

University Constitution and Regulations Committee (UCRC)

Minutes

18 October 2021

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

10:00 a.m.

Present: Charlene Luke, Patricia Pereira, Chris Hass, Katie Vogel Anderson, Marc-Alain Babi, Mei-Fang Lan, Merritt McAlister, Gail Hansen De Chapman, Jason Nance, Karen Whalen, Taylor Rose, Laurie Bialosky, and Tobi Shorey.

- 1. Call to Order** – Charlene Luke, UCRC Chair
 - The meeting was called to order by UCRC Chair Charlene Luke at 10:02 a.m.
- 2. Approval of 20 September 2021 Minutes**
 - The minutes were approved.
- 3. [Membership Increase Request from the Lakes, Vegetation And Landscaping \(LVL\) Committee](#)** – Gail Hansen De Chapman, LVL Chair
 - The Chair of the LVL Committee requests consideration of an LVL Committee membership increase from six to ten. The new membership would be evenly split (as it is now) between the President (or the President’s designee) appointees and Senate-elected faculty.
 - While LVL has traditionally proactively recruited faculty members to serve on this committee, this proposal’s primarily goal is to strengthen meeting participation. A key LVL responsibility is to consider requests for tree removal and advise on issues pertaining to tree protection, including UF’s tree mitigation policy, and other significant campus reconstruction issues surrounding conservation areas, lakes, green spaces, and approvals of landscape plans. One request can encompass consideration for removal of 60 trees in a single project, so ensuring that there is an appropriate tree mitigation plan which follows all LVL guidelines is essential, as is faculty committee participation in such decisions.
 - The UCRC heard input from the Senate Nominating Committee membership that it would not have an objection to this proposal. UCRC discussed that an opportunity to increase faculty in decision-making is positive and the Faculty Senate should continue to consider how best to increase faculty participation campus wide.
 - Because LVL is a joint committee, it reports to the President; the Committee on Committees (COC) approved this membership change request on April 26, 2021, contingent on the support of the administration, including this joint committee’s administrative liaisons (Curtis Reynolds, VP of Business Affairs, and Linda Dixon, AICP, and Director of Planning, UF Planning, Design & Construction). A [notice of approval from VP Reynolds](#) was received.
 - UCRC unanimously approves this [membership proposal](#) and is forwarding it for placement on an upcoming Faculty Senate Steering Committee agenda.

- 4. Establishment of the [Professional Curriculum Committee \(PCC\)](#) and [Requested Bylaw and Constitution Amendments](#)** – Karen Whalen, Clinical Professor & College of Pharmacy Assistant Dean for Curricular Affairs and Jason Nance, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development and Professor of Law
- Dr. Nance introduced the committee faculty members and all elements of the proposed new committee.
 - Distinctions between UF professional programs, professional schools, and professional programs within schools, as well as degree differentiations and how each is presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT) during the curriculum approval process were elaborated.
 - This proposal aims to provide the infrastructure to address curriculum matters in UF's professional programs and degrees, especially as separate from undergraduate matters.
 - If a curriculum proposal is identified as an undergraduate item, it will be considered first by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). When a proposal is considered, communications by the UCC, PCC, and Graduate Council will be ongoing to relieve any potential ambiguity during the curriculum assessment and approval process.
 - Following an inquiry, it was clarified that the PCC is not related to, and does not address, faculty promotions; its focus is on degrees and programs.
 - UCRC requests that an additional, conforming amendment be made to clarify the role of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) as separate from the PCC.
 - The UCRC conditionally approves this proposal pending updated bylaws language of approving courses residing within PCP and UCC.
 - The timing (and overlap) of Faculty Senate's PCC approval process and the university committee elections cycle was discussed. To ensure PCC membership can be formed during this faculty election cycle so that work can begin in Fall 2022, the PCC is now added to the university committee nominations form. Nominees will be considered once/if the PCC is ultimately approved by Faculty Senate.
- 5. UF Constitution's Special Meeting Provision: [Update from the Subcommittee on Constitutional Revision Related to Special Meetings](#)** - Merritt McAlister, UCRC Member & Subcommittee Chair
- Professor McAlister presented the subcommittee's proposal which aims to provide a safety valve provision or check and balance of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee when bringing forward agenda items and topics of faculty concern. Constitutional language clarifications to provide this option were discussed at length by both the subcommittee and UCRC.
 - A key consideration is allowing for the will of the majority, while protecting the rights of the minority. Identifying the most reasonable threshold of how many Senators are needed to trigger such a safety valve was discussed. UCRC members expressed the critical need to avoid unintentionally allowing 'the capture' of the Faculty Senate, a university-wide Faculty Senate body, by one large college, which might have the maximum allowable representation of 25 Senators (i.e. CLAS, MED, AG), against the will of other small colleges which might have the minimum allowable Senate representation of two Senators. Encouraging multiple or cross-college/unit cooperation is key to helping to hear all voices. Raising the bar from 25 to 50 Senators to call a Special Meeting (and when) is favored by the UCRC, largely because 50 Senators represent 1/3 of the Senate body, so while it is not the majority, it marks the critically needed element of 'significant representation' to trigger this action.

- The subcommittee noted the other distinction to be made is that a simpler language change could allow this group to effectively exercise the authority the Faculty Senate Steering Committee would otherwise exercise; discussion was held regarding whether the petitioning group has an agenda setting ability. UCRC discussed the essential need to ensure that such an action is being done at the behest of widespread and significant concerns within and by the faculty.
- UCRC favors the sub-committee's first option and will continue discussion at the November UCRC meeting, by which time the sub-committee will have met again.
- UCRC is prioritizing this item but will consider discussing in the future how to create a process to designate a Faculty Senate Parliamentarian when such a rare event as a special meeting is triggered, or if a recusal is needed because the Parliamentarian is a member of the UF General Counsel's Office. The General Counsel's Office may be able to provide a handbook or reference. 'Volunteer' faculty turnover may be an issue in retaining a consistent Faculty Senate Parliamentarian and many faculties may not have experience in interpretation of constitutional issues. Options such as naming the Faculty Senate Chair-elect as Faculty Senate Parliamentarian during rare occasions of needed recusal may be a consideration, particularly if a reference/resource guide can be provided.

6. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 11:08 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