



Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2021 - 3:00 p.m.

Zoomcast:

<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/9ffd310c7d3b4e619131bae5618d7adb1d?catalog=8456cbab10b449868436ee51ddb84dc421>

Call to Order & Approval of [March 25, 2021 Minutes](#)

Sylvain Doré, Chair

- The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Faculty Senate Chair Sylvain Doré.
- The minutes were approved.

Reports:

[Chair's Report](#)

Sylvain Doré, Chair

- Nearly 280 faculty and staff volunteers are needed to assist with Commencement ceremonies.
- Chair Doré touched on the theme of empathy with colleagues and the community as well as the availability of the [UF Wellness Assistance Program](#).
- The Faculty Senate Chair-elect election closes at 5:00 p.m. today. *Following the meeting, Senators received emailed election results naming Amanda Phalin as the Faculty Senate Chair-elect.*
- COVID-19 numbers are still relatively low. Please encourage others to take advantage of the current widespread vaccine availability. Per Governor DeSantis' executive memo, vaccines are not required. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rules prohibit asking whether one has taken the vaccine.
- VP of Research David Norton recently provided updates regarding limited numbers of persons per square foot in research laboratories, as well as guidance on the submission of proposed activities and personnel through the Research Activity Request portal. Campus COVID-19 guidelines, which include physical distancing, face coverings, hand hygiene, and isolation if ill, are now applicable in place of the former guidelines. Consideration is being made to change the six feet distancing to three feet distancing.
- Summer A will follow the same COVID-19 guidelines as are currently in place. Normal operations are expected to resume (likely with continued masking) for Summer B.
- An agenda preview of the next and final Senate meeting of the academic year was provided. It will include an introduction to new CFO Chris Cowen, who will provide a budget update (which is now being discussed by the state legislature). VP of Human Resources Jodi Gentry will present an HR update, including acute and permanent solutions to Baby Gator and childcare needs, which will also be presented at the June 10 Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting. The agenda will also include a presentation of the results of consultations related to the formation of a Peer Evaluation document meant to essentially balance the Student Evaluation. Identifying actionable items to improve the overall Graduate Student Experience at UF is also being discussed.
- The state legislature has entertained much discussion about higher education during this legislative session about higher education. State University System (SUS) colleagues have discussed the benefits of continued efforts to reach out to elected representatives and their staff. Inviting them to campus to meet graduate students, postdocs, support staff, medical personnel, and faculty or to attend campus functions and observe the positive work of the state universities would be beneficial.
- Three finalists have been named for Dean of Graduate School. Thank you to the faculty who have participated in these open interview sessions.
- In regard to the events notably following George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and more recently, violence against Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Faculty Senate Councils and Committees were asked at the start of the academic year to create a list of actionable items, in lieu of a dispersed memorandum/diversity statement. Today the Welfare Council, under the leadership of Chair Sarah Lynn, will be present an Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) document and resolution.
- Beginning in Summer A, UF students will have the opportunity to (optionally) select their preferred pronouns.

- All Senators and faculty are welcome to contact the Chair of the Faculty Senate or any of the Faculty Senate Councils and Committees with any comments, concerns, or issues needing to be addressed.

President's Report

Kent Fuchs, President

- All faculty and staff are asked to consider volunteering to participate in the in-person [commencement](#) ceremonies, for which 10,000 students, in 25 ceremonies, have registered. Approximately 3,500 of these students graduated last year and will return for this year's commencement. All ceremonies will be held in the O'Connell Center and will follow UF health guidelines for physical distancing and masking.
- There is currently a plentiful supply of vaccines and UF Health has been vaccinating as many as 5,000 per day at the stadium. UF is and cannot require vaccinations, but please encourage colleagues, friends, family members, and students to be vaccinated.
- More in-person events are taking place. President Fuchs attended the inaugural Michael Gannon Lecture, given by Historian John Meacham at Smathers Library. The live stream was viewed by about 500 participants.
- Thank you to a number of faculty in the College of Journalism and Communications, including Professor Tim Sorrell, who assisted with President Fuchs' April 1 (April Fool's Day) video announcement about the relationship of UF plans to replace administration with its new Artificial Intelligence Supercomputer.
- Dr. Fuchs thanked the faculty for being so successful in this most challenging of years.
- In response to an inquiry, about the number of UF personnel who received vaccinations, Provost Glover noted that it is estimated that roughly 75 to 80% of the UF community has been vaccinated.

Provost's Report

Joe Glover, President

- Today Provost Glover received detailed feedback from the Dean of the Graduate School interviews and expects an announcement to be made in a week or two. Thank you to all faculty who participated in the open interviews.
- Dr. Glover discussed applications of the AI supercomputer including the GatorTron Project, which has digested over 100 billion words of UF Health medical texts from the past ten years. While personal identifiable information is protected, a wealth of medical data has been processed to successfully provide relevant and key information about healthcare outcomes and, for the first time, UF was able to surpass previous efforts (which involved 100 million words) to train a supercomputer. A UF Health press release detailed this experiment and exciting outcome. Vice President and Chief Information Officer Elias Eldayrie was introduced and available to discuss the collaboration with SUS faculty and the upcoming world speed trials for new supercomputers. UF will be submitting its results and it is expected that the HiPerGator AI will rank as one of the top 25 or 30 fastest supercomputers in the world.
- Normal university operations are expected to return for the Summer B term. With guidance from UF Health, masking may continue, physical distancing is expected to be relaxed, and all employees, including faculty and staff, will largely return to repopulate campus.
- An inquiry was raised regarding the need for increased clarification for security compliance for visiting students and faculty. Provost Glover noted that over the past twenty years, the number of all papers in science and engineering which have an author from the US and also have an author from another country, has approximately doubled (i.e. from about 20% to 40%). The Office of Research and the General Counsel's Office are addressing federal and state government actions taken to increase the protection of intellectual property in higher education. President Fuchs noted that UF is prioritizing transparency and openness to welcoming international community members.

Action Items:

[Constitution of the University of Florida & Bylaws of the Faculty Senate Amendments](#)

Padraic Levings, Chair
University Constitution & Regulations
Committee

- This is a request from the UCRC to amend the name and charge of the Compensation Committee to include equity and to change the Committee on Committees reporting period from 'periodically' to an

annual review of at least 1/3 of Faculty Senate committees.

- This item was approved.

Information Items:

[IDEA Resolution and Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility \(IDEA\) Action Items: A Living Document](#)

Sarah Lynne, Chair, Welfare Council

- This document and resolution enumerate immediately identifiable IDEA action items which would be completed by UF departments/units, and/or administration. Some of the 23 actionable items will take the form of communications made across the institution; in professional and award development; and enhancement of faculty representation and the faculty experience. The document was developed, with faculty input, in the Welfare Council, and will not be static, but will instead be a living document to be reviewed and updated annually by the Welfare Council.

- Senators' inquiries and feedback regarding how to best be an inclusive community were also addressed.

[Faculty Senate Memorial Web Page](#)

Sylvain Doré, Chair

- A new 'In Memoriam' web page is being added to the Faculty Senate website to post faculty memorial notices. UFIT has designed the page and it will be solely maintained by a memorial notice system input from each Dean's Office. Each Dean will assign an individual from his/her office to submit and approve each memorial page/notice.

Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) Report

Mike Sagas, Professor and Faculty Athletics Representative to the NCAA

- The Intercollegiate Athletic Committee (IAC) report provided an overview of: the IAC mission; academic success metrics; an NCAA governance update, including impending discussions and actions regarding the NCAA Name, Image, and likeness (NIL) rules; and the annual progress rate (APR) of UF student athletes, based on retention and eligibility each semester.

Successful College Collaborations Series

Cammy Abernathy, Dean

Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering

- Dean Abernathy provided a snapshot of collaborations including education certificates in AI, and the exploration of both a Master of Sciences in new AI systems, and an interdisciplinary PhD in AI. The Electrical and Computer Engineering Department has been collaborating with agriculture via grants received from the distinctive Engineering Research Centers (ERC).

Julie A. Johnson, Dean

College of Pharmacy

- [The College of Pharmacy inter-college collaborative efforts](#), which range from the discovery of new drugs to basic science, were shared by Dean Johnson.

University Curriculum Committee

Angela Lindner, Associate Provost
Undergraduate Affairs

[Creation of New Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation \(PM&R\)](#)

- This is a proposal to re-organize the Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation by having the Division of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) transition to an independent Department of PM&R.

Open Discussion from Senate Floor - *Three minutes per speaker.*

1) University of Florida Faculty Senators

- There was an inquiry regarding the availability of pronoun use data within the institutional data collected for federal reporting. This is balanced with university inclusivity and any possible privacy risks which could occur in an open records access state.

- There was an inquiry regarding the delayed issue of the email notification for the Dean of Graduate School applicant interviews. The notice was inadvertently initially sent to a smaller email listserv before being sent to the campus-wide listservs, including the 'all salaried faculty' listserv. The importance of, and the need for, clear and timely communication to faculty on such essential matters was voiced and noted.

2) University of Florida Faculty

- UF Faculty member Robert Leeman spoke on behalf of eleven faculty from three colleges who forwarded a letter to, and received a responsive and engaging reply from, Graduate School Sr. Dean Paul Duncan regarding a concern about the decision to suspend funding for the graduate school preeminence awards/graduate school funding program for this recruitment cycle and instead substitute block grant funding for a substantially lower amount. Because there is a concern that this will adversely impact resources needed by students, particularly in under-represented groups, to complete their graduate school education, institutional support, perhaps into comparable funding programs that are on par with peer and aspirational peer institutions, is requested and welcomed.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Attending

- View meeting registrants [here](#).