

**Welfare Council Minutes**  
**Monday, 8/30/2021**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**Via Zoom:** <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/93869549671?pwd=NGhIRk92WGtuRUVtUDZiRG5mLzB6QT09>

**Present:** Sarah Lynne, Mark Hostetler, Keith Diem, Kalen Manasco, Jason Byrd, Lisa King, David C. Bloom, Chris Hass, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Amanda Phalin, Mei-Fang Lan, Sean Trainor, Juan Nino, Laurie Bialosky, Jodi Gentry, Stephanie Bogart, Ray Issa, Shannon Edwards, Taylor Rose and Keith Rambo.

**1. Call to Order** – Dr. Sarah Lynne, Welfare Council Chair

- The emergency meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Welfare Council Chair Sarah Lynne.

**2. Discussion of COVID Resolution**

- UF Faculty member Mark Hostetler submitted a ‘vote of no confidence’ resolution regarding the University’s COVID-19 Plan for Fall 2021. An emergency Welfare Council meeting has been called in deference to the proposal’s gravity and the need to address the proposal in an expedited manner with all due diligence.

- The language is modeled after Penn State’s recent resolution and the intent is to provide a no vote of confidence in the university’s COVID policy.

- The resolution framework was outlined: first, the resolution makes a few statements outlining facts; last, it discusses how the policy came to be and how it engaged with Faculty Senate. If ultimately passed, the resolution wants the university to revisit the COVID policy and establish a desirable policy.

o Council points of discussion and comments included:

- This resolution can be supported as a representational matter, given that many faculty are feeling demoralized, disrespected, and powerless, and are contemplating leaving UF and the state of Florida, and it is vital that a resolution be directed to the appropriate parties.

- This resolution can be supported as a matter of principle and in keeping with UF’s reputation and credibility as a community of UF scientists, public health experts, educators, scholars and care providers.

- There is currently a vulnerability being felt in academics but there is still a need to be conscious of the fact that elected faculty members at large and Faculty Senators are representatives of all university faculty and also that that faculty success contributes to a healthy amount of the state’s GDP, economy, and ability to attract state of Florida residents.

- As health care providers, scientists must be heard, and as teachers, faculty should be a model for positive student behavior.

- A more specific proposal of what we should see happen is needed.

- This resolution is essentially copied from Penn State, but the UF version omits recognition of what the university has done and addressed; the Penn State Senate does recognize the effort of its university in its resolution, while the UF resolution doesn’t address a core problem that the policy originates from outside of the university (i.e. by the state), and those are the key issues of

faculty concern.

- Faculty representatives are hearing opinions counter to this resolution, in that many faculty are uneasy with a no confidence vote, so it is positive that this council is carefully reviewing this proposal.

- Consider that there is no 'Fall 2021 COVID plan'. There is a need to clarify that there is a broader 'UF COVID policy'.

- In addressing what faculty may feel is a significant attack on the university and its members, please consider how to best address the issues in a way that does more good than harm.

- Whatever the mandate is, it is best to use caution to send a message to Tallahassee in a way that does not have faculty providing reason to make leadership changes from Tallahassee.

- Faculty need to be cognizant and careful to unhelpfully avoid 'finger pointing' within the university/at the UF administration, which may ultimately be detrimental to the goals a strong resolution would achieve.

- [The resolution passed at Thursday's Faculty Senate](#) clearly outlines what faculty object to, and that the university is not free to make its own decisions. The screen test and protect program has crafted and communicated the steps we are taking. Positive faculty engagement and avoiding assigning blame in the wrong space is critical and the resolution needs to be better crafted to reflect this.

- There is objection and frustration with the resolution's finger pointing at the UF administration. The Board of Governors (BOG) has handed down the mask mandate and that is different than the university and UF administration saying they do not care about its members.

- The Faculty Senate Chair has been involved in recommending the policies and is a voting member of the Board of Trustees. There is acknowledgement that the BOT has tried very hard to work diligently to amplify faculty voice and concerns. BOG has set the policy but there is a need to make as strong of a faculty voice as possible.

- Not averse to changing resolution wording but two larger points are that faculty all recognize the parties who have established policy, and a very different path has been taken by local, Alachua County Public School leadership. The most recent, supportive court ruling was briefly discussed.

- History is rife with a 'hands tied' argument. There were opportunities which could have been acted on, including a petition to require a vaccination, which Professor Hostetler understands to have legal standing; there is a failure to address this legal avenue.

- The resolution focus is on Fall 2021 COVID plan. The resolution does not specifically name the BOT, administration, etc. because they are clearly under constraints. It is meant to be open to identify who takes blame. Professor Hostetler requests that council leave the language as is and allow the resolution to place blame on the COVID policy.

- A strong statement from faculty may help pressure changes.

- Two key distinctions were discussed by council: 1- a clarification was made regarding equating UF to the Alachua County School Board or to a private business; they are dissimilar. Unlike a private business where it may be legal to require vaccines or masking, it needs to be recognized that UF is a state entity; one can be relieved of his/her duties if they defy a directive made by a Governor. 2-The Alachua County School Superintendent is accountable to the Alachua County School Board, not the Governor. The Alachua County School Board members are elected.

- There is concern that the entire population of individuals affected by UF policies isn't being explicitly acknowledged in the proposed resolution. Some acknowledgment needs to be made that there are large groups of vulnerable individuals (children under 12) on our campus who are not eligible for vaccination and who rely solely on other mitigation measures. The status of PK Yonge as its own district was discussed. Including this reference could strengthen the resolution.

- Should there be two resolutions? 1- A 'no confidence' in the policy, which would result in faculty and administrators going back and consulting on a new policy. 2- If this is an 'it is what it is', scenario, then identify how faculty can best move this forward to try to make things better.
- Following consultation with faculty colleagues, replies have been received that if there is a 'no confidence vote', there is real worry that Dr. Fuchs could be very negatively impacted and there was direct opposition to this, if this could be the outcome of the resolution. However, if the resolution more clearly identifies the decision-making state officials, faculty colleagues voiced resolution support; is there a middle path?
- Many colleagues have voiced distress and much frustration has been directed toward the state policy makers, rather than members of the UF administration.
  - Professor Hostetler advocates a vaccination mandate and that nothing in the Governor's executive order states that UF cannot require employee vaccination. His colleague feedback indicates faculty anger with upper UF administration. He requests that faculty debate this next Friday in an emergency meeting and that it is premature to debate any nuances in council today.
  - Tallahassee is extraordinarily unequivocal about what the university can and cannot do. Any policy change in opposition to Tallahassee would be immediately reversed.
  - The resolution is in need of review now in diligent haste; there should be no assumption that this resolution will pass. Today's council/faculty feedback captures the resolution's weaknesses and outlines the arguments against the resolution.
  - Does the intent of this resolution go beyond the content of the [resolution passed by the Senate on 8/26](#)? There is concern that this document, as is, will not carry at the full Faculty Senate meeting.
  - Part two of the 'be it resolved' clause should be re-worked:  
BE IT RESOLVED the University Faculty Senate of the University of Florida urges state and university leadership to immediately institute vaccine and mask mandates; and maintain an indoor masking requirement until..
  - Vulnerability and feelings of safety on versus off campus were articulated.
  - The shared governance structure, including that of Faculty Senate's diverse, elected representatives, and the shared governance process was shared. The council's function in this process was discussed, including that, broadly, faculty elect Senators and council members who represent all faculty. The urgency of this resolution has resulted in two emergency meetings: this one and the August 27 Steering Committee meeting. There is a need to find a clear and agreeable resolution which represents the faculty and the faculty's best interest and properly move it forward.
- Professor Hostetler noted that, per [Faculty Senate Bylaw 4\(G\)\(1\)\(b\)](#) , 'special meetings of the Senate may be called upon by due notice at such times as the Chair or President may designate, or upon petition to the Chair of at least 25 voting members of the Senate members of the Senate'
  - The Parliamentarian ruled that the procedure is that Senate agenda items must be vetted and established by the Faculty Senate's executive and advisory committee, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. It's responsibilities were briefly noted (i.e. as per below posted web page details):  
***Steering Committee responsibilities:***  
The Steering Committee is the executive committee of the Faculty Senate. It advises the Chair of the Faculty Senate on all matters, including issues brought to its attention from outside the Senate's or administration's formal structure. The Steering Committee shall determine the agenda for each meeting of the Senate. It shall provide for reporting to the Senate by administrative officers, by the chair(s) of councils and committees, and by individuals. It coordinates, reviews, and refers actions and proposals

from Senate and Joint Committees and from the Administration. The Steering Committee also refers matters to the Senate Policy Councils and accepts reports and recommendations from the Senate Policy Councils and committees for Senate action. Where appropriate, the Steering Committee can direct a matter to the combined attention of two or more Senate Policy Councils.

- A straw poll showed council members unanimously agreed the resolution in its current format is in need of clarification and re-wording and are against moving the resolution forward as is.

- As instructed by [the Steering Committee at its August 27 emergency meeting](#), Chair Lynne will rework the resolution to incorporate council's (above) feedback and will [present it at the next Steering Committee meeting being held on September 2<sup>nd</sup>](#).

### **3. Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.