

Senate Steering Committee Minutes

November 4, 2021

3 p.m.

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Present: David C. Bloom, Elena Barrera, Joe Glover, Kent Fuchs, Taylor Rose, Sarah Lynne, Juan Nino, Angela Lindner, Rick Stepp, Richard Scholtz, Keith Diem, Amanda Phalin, Rick Yost, Sylvain Doré, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Dana Zimmer, Jason Byrd, Hessa Fernandez and Lisa King.

Call to Order

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Approve [October 7, 2021 Minutes](#)

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The minutes were approved.

Reports

• **Chair's Report**

David C. Bloom, Chair

- Chair Bloom attended the Board of Governors and Trustee Summit meeting held today and yesterday at Florida Atlantic University. Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, was a keynote speaker and participated in a panel discussion on freedom of expression on university campuses. His work involves bringing together different points of view to promote academic freedom and challenges all to come together to discuss how to break common barriers. Dr. George noted that many of the issues now being brought forward at UF speak to the heart of academic freedom and it would behoove UF to review its current policies.
- On Monday, Chair Bloom notified faculty that he is moving forward with the formation of two separate, special ad hoc committees. One will address academic freedom and one will examine the hiring process of UF College of Medicine faculty member and newly appointed Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo. With clarity and due diligence, these committees will gather and examine facts. Findings will be presented to the Faculty Senate in a timely and transparent manner. The committees will be deliberate, thorough, and expeditious.
- President Fuchs is announcing a special task force, led by Provost Glover, to review UF practices regarding requests for approval of outside activities involving potential conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment. Chair Bloom is being consulted in the naming of two faculty appointees. Former Warrington College of Business Dean and Faculty Senator Professor John Kraft has agreed to serve on the panel.
- The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee will run in parallel to this task force and will be cognizant of the critical need for faculty to be insulated from any political pressure to help ensure faculty rights to engage in scholarship.
- The Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) has voiced continued and strong support of the UF faculty and has expeditiously drafted a statement with support from all 12 universities, which was presented to the Board of Governors today. It reads as follows: The State University System of Florida Advisory Council of Faculty Senates, representing the faculty of all twelve public universities in Florida, have united to express our grave concerns over the recent events taking place at our member institution, the University of Florida. Together, we express deep alarm about what appears to be a serious breach of academic freedom.

In its [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), based on its original 1915 *Declaration of Principles*, the American Association of University Professors set forth clear professional norms regarding faculty participation in civic discourse: “College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline...” Recognizing their obligations as representatives of their disciplines and universities, the AAUP further notes that faculty have an obligation in such circumstances to speak with accuracy and respect for others, and as individuals rather than institutional speakers. This is precisely what the faculty at the University of Florida were attempting when their public participation was blocked by the university.

When faculty are invited to participate in policy processes through their speech or research, they do so as objective experts, prepared by academic training to focus on evidence over bias. When they are denied the right to participate, not only does it undermine both freedom of inquiry and the independence of the university, it denies the citizens of the State, to whom the university is ultimately responsible, access to the most current and independent knowledge available on the issue under consideration.

In these recently publicized instances, faculty in a variety of disciplines attempted to engage in professional activity consistent with the principles of academic freedom that have been protected in the United States for over 100 years. As fellow faculty and stewards of the academy, we rise to defend these principles, especially when they are challenged in what appears to be a systematic way. We urge the University of Florida to reconsider these decisions, and we urge the State University System to reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech as core values of all public institutions of higher learning.

- Chair Bloom suggests a new academic freedom resolution be added as an Information Item at the November Senate.
- During discussion, the items below were referenced:
 - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/11/03/we-work-people-florida-thats-why-we-cant-let-university-florida-silence-us-voting-rights-law/>
 - Article III, section 2 of [The Constitution of the University of Florida](#) includes UF's definition of Academic Freedom.
 - In 2017 the Faculty Senate sponsored an [Academic Freedom and Responsibility Symposium](#) which can be [viewed online](#).
 - The UF regulation 1.011 Disclosure and Regulation of Outside Activities and Financial Interests is viewable at: <https://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1011DisclosureandRegulationofOutsideActivitiesandFinancialInterests.pdf>
 - Recognizing that UF is the state’s flagship university and has achieved top 5 status, UF should have an outsized voice in the ACFS discussion of this topic potentially affecting all state faculty.
 - Chair Bloom acknowledged the solidarity and support from the ACFS.
 - A motion to add this topic to the November Senate as an Information Item carried unanimously. Chair Bloom will update the above ACFS resolution with a UF preamble identifying it as a UF resolution in support of the ACFS resolution.

- **Provost’s Report**

Joe Glover, Provost

- Following national and state legislative interest in faculty tenure, proposing an updated post tenure review policy could be beneficial and proactive. Provost Glover had shared a [post](#)

[tenure review draft](#) with the SUS Presidents and Faculty Senate Chairs. The Provost noted that some media, including *The Tampa Bay Times* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, are reporting on this.

- The statute draft contains no specifications regarding review criteria but suggests that post tenure reviews be conducted every five years at the college-level and be presented to the Provosts. The details of how the reviews would be implemented and the evaluation criteria would have to be worked out by each individual SUS school.
- An inquiry was made seeking clarification if this was proposed legislative language or a proposed university policy.
- Dr. Glover noted that UF's tenure policy has not been reviewed since it was first developed a couple of decades ago. Provost Glover provided background on the history of how the post-tenure policies moved forward when they were first initiated. The current draft is written in the form of a draft statute so that it can be more easily moved to the legislature. He reiterated that circulating such a draft as now proposed may be useful.
- During the Steering Committee discussion, some objection was expressed in circulating statute language instead of policy. A concern was expressed that providing legislators with proposed statute language might unintentionally cede faculty independence in the area of tenure policymaking. Dr. Glover noted that a downside to circulating policy instead of statute language may be that it could potentially allow more room for interpretation by legislators when they are translating the policy to statute.
- Another approach may be to document UF's success with tenure, provide historical background, and an update. It was also noted that a helpful framework for this discussion may be in highlighting UF's reputation as a top 5 institution.
- Chair Bloom suggests a first step be to conduct an audit of UF colleges' tenure policies and successes, and then a task force to establish a specific plan.

- **President's Report**

Kent Fuchs, President

- President Fuchs will distribute a campus memo tomorrow which will name task force members who will make recommendations on policies related to how UF approves outside activities, including when faculty serve as (either compensated or uncompensated) expert witness when the state is involved in litigation. In business settings, it is typical that employees are not allowed to engage in litigation against the business on behalf of another. Recommendations about how to handle future cases will be made. The task force composition includes: Provost Glover (Chair); Terra DuBois, UF Chief Compliance, Ethics, & Privacy Officer, who has professional expertise and broad experience in conflict of interest items; two deans: Laura Rosenbury, Dean, Levin College of Law & Hub Brown, Dean, College of Journalism and Communications; Katie Vogel Anderson, Clinical Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy, and a former Faculty Senate Chair; John Kraft, Professor and Susan Cameron Chair of International Business, Warrington College of Business, who was suggested by Chair Bloom; and Clay Calvert, Professor of Law and Professor of Journalism and Communications, Brechner Eminent Scholar and Director, Marion B. Brechner First Amendment Project, who is a first amendments rights expert .
- Dr. Fuchs has asked for preliminary recommendations by two weeks from Monday.
- Many professional groups and societies are weighting in to support expert witnesses by employees of the state and people of diverse backgrounds. UF will work though these important issues and identify the best path not just in legal terms but in terms of academia and scholarship.

- Dean Zimmel provided a thumbnail of her professional and academic history, the College of Veterinary Medicine's research mission and programs, shelter medicine and other community programs.

Honorary Degrees

Richard A. Yost, Honorary Degrees & Distinguished Awards Committee Chair

- The Honorary Degree candidates were presented and a motion to approve them and move them forward for Faculty Senate consideration carried unanimously. There has been a backlog of degree recipients but now that Commencements have resumed, it has lessened.

- A concern was raised about the lack of diversity in this year's cohort. Chair Yost noted that the committee reviews what is submitted by faculty so ways to increase diverse nominations should be engaged. Chair Bloom noted that the UF [Aspire](#) / [SEA](#) Change Executive Committee has noted that diversity in special awards nominations needs deliberate attention and engagement.

- To help increase diverse nominations, during the next nomination cycle, Dr. Yost will address the participants at the monthly Faculty Senate Chair and College Council/Assembly Chairs meetings.

2/9/22 UF Day of Gratitude, Celebration, and Reflection **Angela Lindner**, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

- A request is being made for consideration of cancellation of classes on 2/9/22 to mark a UF Day of Gratitude, Celebration, and Reflection. This is scheduled on a Wednesday when students are expected to be present on campus. The day will focus on the core values approved by the trustees last year. In the next month or so, the Provost's Office will begin planning the day and how we can implement these values on February 9 and moving forward. President Fuchs would like to cancel classes and seeks faculty support to do so in a way which will make the day off meaningful. The Academic Policy Council has provided feedback on this point and has discussed including professional development and implementing this as a day of Gator service with attention to core UF values. President Fuchs would also like to involve the staff as much as possible and VP of Human Resources Jodi Gentry and VP of Advancement Tom Mitchell are open to suggestions and are helping to coordinate this day. Suggestions can be relayed to Associate Provost Lindner as well.

- A motion to approve carried and this will appear as an Information Item this month and an Action Item in December.

University Curriculum Committee

Angela Lindner, Associate Provost Undergraduate Affairs

- [Construction Management Major - Update Common Prerequisite Manual](#)

- The proposed Common Prerequisite Manual update will align with previously approved curriculum changes. A macro rather than a micro focus is being made now that accreditation has been completed.

- [LL.M in Environmental Land Use Law Termination](#)

- Elimination of this degree program is proposed as it is not currently marketed and has no enrollment.

- [UF/IFAS Soil & Water Sciences Dept. Name Change to Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences](#)

- This proposed department name change to Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences better aligns with faculty expertise and the ecosystem at the heart of such work.

- [Nuclear & Radiological Sciences Major Termination](#)

- Termination of this major is proposed as it does not fulfill a meaningful role beyond what is already achievable in the Nuclear Engineering major, particularly when accounting for transfer equivalency credits.

- [Medicine \(M.D.\) Reduction of Total Credit Hours](#)

- This is a proposal by the College of Medicine to reduce the Medicine (M.D.) total credit hours

through four elective credits.

- [DCP Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Degree Credits Change](#)

- This proposed reduction in credits from 144 to 120 is part of a curriculum modification proposal to change the DCP to a four-year (from a five-year) degree.

Introduction to the Dean of the College of Journalism and Communications

Hub Brown, College of Journalism and Communications Dean

- Dean Brown is unable to attend today's meeting but submitted the points which he will review in his Senate presentation. He will discuss his background, priorities as Dean, challenges and opportunities for his college and within the discipline.

Council Reports

Budget Council

Ashley Ghiaseddin

- At its last meeting, council followed up on interest from some colleges to increase benefits to be more competitive to peer institutions. Compensation & Equity Committee Chair Sean Trainor, Director of Benefits Shannon Edwards, and VP of Human Resources Jodi Gentry attended, and the latter mentioned that historically many faculty have shown greater interest in compensation increases through salary or pay as opposed to increased employee benefits contributions. While not all faculty are supportive of the latter, there was discussion with the Board of Trustees in the past that UF contributes about 5.4% while some peer institutions contribute 10%.

Infrastructure Council

Keith Rambo

- Council met yesterday and was charged by Chair Rambo with examining what infrastructure policies, processes, or actions which were taken to accommodate the COVID environment would be useful to continue to maintain positive outcomes in infrastructure. The Lakes, Vegetation and Landscaping Committee Chair Gail Hansen will attend a regional conference discussing this topic and will report information to council. Professor Hansen also shared with council a resolution presented by Student Government and a letter of support from the namesake of Maguire Village: ([Raymer F. Maguire, III Letter](#)) ([Student Senate Maguire/UVS Resolution](#)) ([Central Energy Plant Op-Ed](#)) Both expressed support for graduate student housing, specifically Maguire and UVS student housing. Chair Bloom asked the President and Provost to provide comment and President Fuchs noted that CFO Chris Cowen is coordinating a creative public private partnership to assist with graduate student housing and could provide more information to Faculty Senate.

- Council is also discussing the central energy plant and its impact on UF's carbon footprint goals. and will hear next month from League of Women Voters of Alachua County President Lynn Frazier, who co-authored a [Central Energy Plant Op-Ed](#) in the Gainesville Sun. Council will coordinate with the Sustainability Committee to help prepare or forward any possible resolutions or initiatives of interest.

- An inquiry was made about receiving an annual update on classroom and building air quality to continue the monitoring begun during COVID. Data has shown such investment in air quality decreases infection risks.

- An inquiry was made about the progress of the building names task force. President Fuchs noted that this is chaired by VP and General Counsel Amy Hass and the group will document the honorary names of UF buildings on campus with attention to why they were so named and what principles and values need to be emphasized when a building is named or renamed.

Welfare Council

Sarah Lynne

- Council discussed two resolution updates. The first was related to the no confidence COVID resolution. A concern was expressed in Faculty Senate that the first 'whereas' statement is no

longer accurate due to changing, documented COVID-19 transmission rates. Council discussed the Senate feedback and decided not to implement any amendments to the resolution because it is time-stamped and therefore accurately reflects the ever changing COVID picture at that particular moment. There was also hesitancy to make changes because colleagues are being asked to look at the version submitted as an Information Item at the last Faculty Senate. Transparency is critical and another set of edits from council may be viewed negatively. Council suggested that friendly amendments on the Senate floor is the best way forward. To increase clarification and efficiency, Dr. Lynne will present this rationale during her Senate presentation this month.

- Prior to the breaking of UF academic freedom issues in the national media, Chair Bloom charged the council with drafting an academic freedom resolution and had discussed what it might look like. Council will have a 1:30 emergency meeting tomorrow to expedite the drafting of this resolution. Council intends to be very deliberate and thoughtful. A resolution may be drafted which could be similar to the [IDEA resolution](#) in that it outlines specific goals and engages faculty. [AAPF Academic Freedom documents](#) reviewed by council in October include the [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), which is referenced in the ACFS resolution statement and will help inform the drafting of tomorrow's resolution.

- Dr. Lynne was thanked by the committee for her dedication. She thanked and recognized the diligence and commitment of the Welfare Council members, who have been very actively engaged in shared governance.

Academic Policy Council

Richard Scholtz

- APC reviewed and approved the UF Day of Gratitude and the [Faculty Author Rights Policy](#), which will be moved forward to Steering in December. Discussion was held about awarding a degree to a terminally ill student and exploring an in-memoriam degree award policy. APC is coordinating with the University Information Technology Committee to work on a syllabus statement policy/template and will discuss this as well as possible revisions to the UF attendance policy in an upcoming meeting.

Research and Scholarship Council

Jason Byrd

- Council approved and forwarded the [Faculty Author Rights Policy](#) for APC review. Council will hear from three presenters addressing, separately, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval efficiencies; Animal Care Services (ACS) cores and specialized services gaps; and UF infectious disease research barrier reductions.

- Council is interested in having representation in post tenure review conversations.

- Past Faculty Senate Chair Sylvain Doré addressed council with suggestions for stakeholders who would benefit from ELN Enterprise funding and also discussed the benefits of obtaining and increasing open access publishing funding.

- Council will discuss with its Graduate School administrative liaison, Dr. Paul Duncan if any graduate awards criteria modifications may be helpful to be more inclusive of smaller units and programs.

Approve [November 18, 2021 Faculty Senate Agenda](#)

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The agenda was approved as amended to list the COVID resolution as the first Action Item, the Faculty Titles Resolution as the second Action Item, and to insert the new UF/IFAS Soil & Water Sciences Dept. department name in the UCC Information Item.

Adjournment

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.