

University Constitution and Regulations Committee (UCRC)

Minutes

20 September 2021

Via Zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/93300549824?pwd=V0FyY2ZGNkxkcWxqbVlqaWpBYmxodz09>

10:00 a.m.

Present: Charlene Luke, Mei-Fang Lan, Katie Vogel Anderson, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Merritt McAlister, Richard Scholtz, Amanda Phalin, David Bloom, Marc-Alain Babi, Laurie Bialosky, Chris Hass, and Taylor Rose.

1. Call to Order – Charlene Luke, UCRC Chair

- The meeting was called to order by UCRC Chair Charlene Luke at 10:00 a.m.

2. Approval of 5 May 2021 Minutes

- The minutes were approved.

3. Introduction of Members and Liaisons and Overview of UCRC Mission

- UCRC members and liaisons were introduced. An overview of the UCRC's mission was provided by Chair Luke, who shared [slides](#) and introduced Taylor Rose, who is the committee's administrative liaison, a Senior Counsel in the General Counsel's Office, and the Faculty Senate Parliamentarian, and is responsible for sharing any university regulations which will be considered by the Board of Trustees (BOT).

- Taylor presented [Fall 2021 BOT regulations](#) for discussion and lighting. The UCRC has adopted a color-coded key for easily informing the Faculty Senate of proposed regulation changes that may affect Senators or their colleagues:

- **Red** – proposed changes affect the faculty; please review and comment as appropriate.
- **Yellow** – proposed changes may affect or be of interest to faculty; senators may want to review and comment as appropriate.
- **Green** – proposed changes likely have minimal effect on faculty and do not necessarily warrant further review by the senators.

- Four regulations were presented. Each regulation was lit as follows:

4.040. Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. Red

1.300. Direct Support Organizations, Health Services Support Organizations Yellow

Major Gifts Challenge Grant Program (No. TBD) Green

3.0031. Volunteers Yellow

These regulations will be presented by Chair Luke at the October Faculty Senate meeting as an Information Item and will be voted on by the BOT this fall.

4. Senate Term Ad Hoc Committee Update – Richard Scholtz, Ad hoc Committee Chair

- An Ad hoc Committee formed last spring with membership including four past Faculty Senate

Chairs, last year's Faculty Senate Chair, three former members of the UCRC, and a faculty Senate committee member. Chair Scholtz will present the [Senate Officer Term Ad hoc Committee Report](#) to Faculty Senate this Thursday. The report contains three distinct sections of recommendations to help improve shared governance and the voice of Faculty Senate, including on the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS), and BOT.

- Areas requiring no official bylaw or constitutional changes were reviewed, including an immediate reschedule in the training of the Faculty Senate Chair-elect. In the past, most duties began the spring following his/her election, which is an eight month lag before being actively involved in shared governance. The Ad hoc Committee also asks that there be an unofficial committee of past chairs to help guide the Chair-elect through becoming chair and provide a sounding board for the incoming chair. Additionally, all Past Chairs should provide an assessment of their term to the Steering Committee to help evaluate if any of these suggested provisions today need to take place in the future.

- A proposed Governmental Liaison and Communications Officer (GLCO) role and its primary responsibilities were reviewed.

- Other suggestions were reviewed, including holding the Faculty Senate Chair-elect election one month earlier and moving the ACFSC responsibilities from the Chair-elect to the Past Chair, while encouraging attendance of the Chair-elect at all ACFSC meetings

- Longer term options that are not up for consideration now and which would require Constitutional or By-law changes if deemed warranted by the Steering Committee were also reviewed, including the Faculty Senate Chair term start date and length.

- The UCRC discussed the need to consider workload alterations in implementing any of the above suggested changes, specifically that there is currently staff support for just the Faculty Senate Chair. Consideration also should be made regarding how a large increase in service commitment would impact colleges/units. Balancing service with faculty research and publishing responsibilities was discussed.

- Faculty Senate Chair-elect Phalin spoke to the need to strengthen UF's relationship to the ACFS and the legislature, and how this is impacted by UF's annual turnover of the Faculty Senate Chair. She voiced support of an extended Faculty Senate Chair term.

- Other discussion points included that the Faculty Senate needs to be better educated about what exactly they are electing the Faculty Senate Chairs for (i.e. what functions a Faculty Senate Chair must carry out). There is a continuing need for an involved and active Faculty Senate and UCRC support was expressed for the considered approach taken by the Ad hoc Committee.

5. [Constitution of the University of Florida](#)

- Article IV section 1 & Article V section 2A / Article IV Section 4

- The ambiguity in the above clause was discussed. Chair Bloom has asked the UCRC to examine and interpret Art IV Section 4. A special meeting is required to take place if there is a petition from 25 Faculty Senators, but the Steering Committee would need to agree to put the proposed matter on the agenda for such a special meeting (Art. IV section 1 & Art. V section 2A). Rules governing bringing agenda items forward needs to be meshed with the petition of 25 Senators for a special meeting. The agenda is prepared by the Steering Committee which determines each agenda; 4c discusses how things are placed on an agenda – all of which points to Steering Committee facilitation.

- UCRC agreed it wishes to fix this ambiguity but today's interpretation of the question at hand, raised by Professor Hostetler regarding the petitioning of 25 Senators to call a special meeting, is that the Steering Committee must establish the agenda.
- Chair Bloom spoke to the need for a deliberative process in Faculty Senate actions and considerations. Time is also needed for Senators to go back to constituents to receive input, concerns, and comments. Time is also needed to adhere to the Sunshine Law and fulfill posting requirements.
- Additional clarification is needed regarding a 'bypass' of the agenda requirements on an item of urgency.
- Clarifications are needed on how a special meeting is called, placed on the agenda, and when it can be voted on.
- Professor Hostetler's specific request was discussed. The petition in this particular case was declined by the Steering Committee due to a lack of urgency because a resolution pertaining to the same subject matter had already been passed by the Faculty Senate at its first meeting of the academic year (in August).
- Chair Bloom noted that his next Faculty Senate Chair's report will encompass this topic and continued discussion of a COVID resolution will likely be an Information Item on the October Faculty Senate agenda. The resolution submitted by Professor Hostetler was not denied by the Steering Committee but was referred to a committee (i.e. the Welfare Council). It was discussed that it is within the purview of the Steering Committee to refer a proposal to a committee for needed clarification or adjustments.
- It was also noted that there are currently not 25 petitioners, as two Senators asked to remove their names following their initial signing.
- The need to ensure diverse "buy-in" when placing an item on the agenda was also discussed. Concerns were expressed about larger colleges controlling the Faculty Senate agendas and calling special meetings as frequently as they wish, simply by virtue of their sheer size. For example, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the College of Medicine, and the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences all have the maximum-allowed 25 Senators serving on Faculty Senate, whereas a number of colleges have the minimum-allowed two Senators serving on Faculty Senate. What number of petitioners is best for a call for a special meeting? Increasing the current threshold of 25 to perhaps 30 or a larger to help ensure there is a cross-college collaboration on such a petition was discussed.
- UCRC discussed providing a safety valve mechanism for the minority voice to have a pathway to action or consideration.
- Chair Luke suggested input can be sought from Law Professor and former Faculty Senate Chair Danaya Wright.
- It was moved and unanimously carried that UCRC examine this topic. UCRC members Merritt McAlister, Katie Vogel Anderson & Ashley Ghiaseddin will meet in a sub-committee to work on a first round draft language to resolve the ambiguity in the UF constitution articles relating to special Senate meetings and agenda items. It will be preliminary and will be worked through by the full UCRC next month to refine any proposals. It is envisioned that the bylaws drafting portion be a later piece once the full committee has met to discuss and has agreed on the UF Constitution language proposals. The bylaws initial drafting piece could go to a different group to limit overburdening any one person/group.

- At the next meeting, the UCRC will facilitate a [Lakes, Vegetation And Landscaping \(LVL\) Committee](#) membership increase request. Gail Hansen De Chapman, LVL Chair, will present this item.

6. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Resources:

[Constitution of the University of Florida](#), as amended by April 15, 2021

[UF Senate Bylaws](#), as amended by April 15, 2021

[UCRC Operating Procedures](#), as amended by May 2015