequently, new and past College Council Chairs are invited to meet for thirty minutes prior to each Faculty Senate meeting this academic year to share ideas to maximize the betterment of shared governance.
 - Council Chairs are asked to please provide a council member substitute in the absence of a Steering Committee meeting, ideally a selected Vice-chair, who could also benefit from knowledge and training as a potential future Council Chair.
 - Thanks to the generosity of the University Press of Florida and the efforts of its Director, Romi Gutierrez, a Florida-focused diversity bookshelf has been erected in the Faculty

Senate Office. All are encouraged to email FacultySenateChair@ufl.edu to arrange a pick-up time for these [University Press of Florida Books available for Check-out in 134 Tigert.](#)

---Faculty Senate sponsored an 'Open Dialogue with Police' Town Hall on July 30 with Alachua County Sherriff Sadie Darnell, UF Police Chief Linda Stump-Kurnick, and Gainesville Police Chief Tony Jones. *The Chair suggests reviewing how we potentially improve procedures and UF police budget, which could be an actionable item for the Budget Council.

---A 'suggestion box' [link](#) has been added to the [Faculty Senate home page](#), such that all faculty can engage in direct participation in shared governance and encourage constructive recommendations/ideas. The Faculty Senate Chair or a delegate will follow up on all suggestions/actionable items.

- *Faculty and committee members are encouraged to reach out to the Faculty Senate Chair to discuss sponsoring relevant town halls, which can feature national or international level guests, such as the one being planned on the First Amendment and Academic Freedom of Expression.
- The Provost Office will continue to provide updates on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiative, and the plan to hire 100 new faculty.
- The new Senator orientation takes place virtually at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, August 25, and all are encouraged to attend.
- The Chair received a complaint about the parking fee being raised by 5% in the midst of an economic crisis and pandemic. Although this measure was passed by the BOT before the virus crisis, the billing timing is questionable. The Chair received a response from Craig Hill, Associate Vice President of Business Affairs, outlining the details of this fourth and last-tiered fee increase.
- After the Chair's Report, committee inquiries and responses included:
A request was made to review the issues related to this fall's slow parking decal application processing and system access. *An outside vendor was hired; the Infrastructure Council (of which the Parking & Transportation Committee Chair is a Contributing Chair) could examine these issues and how to avoid them in the future.
- *Associate Provost Lindner will be invited to address faculty concerns about course integration with diversity topics in Quest 2 in an upcoming Academic Policy Council and/or Steering Committee meeting. Similar to the tenure pause, is it feasible to delay the Quest 2 roll-out for a year because of COVID-19, or is there a risk of losing Quest course(s) momentum?
- *The Faculty Senate Secretary will add to the University Constitution & Regulations Committee (UCRC) and the Committee on Committees (COC) agendas the topic of 'examining if there is a need to update University Constitution and Senate Bylaws in emergency scenarios'.
- Without the benefit of a complete picture of the university budget, it was briefly discussed that a *UF furlough policy may need to be addressed in a future Welfare Council agenda. VP and General Counsel Amy Hass could be invited for an overview and discussion of how such a policy could be effectively implemented, including potential Senate furlough proposals to the Deans and Chairs should budgetary cuts occur.
- There have been several childcare proposals in the past to address the issues related to child care offered at UF, notably in terms of the physical buildings, and popularity of such services with long wait lists. In his role as the Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Doré made the request to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who then assigned Trustee Daniel O'Keefe to develop and present a permanent solution. One meeting has been held thus far, and the next one is on September 8th. This is a team effort with the Chair and Jodi Gentry, VP

of Human Resources, Stacy Ellis, Baby Gator Child Development and Research Center Director, and Patricia Snyder, UF Distinguished Professor and Director of the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies. *While the Chair will provide updates to the Steering Committee, it was suggested that the Welfare Council Chair and faculty who have children be invited to actively participate in this discussion, particularly by addressing the availability and cost of childcare.

- **President's Report**

Kent Fuchs, President

- President Fuchs provided an overview of his State of the University Address, which will be pre-recorded for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting at which he will still be in attendance. The address will have some traditional elements, including university and faculty accomplishments, and Dr. Fuchs will share his thoughts about this historic year both on and off-campus.

- **Provost's Report**

Joe Glover, Provost

- Pandemic related issues continue to be a focal point of the Provost's Office. The campus has been prepared to the best extent possible. Many professional and graduate-level programs have chosen in-person instruction, while approximately ten percent of undergraduate Fall courses are being taught by hybrid or in person. Many undergraduates are enrolled in face to face instruction for clinical training, laboratories, music classes, and other experiential-based learning courses.
- The Provost will distribute operational guidelines, including 'what if's' in the classroom environment, to answer practical questions for faculty. Classes begin August 31. Many students are returning now and are being scheduled daily to move into dorms, with approximately 800 moving in tomorrow, although most students continue to reside in off-campus housing. UF expects an inevitable increase of COVID-19 cases and continues to provide transparency through the UF Health, state, and national website numbers dashboards. Realizing this, UF Health operations are in place. Some of the science has changed since the pandemic's start, and it is now recognized that transmission is largely by aerosol; contact transmission is a much lower event-spread, so while continued handwashing is necessary, the community can be less alarmed about contact transmission.
- Committee inquiries and responses included:
 - Due to varying physical arrangements of sorority and fraternity houses, each must submit a plan to the VP of Student Affairs, D'Andra Mull, and pledge to adhere to university COVID-19 policies.
 - COVID-19 testing has been offered at every feasible opportunity.
 - The AI unit will be delivered to UF this fall and will be installed and operating in January. It is an AI-across-the-curriculum program, so all UF students can graduate with basic AI knowledge, if they wish. UF will be the first university in the nation to train the next workforce of AI to scale, and every college has an opportunity to engage in a substantive way.

Human Resources Updates

Jodi Gentry, VP of Human Resources

-At Senate, VP Gentry will provide a bullet-point overview of upcoming changes which the university is making to paid family leave and PTO (Paid Time Off), with mentions of: faculty retirement, including broad early retirement options provided by colleges; COVID-19 related leave related to FMLA and other leave; forthcoming required faculty and staff training for fall; and initiatives to increase the university's support of postdocs.

-*A robust conversation will be taking place on campus throughout the fall regarding the new and

substantial leave and other benefits changes, and VP Gentry is engaging with the colleges to discuss and distribute information.

-VP Gentry answered inquiries regarding:

-Shared governance related to the 12-week leave resolution passed by the Faculty Senate in May and university consideration of the input by the United Faculty of Florida (UFF).

-Utilization of paid time off (PTO) for nine-month faculty and the ability to use this benefit.

-The Steering Committee suggests urgent HR questions be addressed to individuals' unit HR professionals.

University Curriculum Committee

Angela Lindner, Associate Provost
for Undergraduate Affairs

- [Common Prerequisite Manual for Programs in CALS](#)
 - Working with the Office of Undergraduate Affairs, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is requesting a modification to the Common Prerequisite Manual (CPM) for the following programs: Food and Resource Economics; Animal Sciences; Plant Science; Soil and Water Sciences; Forest Resources and Conservation; Geomatics; Entomology; Interdisciplinary Studies; Dietetics; Horticultural Science; Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; Human Resource Development (FYCS); Nutritional Science; Food Science; and Landscape and Nursery Horticulture.
 - This item was approved.

Graduate Council

Paul Duncan, Sr. Associate Dean
Graduate School

- [PhD with Major in Plant Breeding](#)
 - This interdisciplinary PhD degree in Plant Breeding is proposed to fill the demand for breeding research and for training new plant breeding graduates at the University of Florida.
 - This item was approved.
- [Termination Health Services Research PhD Program](#)
 - This is a request to terminate the Health Services Research PhD, which has been replaced with the PhD in Public Health, Health Services Research concentration.
 - This item was approved.
- [Name change of Major from Tourism and Recreation Management to Tourism and Hospitality Management](#)
 - The Department of Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management in the College of Health and Human Performance is proposing to rename the current MS with a major in Tourism & Recreation Management (TRM) program to MS with a major in Tourism & Hospitality Management (THM).
 - This item was approved.

Council Chairs Introductions & Overview of Annual Council Reports

-Current Council Chairs were introduced.

-Councils will hold their first meeting of the academic year in September and, in addition to the Faculty Senate Chair and Steering Committee suggestions, will then ascertain the members' agenda focus and topics of interest for this academic year.

Welfare Council

Sarah Lynne, Chair

-*Council topics of focus the last academic year included benefits and family leave, and this academic year council expects to focus on diversity, inclusion, and Black Lives Matter topics; retirement equity with peers; and childcare crisis issues.

Research and Scholarship Council

Keith Rambo, Chair

-*Last academic year, council focal topics included and will overlap with this academic year's topics

of: Discovery Suites research tool updates, provided by Institutional Research & Planning Director, Dr. Cathy Lebo; reviews of research regulations; consultation with the UF Office of Research and its administrative liaisons in getting labs back up and optimally running during the challenges posed by COVID-19; continued work on initiatives and continued operations of the University Libraries group; and exploring a tool to utilize when generating annual reports to make it a continuum with the online promotion and tenure process, so it is automated.

Infrastructure Council

Richard Scholtz, Chair

-*Council topics discussed last academic year which will be continued this year include: future construction and the master plan in the COVID-19 environment; updates on the Data Science Building and its impact on parking and transportation; decal vendor issues; and how the master plan impacts graduate housing. Privacy and security issues related to license plate readers, 360 cameras on campus, and the increase in the amount of surveillance on the outside of buildings were discussed by the council and also by the University IT Committee.

-*The Senate Chair requested that updates be obtained on the new police facility construction.

Budget Council

Ashley Ghiaseddin, Chair

-Last academic year, the council updated and discussed the financial transparency portal and noted that the overall and granular level of the university college budget is good.

-*Agenda topics from last academic year which will be revisited this academic year include sustainable investments and its oversight and data quality, which could be addressed by Andrew Winden, UF Associate Professor of Law. The virus side-tracked a planned legislative update discussion from VP for Government and Community Relations Mark Kaplan and also a Compensation Committee Chair update to the Budget Council. With the council's consent, it will potentially invite the new UF CFO Chris Cowen and introduce him to the Faculty Senate.

Academic Policy Council

Hans van Oostrom, Chair

-Council agenda items from the last academic year included:

-APC clarified its constitutional charge to provide clarity and to ensure that APC isn't responsible for vetting individual administrators, but rather the policies regarding qualifications required for administrative positions.

- APC reviewed a new policy to allow credit earned by UF students in UF courses while in a non-degree status to be used towards a degree program.

- APC reviewed new language regarding the new Gator Evals system and new language for the Disability Resource Center accessibility statement.

-Council spent significant time discussing the non-tenure track faculty, predominately the Lecturer title, which does not represent what those faculty members are asked to do and what jobs they actually perform.

-A number of Spring and Summer emergency/previously-unscheduled council meetings were held where there was strong attendance. Council reviewed and approved a number of emergency policies, including S/U grading, a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) assessment, and a policy rider to allow UF faculty and administration to make academic policy changes in emergency situations. *In the forthcoming academic year, the council may revisit the emergency policy rider generated in response to the COVID-19 environment. Professor Ray Thomas will forward to Dr. van Oostrom the recently updated Florida International University (FIU) policy rider as an example that could be shared with the council, which may help inform their discussion.

Approve [August 25, 2020 Faculty Senate Agenda](#)

Sylvain Doré, Chair

-The agenda was approved.

Adjournment

Sylvain Doré, Chair

-The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.