

**Senate Steering Committee Minutes**

**March 3, 2022**

**3 p.m.**

**Tigert 226**

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**Present:** David C. Bloom, Richard Scholtz, Keith Rambo, Cassandra Farley, Bonnie Moradi, Chris Hass, Joe Glover, Paul Duncan, Kent Fuchs, Taylor Rose, Sarah Lynne, Juan Nino, Jason Byrd, Amanda Phalin, Hessa Fernandez, Sylvain Doré, Angela Lindner, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Charlene Luke, Laurie Bialosky, Rick Stepp, and Danaya Wright.

**Call to Order**

**David C. Bloom**, Chair

- The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Faculty Senate Chair David C. Bloom.

**Approve [February 3, 2022 Minutes](#)**

**David C. Bloom**, Chair

- The minutes were approved.

**Reports**

• **Chair's Report**

**David C. Bloom**, Chair

- Chair Bloom and Chair-elect Phalin attended the February 24-25 Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) meeting in Tallahassee and met with members of the Florida House and Senate who are serving on Education committees, including Senator Shevrin Jones who expressed interest in visiting the State University System (SUS) universities to obtain information about how to best serve the state and learn about the university environment, concerns, and interests. SUS Chancellor Marshall Criser, SUS Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Vice Chancellor Christy England, and SUS Vice Chancellor of Finance/Administration and CFO Tim Jones expressed enthusiasm about the robust education discussions with the house and senate leadership and remain fairly positive in this early period in the legislative cycle. Chair Bloom noted some possible pending legislation, including one which involves the SUS changing its accreditors from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); language is currently being drafted.

- Searches are either underway or about to be underway for each of five SUS Presidents who are stepping down.

- After the presentation of the slate of new Board of Trustees (BOT) regulations last month, Chair Bloom received a number of concerns regarding the regulations related to emeritus faculty parking. He will share these comments in the BOT pre-meeting which he is attending and will follow-up with the Office of Business Affairs to confirm that both emeritus and retired parking privileges will remain unchanged with the most recent, proposed regulations changes.

- Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Chair Bloom has received a number of inquiries related to whether UF has investments in Russia. UFICO (UF's investment managing arm) has relayed that UF had only a 0.2% exposure to Russian concerns and that this was in the process of being divested. There is a 0.01 percent exposure through mutual holdings and those entities are in the process of being divested once the Russian exchanges re-open.

- Join us for the 4<sup>th</sup> and final lecture in the 2021-22 Distinguished Professor Lecture Series on March 17 in Reitz Chamber at 5 p.m. when Dr. Julie K. Levy will present "Spayathon for

Puerto Rico: Lessons & Outcomes from 50,000 Surgeries.”

- Faculty Senate Chair-elect nominations are open through March 31. Email nominations to the Faculty Senate Secretary @: FacultySenateChair@ufl.edu or lbialosky@aa.ufl.edu. The written vote takes place at the April 14 Faculty Senate meeting.

- Invitations will be emailed later this month for the Faculty Senate reception which will take place at 5:30 at the Powell University House following the April 14 Faculty Senate meeting.

- **President’s Report**

**Kent Fuchs**, President

- Dr. Fuchs noted that he just received and has not yet had an opportunity to review, some post-tenure review proposed policy language.

- President Fuchs discussed state resources, regulatory and other challenges, including the ability to raise or establish tuition and fees, faced by SUS and public universities.

- The situation in Ukraine is worsening. UF has faculty, students and staff who are either from Ukraine or Russia, or who have connections to either or both. UF faculty are hosting forums and panels to help with sharing perspectives from both countries and providing support to both communities.

- West Palm Beach campus progress updates were provided, including potential state and philanthropic funding for the West Palm graduate campus. UF is actively participating in the developing economy in Southeast Florida; the commitments being made were discussed.

- The Steering Committee discussed how UF can remain a top 5 institution with the additional constraints imposed by the state legislature.

- An inquiry was made related to Judge Walker’s ruling and the university’s Conflict of Interest (COI) policies. Discussion points included: that it was a narrow ruling and if UF doesn’t appeal, it goes to trial; the appeals panel and the practical matter of this decision being a preliminary injunction/hearing; the trial is scheduled for November; UF time and monetary commitments needed for an appeal or a trial; the preliminary injunction content related to constitutional rights; and the sharing of university best practices.

- Following an inquiry, Dr. Fuchs clarified that UF’s tradition is that UF Presidents are academicians (and not elected officials). Sunshine law, open records rules, and faculty involvement in the presidential search, particularly in its initial stages, were discussed.

- An inquiry was made pertaining to UF resources, including endowments and foundation funding for increasing the employer contribution to retirement plans and it was noted that support for an increased employer contribution is being discussed in several Faculty Senate bodies.

- **Provost’s Report**

**Joe Glover**, Provost

- Dr. Glover received and read the text of an amendment filed this afternoon pertaining to strengthening of post-tenure review procedures across the SUS. The draft legislation empowers the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and direct the SUS schools to do so.

- Provost Glover shared UF admissions numbers including that 65,400 total applications were received for the freshmen class; 58,800 arrived by the admissions deadline; 52,931 decisions were released on Friday; 14,956 were admitted to the fall freshmen class, with the admissions goal being 6,400; and the academic profile is slightly higher than last year’s. Admitted students had an average: 4.49 GPA; 1407.25 SAT; and 31 ACT. The deadline to accept or decline a UF admissions offer is May 1.

**University Constitution & Regulations Committee Charlene Luke, Chair, UCRC  
(UCRC) Report – Special Meetings**

- The UCRC added two additional clarifications to its special meetings proposal:

-- a special meeting time would be established within regular business hours to ensure that all can

attend.

-- the quorum will be the same for a special as a regular meeting.

- The Steering Committee discussed that it felt that safeguards are in place to ensure that a clear path is available for special meetings and its procedures are spelled out.

- Chair Bloom thanked the UCRC for its diligent work in establishing a good path for a special meeting without adding or subtracting barriers and for staying true to resolving the specific problems discussed by the Faculty Senate and presented to the UCRC.

- During discussion by the Steering Committee, concern was expressed about internal consistency, specifically in creating a lower quorum threshold to bypass the Steering Committee when an item has been denied by the Steering Committee, (or referred to another committee), and if one process or decision now obfuscates the other.

- A motion to approve the proposal carried with one opposed.

### **International Engagement and Researcher Screening**

**Cassandra C. Farley**, Director, UF Research Integrity, Security & Compliance (RISC)

- Director Farley discussed UF's support for international engagements and collaborations.

An overview of requirements to comply with Florida legislation was provided. Screening details for international visitors and scholars, researchers, and new hires who access research data or materials were reviewed. Resource links will also be shared at the Faculty Senate meeting this month.

### **Graduate Council**

**Paul Duncan**, Sr. Associate Dean  
Graduate School

- [Proposal to establish the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies](#)

- This proposal is to establish the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS) at the University of Florida. Existing faculty and resources are being used for any needed transitions to establish the department.

- This proposal is supported by the college's faculty and by the UF Graduate Council.

- Following an inquiry, it was clarified that rather than utilizing a specific formula, deans help allocate department resources.

### **Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee Report on the Dr. Ladapo Hiring Process**

**Richard Scholtz**, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee

- The committee is finalizing its report to the Faculty Senate and final interviews are being conducted. It is interviewing VP for Health Affairs & President of UF Health David R. Nelson on Friday, and it met yesterday with College of Medicine Dean Colleen Koch.

### **Presidential Qualities Resolution**

**David C. Bloom**, Chair

- At the Faculty Senate Chair and Faculty Council/Assembly Chairs monthly meeting, Chair Bloom charged each of the latter to provide input on desired presidential qualities by March 15.

- A motion to table this item until April carried unanimously.

### [Academic Freedom Resolution](#)

**Danaya Wright**, Senator, Fredric G. Levin  
College of Law

- Professor Wright presented this resolution which she noted could, aside from any lawsuit interpretations, help serve as a statement for faculty to express an opinion about current academic freedoms at the university and could also allow an opportunity for Faculty Senate to take a position.

- Points of discussion included; possible influences on UF's legal strategy; the qualifications or expertise of most Senators to opine on the resolution's referenced legalities; reasonings to proceed or not proceed with an appeal; the resolution's language, including its clarity in a number of clauses and if some of it may potentially be considered inflammatory; if the proposed resolution is engaging

Faculty Senate in a legal strategy conversation; the generality of some clauses; a recommendation to add URL's to citations within the resolution; the nuances versus the sentiment of the resolution; if this resolution will help the current academic environment and relationships; and if additional clarity could be added by re-titling the resolution to clarify its pertinence to the conflict of interests lawsuit (as opposed to academic freedom.)

- The Steering Committee discussed next steps for the resolution. A motion to send the resolution to the Welfare Council to add clarifications to help address the above points and then send it to the Faculty Senate as an Information Item for discussion passed unanimously.

### **Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) Awards**

**Chris Hass**, Associate Provost for  
for Academic and Faculty Affairs

- Associate Provost Hass provided the annual report of the OAA awards, which are given to faculty in recognition of faculty excellence including teacher scholar awards, advising, and mentoring. Other professional development, research, and travel awardees will also be named at Faculty Senate.
- Please encourage your faculty to nominate your colleagues for these awards.
- In response to an inquiry related to a faculty toolkit for use in assisting with P&T packages, Dr. Hass noted that Academic Analytics is building a tool kit and briefly noted how data is pulled and resources are used.

### **Council Reports**

#### **Research and Scholarship Council**

**Jason Byrd**

- Council continues its work on the document "Summary of facts related to Pathogen Research Improvement, IRB / EH&S Approval Efficiencies, ACS Cores & Specialized Services" It has been reviewed by the Office of Research (and VP of Research David Norton) and College of Medicine Professor Stephanie Karst. It is currently being shared with Animal Services Executive Director Irene Cooke who anticipates completing her review by Monday. It will be reviewed by McKnight Brain Institute Director Professor Todd Golde and returned to council for final revision. It will then be sent to the Faculty Senate Chair for review.
- The Steering Committee discussed the goals of performing external evaluations and assessing/utilizing council's report to draft a resolution to call for an outside review. Chair Bloom will bring council's concerns to the April BOT meeting to help UF resolve ongoing issues and help UF compete on a level playing field with peer institutions.

#### **Budget Council**

**Ashley Ghiaseddin**

- Compensation & Equity Committee Chair Sean Trainor attended the last council meeting to discuss the feasibility of preparing a broad resolution regarding increased support for faculty leave, child care, parking, and other items of faculty interest, much of it dealing with UF employee recompense post-COVID-19. Budget Council resolution updates are being posted on its [webpage](#). At the next BOT meeting, Chair Bloom will share faculty concerns and the content of any resolutions still being prepared.

#### **Infrastructure Council**

**Keith Rambo**

- Council met on Wednesday and Assistant VP for UF's Facility Services and Sustainability Mark Helms discussed air quality room monitoring, including air flow in laboratory spaces. The classroom air exchange data @: <https://www.facilitieservices.ufl.edu/information/> continues to be updated and additional rooms may be added upon request and in coordination with departments.
- Assistant VP Helms also answered central energy plant inquiries pertaining to costs and sustainability.
- The Lakes, Vegetation, and Landscaping (LVL) Committee looks forward to the Faculty Senate vote this month on its request to increase this joint committee's faculty membership from six to ten

members, including five elected by Faculty Senate and five appointed.

- UF Information Technology Committee Chair Ray Issa reported that this committee is discussing increasing the speed of IT risk assessments as well as the management of faculty control and expenses for laptops and desktops in the Health Science Center.
- Council will bring forward several parking concerns to the Parking & Transportation (joint) Committee, some of which were related to lack of parking when three simultaneous sporting events were held on campus.

### **Academic Policy Council (APC)**

**Richard Scholtz**

- To help identify Presidential nominee qualifications and qualities which are important to and desirable for faculty, APC is looking into past presidential searches. It expects this topic to be its primary focus at its March meeting.
- Online course review processes were reviewed as well as markers of distinction in teaching which can potentially be added to tenure packets for those less familiar with teaching elements to increase the thoroughness of evaluations.

### **Welfare Council**

**Sarah Lynne**

- [IDEA document](#) updates were discussed, including improving the campus reporting process for age, sex, gender, ethnicity and other diversity bias/discrimination complaints. Council agreed that a summary of such discrimination reports would be helpful in combatting such ills.
- At its last meeting, council provided feedback on the [proposed academic freedom resolution by \(LAW\) Senator Danaya Wright](#) which was [updated for presentation at today's Steering Committee meeting](#). Council provided input about the relevance of this resolution to (and any possible redundancy of) the Welfare Council's [November 17, 2021 UF Faculty Senate Academic Freedom Resolution](#).
- Council discussed increasing the validity of a conflict of interest or academic freedom policy review through the utilization of external review committee members.
- Council discussed concerns of anti-diversity legislation being drafted across the country and the need to increase support for current students and UF community members of diversity in this moment. Given the recent and impending departures of a number of UF deans, directors, and positions of senior leadership, and the Presidential searches in the SUS and on our campus, ensuring that there is no leadership or support voids for such diverse communities is essential. Increased communications on how faculty can get involved in the leadership searches will be helpful moving forward.

Other:

- In discussing a proposal to make the Compensation & Equity Committee a council and its chair a voting member of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, (primarily in recognition of the Committee's importance and the many tasks faced by its reporting council, the Welfare Council,) it was agreed that it would necessitate a constitutional change
- Options for gathering questions for the upcoming COACHE survey were also raised; while UF has the ability to write its own questions, it was discussed that doing so may inhibit peer comparisons (because peers are not being asked the same question(s)).
- The total number of faculty memberships on committees (including elected and appointed faculty), and increasing faculty representation were briefly discussed, including that Provost and Presidential faculty appointments allow an opportunity to populate committees with more diverse (i.e. from different colleges or fields of expertise) faculty members who may not always get elected, but who may be needed to fill such gaps.

### **Approve [March 17, 2022 Faculty Senate Agenda](#)**

**David C. Bloom**, Chair

- The agenda was approved as amended to remove the Presidential Qualities Resolution and the

Academic Freedom Resolution items from the agenda.

**Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

**David C. Bloom, Chair**