

Senate Steering Committee Minutes

September 2, 2021

3 – 5 p.m.

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Present: David C. Bloom, Ashley Ghiaseddin, Mark Kaplan, Mark Hostetler, Keith Diem, Juan Nino, Angela Lindner, Kent Fuchs, Rick Stepp, Joe Glover, Nicole Stedman, Richard Scholtz, Sarah Lynne, Taylor Rose, Laurie Bialosky, Amanda Phalin, Stanley Kaye, Timothy Murtha, Lisa King, Sylvain Doré, Keith Rambo, Jason Byrd, and Alice Freifeld.

Call to Order

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The meeting was called to order at: 3:00 p.m.

Approve [August 19, 2021 Minutes](#)

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The minutes were approved.

Reports

• **Chair's Report**

David C. Bloom, Chair

- Chair Bloom discussed the critical need for faculty participation in shared governance and ways to strengthen awareness of the pathways to do so. The [UF Shared Governance Model](#) has been prominently placed on the [Faculty Senate home page](#) and will be reviewed and discussed at this month's Faculty Senate meeting to encourage inquiries and further shared governance discussion.
- All colleagues are encouraged to join us for the first lecture in the [2021-22 Distinguished Professor Lecture Series](#), which will be held at 5 p.m. following the September 23 Faculty Senate meeting in the Reitz Union Chamber Room, with a reception to follow in Room 3320 (3rd Floor). Distinguished Professor Sanjay Ranka, from the Department of Computer Information Science and Engineering in the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, will present 'Big Data versus Big Brother: Leveraging AI for Smarter Transportation.'
- Chair-elect Phalin will travel to the University of Central Florida to attend the September 10th Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) meeting.
- Chair Bloom will attend the Board of Trustees (BOT) retreat meeting September 9-10 in Winter Park, FL.

• **President's Report**

Kent Fuchs, President

- President Fuchs discussed the annual rankings and why it is helpful when the university increases in rank, including positive responses from elected officials who provide resources and who view a strong ranking as a metric to indicate a positive return on resource investments. Friends of the university can also view ranking metrics relative to our peer universities and colleagues. Rankings will be released in the next eleven days and the President's Office is in touch with department chairs and deans to discuss their vision and plans.
- The AI-centric data center is fostering educational curriculum and research and grant opportunities which faculty from across the university are engaged in to help solve real-world problems. The national implications of teaching AI across the university's curriculum was discussed. One of the nation's economic problems has been identified as insufficient

competency in the AI workforce and in AI skills. UF's \$70 million supercomputer, and its data center, are helping to fulfill the great need to educate students at scale. UF is engaged in conversations with the White House to help continue this focus.

- **Provost's Report**

Joe Glover, Provost

- Provost Glover would like the Faculty Senate to review areas of the AI initiative and focus on where we are succeeding, where we can contribute, and how we can energetically seize this opportunity in business, medicine, agriculture, and in other areas across the campus and the curriculum.

- Following an inquiry, there was discussion about the inclusion of an ethics component in the university's AI initiative. The Philosophy Department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is examining the ethical framework of AI.

- Provost Glover discussed metric sets of importance to the university. The university has performance-based funding metrics in which it can score up to 100 points. It is measured each year and affects the funding of the university. Most metrics are chosen by the Board of Governors (BOG) and the university identifies one metric, which was the graduation rate but is now the university endowment.

Introduction to the Dean of the Graduate School

Nicole Stedman, Associate Provost and Graduate School Dean

- Dean Stedman is working with Faculty Senate to identify items of interest to the Graduate School and graduate students to help create a functional implementation plan which meets the goals and mission of the Graduate School and which recognizes the graduate student voice. Monthly meetings with the Graduate Student Council President has assisted in broadening the Graduate School's communication and information sharing.

- Dean Stedman's Faculty Senate presentation will provide an overview of what the Graduate School does both strategically and through its initiatives. The presentation will include information about a range of programs, including professional development workshops, and the A2i and diversity initiatives being launched in the Spring in collaboration with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Graduate School's international program outreach will also be showcased, including its Fulbright Program collaboration, job search assistance resources, and its engagement in the AI industry, which encompasses both curriculum and work force partnerships.

- The Graduate School collaborates with the Postdoctoral Affairs Office to provide a monthly program showcasing speakers across campus.

- The Graduate School will host a health and academic resources gathering September 16-17 and hopes to be able to offer vaccinations at this event.

- Dean Stedman recognized the indispensable efforts of faculty assisting with the Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) review process.

- In response to an inquiry regarding limited graduate student housing, Dean Stedman noted that, although this issue is still in development, her focus is primarily in the academic sphere.

- Dean Stedman will present her vision before the Board of Trustees next week.

Academic Calendar

Angela Lindner, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs

- Associate Provost Lindner outlined academic calendar options to both incorporate the delay of the start of spring semester by one week and to better align UF's academic calendar with that of Alachua County's public schools, including overlapping Spring Breaks. The calendar previously proposed, and the academic calendar change request made by Faculty Senate based on the Proposed 2024-2025 calendar, were distributed. The University Registrar oversees the academic calendar and helped provide the two scenarios presented, including maintaining the total days of 220 instructional days

(which is based on a past BOG 'minimum instruction days' mandate) and a second scenario equalizing the number of days in the fall and spring semesters to help with consistency in other university deadlines in the areas of housing, advising, catalog publication, etc.

- Dr. Lindner shared the faculty and unit/departmental comments she has received. Very positive feedback was received on scenario two, which seems to be the favored scenario.
- A discussion was held regarding the feasibility of adding two days at the beginning of the semester and the effect it would have on class schedules.
- Faculty Senate's normal process of approving the academic calendar five years in advance has been slightly delayed this Senate cycle to draft, review, and obtain campus and Alachua County School feedback on the above options.
- A motion to eliminate scenario one from Faculty Senate consideration carried unanimously. Associate Provost Lindner will update the proposed scenarios for Faculty Senate.

Senate Officer Term Ad hoc Committee

Richard Scholtz, Chair

Senate Officer Term Ad hoc Committee

- The contents of the [Senate Officer Term Ad hoc Committee Report](#) was shared by Committee Chair Scholtz. An inquiry was made about reviewing the term of the Faculty Senate Chair in an effort to increase Faculty Senate influence and service on the Board of Trustees, Board of Governors and the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates. A motion to move the report and its recommendations forward for review and discussion at the University Constitution and Regulations Committee carried unanimously.

Council Reports

Welfare Council

Sarah Lynne

- To expedite the review of a proposed [COVID Resolution](#) submitted by UF Faculty member Mark Hostetler which advocates a 'vote of no confidence' in the University's COVID-19 Plan for Fall 2021, Welfare Council held an emergency meeting on August 30th, as instructed by the Steering Committee at its August 27th emergency Steering Committee meeting. Chair Lynne noted the meeting was attended by Welfare Council members and faculty (including Professor Hostetler), Faculty Senate administrative liaisons, and members of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. Chair Lynne provided an outline of the August 30th council meeting's comprehensive [discussion points](#). Council generated a [revised resolution from its August 30th emergency meeting](#) for review at today's Steering Committee meeting.
- A motion to add the Welfare Council's revised resolution to the September 23rd Faculty Senate Information Item agenda failed. Discussion points included:
 - If a resolution amendment is needed to include a clarification request put forward by Tom Dana, Professor of Education and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Education, and Lynda Fender Hayes, P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School Director & University School Professor:
Highlights are quotes from the resolution.

WHEREAS the University of Florida's COVID-19 mitigation measures are restricted from providing accommodations for individuals who are not currently eligible for vaccination – including UF students, employees, and youth under age twelve who are enrolled in University preschool and K-12 educational facilities

For K-12 students at PKY this isn't quite accurate. A qualifying medical condition can, and has, qualified our students for a 504 and/or alternative accommodations (e.g., hospital homebound). We also support a leave of absence for those requesting to enroll in full-time virtual school (the only alternative we authorized to provide for all students)

“robust contact tracing program”

PKY does have this in partnership with UF Health and our School Nurse and new LPN.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that P.K. Yonge should be afforded the ability to make decisions about mask mandates for their school district.

PKY does not have the authority from the BOG or BOT to go against current laws, rules, and emergency orders.

- If the resolution acknowledges or makes clear that the Alachua County School Superintendent is accountable to a different board (the Alachua County School Board) than the University of Florida (the Board of Governors) not just politically (elections versus appointments versus hiring) but from a constitutional power standpoint.
- If the resolution clearly outlines what faculty is specifically trying to achieve.
- If the resolution takes into account the faculty feedback Chair Bloom/Faculty Senate has received about serious concerns of unintended consequences and/or an ultimately adverse impact to the university and its students and employees, particularly with the passage of a second Faculty Senate COVID resolution and, specifically, a ‘no confidence’ resolution. The need to obtain faculty input to seriously and carefully weigh potential benefits and costs for our faculty and university was discussed.
- Mark Kaplan, VP for Government and Community Relations, was asked to briefly comment on the content of, the spirit of, and the reception of [the COVID resolution passed by Faculty Senate on August 26th](#). The resolution endorsed the verbiage prepared by the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) and was passed by all Florida State University System (SUS) schools. The ACFS resolution was presented in lock step of the SUS schools to the Board of Governors (BOG) this week and was unambiguous in its demands.
- The committee discussed if the proposed resolution is saying anything different than the one presented and if a redundant or re-doubled effort is actually going to weaken the faculty position by simply presenting ongoing or multiple resolutions.
- The resolution(s) potential to ultimately impact state policy was discussed.
- Professor Hostetler urged that the resolution be addressed as soon as possible as campus is not safe under the current university policy. He has conducted a poll indicating 90 percent of the faculty are in agreement with him. It was unclear if polling took place before or after his proposed resolution. Chair Bloom noted next week’s meeting conflicts, mentioned in the Chair’s Report, for him (i.e. the BOT meeting) and for Chair-elect Phalin (i.e. the ACFS meeting). The timeline of and logistics for Faculty Senate consideration of another COVID resolution was discussed; the Steering Committee expressed concern that there is an imperative need for faculty vetting on the proposed resolution to take place between today and the next regularly-scheduled Faculty meeting on September 23rd. Placing the proposed resolution on the September 23 Information Agenda would allow it to be moved to action by a supermajority of the Faculty Senate quorum.
- Concern was expressed that further amendments of Welfare Council’s resolution today would not allow for an accurate vetting of these changes before the September 23rd Faculty Senate meeting. Professor Hostetler objected to further delay. Clarification was made about the process of shared governance and the specific charge of the [Faculty Senate policy councils](#) (of which the Welfare Council is one of five) to make policy recommendations and facilitate faculty participation in shared governance in their assigned areas.
- Concern was expressed that the Welfare Council resolution, in its current form, will not pass Faculty Senate.
- It was agreed the resolution needs additional work and is squarely in the charge of the Welfare Council.
- It was agreed that COVID resolution(s) discussion must be heard from the Senators and faculty at

the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting.

- A motion to add a discussion of COVID resolution(s) to the September 23rd Faculty Senate Chair's Report and to refer the Welfare Council resolution to a committee (i.e. the Welfare Council) carried unanimously.
- The Welfare Council was thanked and asked to implement today's conversation and seek faculty vetting to iron out any remaining resolution 'sticking points' at its September council meeting.
- Professor Hostetler voiced his objection to today's decision and the Faculty Senate's handling of his request(s).

Academic Policy Council

Richard Scholtz

- Council convened for an emergency meeting over the summer to address needed language changes in the UF the syllabi statement, given that House Bill HB233 went into effect July 1st. The Provost's Office asked this council to convene to recommend a syllabi statement which would help clarify students' rights and consequences of violation of this bill. Council's approved verbiage was distributed campus wide. At this meeting, faculty input was also sought on Canvas minimum usage verbiage.
- Council next meets at the end of this month for its first meeting of this academic year.

Research and Scholarship Council

Jason Byrd

- Council meets September 17 and will host the Office of Research to obtain updates pertaining to foreign faculty and student hiring, as well as electronic lab notebooks, and university compliance processes related to recent legislation which aims to eliminate institutional undue foreign influence.

Budget Council

Ashley Ghiaseddin

- Council meets mid-month and will discuss and identify council items of interest this academic year.

Infrastructure Council

Keith Rambo

- Council meets September 8th in Pugh 150. Chair Rambo met with outgoing Infrastructure Council Chair Richard Scholtz on August 20th to information share.

Approve [September 23, 2021 Faculty Senate Agenda](#)

David C. Bloom, Chair

- A motion to approve the proposed Faculty Senate agenda carried unanimously.

Adjournment

David C. Bloom, Chair

- The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.