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Faculty Senate Minutes September 2020

UNO Faculty Senate

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2020-2021 Faculty Senate Agenda
Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 2p.m.
Zoom

I. Official Call to Order: President Ostler at 2:01 p.m.

II. Approval of resolution from June Executive Council meeting

A. Executive Council Agenda 6-3-20

RESOLUTION 4418

WHEREAS: UNO's top priority is safety, security, and the facilitation of free expression for students, faculty, staff, and the Omaha community in which we operate

WHEREAS: Tensions have been increasing across the country because of inequities in the just treatment of minority groups, including incidences on college campuses

WHEREAS: Civil unrest has emerged in many cities in response to the death of George Floyd

WHEREAS: Phased reopening of University campuses across the country and specifically UNO will bring a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff together in greater numbers during potentially contentious times

WHEREAS: Strong messages condemning violence, ignorance, intolerance, and hate, combined with proactive communication condoning decency and justice serve as important reminders to an educated and considerate society,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha endorses the following Message to the UNO community:

The Faculty of the University of Nebraska at Omaha has witnessed, as we all have, the recent incidences of violence, ignorance, intolerance, and hate amidst a backdrop of increased local and national community tensions. We stand uniformly in opposition to any language or action that attack individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation. In such instances, we must all speak up, speak out, and stand together against prejudice, while ensuring that we individually and collectively protect our physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.

We believe the greatest resistance to injustice lives within the strength of individual character. Grace, resilience, beneficence, tolerance, trust and tenacity are all part of the Maverick Spirit. Mavericks lead the way in effecting positive change by promoting education, liberty, empowerment, and justice. We must remain steadfast and exhibit these qualities so that the system can adopt and enact positive change. Be informed, be logical, be tolerant, be considerate, be just... be a Maverick.

The UNO faculty supports equity, access, diversity and inclusion. We encourage the respectful exchange of ideas that help us grow as individuals, and by extension, as a community. We take pride in the positive growth, independence, and strength that our students and others in the UNO community exhibit as a result of those challenging conversations. We, as the Faculty of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, commit to this effort in our words, our actions, and in our vision for the UNO campus.

III. Officers' Reports

A. President's Report: Senator Ostler

1. Office of Academic Affairs report on start of semester



- a. Fall semester has started and is without serious incident as of Monday, August 31, 2020. OAA has reported that this start is one of the “quietest” ever. Some of that is, of course, the dedensification of campus but most problems are being managed at their point of occurrence. I am including this in the President’s Report because unforeseen changes/challenges may cause us to have to maneuver quickly this fall on issues that have never before been issues. This is a kind request to stay diligent and listen to student and faculty concerns that might seem unusual. The stress of various schedules and contingencies will be different for different people and we want to be especially mindful of easing unnecessary strain. A quick response to concerns now may save time and effort down the line.

2. Collective Bargaining

- a. Collective Bargaining will begin in late September. Faculty Senate has resumed an earlier effort to define and include Non-Tenure track Faculty Promotion options as part of the contract. Because the Non-Tenure Track Faculty are full time and are fully invested in the function and governance of the university, the bargaining conditions affect their employment and overall part in the university teaching structure; yet, they have not been universally recognized as a priority in bargaining agreements of the past. This option is now being considered in earnest by the UNO ad hoc committee on Faculty Advancement, who will present a promotion proposal later on in the agenda. Also under the Bargaining umbrella is the Academic Calendar. With a J-term still being possible for 2022, AAUP needs information/details on specific starting and stopping dates for the Spring 2022 calendar dates and compensation structure so those can be considered in the new contract.

3. UNO Policy and Compliance

- a. Drew Nielsen will be working with Assistant Vice Chancellor Sarah Edwards and the Faculty Senate on some policy updates including making permanent the temporary policies of recording of zoom lessons and addressing the course attendance requirements for students observing religious holidays/observances. We have worked closely with Drew over the summer to contribute to the Title IX changes, Campus Safety policy, etc., and to get a jumpstart the Academic Integrity Policy. There are other policy/compliance actions as well. These will be assigned to the appropriate Standing Committees as soon as the policy/compliance office is ready for our input.

4. Other updates

a. University Calendar proposal

- 1. The UNO Academic Calendar will follow the originally published dates for the 2020-2021 academic year including all of the holidays and breaks. Given the data collected and work done on possible calendar revisions, Student Government is eager to work with Faculty Senate to create a path for possible calendar changes and term additions. The Student climate survey administered this summer suggested substantial student interest in the possibility of a 2022 J-term. With Collective Bargaining and Faculty Questions exposed as possible barriers to implementing a J-term, Student Government reached out to work with faculty through Faculty Senate.

B. Secretary/Treasurer Report: Senator Surface

- 1. No EO&A meeting; no report.

Reported that we were waiting for the transition of new coordinator for the report

IV. Standing Committee Reports

A. Committee on Academic & Curricular Affairs: Senator Wessling

1. At its 08-26-2020 meeting, the Academic and Curriculum Affairs Committee's (ACAC) main task for this month was to get on the same page with the progress made on goals from 2019-2020 and to read up on the temporary policies enacted in 2019-2020. Members are going to read correspondences from Hank Robinson regarding the issues he found with the current course evaluation process and his recommendations for a solution and Trent Frederiscken regarding our progress on revising the academic integrity policy.
2. To plan goals for 2020-2021 committee members are also reading up on the temporary attendance policy and the temporary video capture policy. Members are going to decide how to move forward with these policy revisions no later than the September meeting whether that is having guests join our next standing committee to clarify the policy or whether to ask for a policy discussion as a new business item for the full Faculty Senate.
3. No Vice Chair has been elected. Senator Siy is going to be the recorder of minutes.

B. Committee on Educational Resources & Services: Senator Surface

1. New Committee Chair
 - a. Senator Surface requested a replacement in her role as Committee Chair since she will serve as Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer.
 - b. The committee voted Senator Richard Stacy as Committee Chair and James Vnuk to serve in Senator Stacy's absence.
2. Paul Beck Memorial Scholarship
 - a. During the 19-20 academic year, the ERS committee developed a rubric and scoring spreadsheet to assist with the reviewing of the Paul Beck scholarship applications.
3. Employee and Dependent Scholarship Program
 - a. It was noted that when faculty logged into the Firefly website to designate the distribution available credit hours, it appears that only undergraduate hours can be designated. A question was brought to the committee regarding the lack of graduate hours available based upon the Board of Regents' rules.
4. Allocation of Finance and Administration (F&A) Funds
 - a. The committee reviewed the goal of studying the allocation of Finance and Administration (F&A) funds. Senior Vice Chancellor Kopp recommended that F&A address F & A in an overall budget review.

C. Committee on Faculty Personnel & Welfare: Senator Helm

1. Procedures and solutions regarding personnel complaints filed with Human Resources, the Behavioral Review Team, and the Ombud Service.
 - a. The Committee began planning and defining priorities regarding research into the UNO resources available to Faculty concerned with a violation of their rights per the Board of Regents Bylaws, Chapter IV. Rights and Responsibilities of Professional Staff, section 4.1.
 1. **Bylaws of the Board of Regents:** Chapter IV. Rights and Responsibilities of Professional Staff- 4.1 Academic Responsibility. Membership in the academic community imposes certain obligations. These obligations include the following duties of academic responsibility: (a) To respect: (1) the dignity of others; (2) the right of others to express differing opinions; (3) the right of others to be free from fear, from violence, and from personal abuse; and (4) the right of the University community to be free from actions that impede its normal functioning.
 - b. The Committee agreed to identify, and develop a document for faculty, the resources available to faculty when they feel their faculty rights have been violated.
 - c. The Committee agreed look into and determine fair outcomes following faculty complaints, i.e. the option to receive written documentation regarding RRPS concerns.



- d. The Committee agreed to identify and interview individuals on campus charged with addressing faculty personnel concerns.

2. Report from Senator Huq regarding the system-wide Committee on Benefits

You may recall that Faculty Personnel benefits committee introduced, and the faculty senate passed, a resolution requesting central administration to review our retirement plan to identify a more cost effective and high performing retirement savings plan for our faculty and staff. The result of that resolution is the creation of a systemwide committee named NU Retirement Plan Review Committee by Central Administration in March, 2020. The committee met four times in August and at the behest of the Central Administration is working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of the NU system seeking qualified Bidders to perform program review services of our Basic 401(a), Tax-Sheltered Annuity 403(b), and 457(b) Deferred Compensation retirement plans. The goal is to ensure that the University is providing excellent service and high performing retirement savings plan for its participants. The Request for Proposals (RFP) will seek a professional consulting firm to provide the following program review services:

- a. A recordkeeper review, evaluating the current providers (recordkeepers) and recommending a strategy including best practices for the plan design and plan governance going forward, along with education for staff and Retirement Plan Review Committee members.
- b. An investment review, evaluating the current investments offered in the University of Nebraska retirement programs and recommending a strategy including best practices for selecting the investments, and a structure for monitoring investments going forward.
- c. Design and recommendation of a communications strategy for change management, as well as best practices for communicating about the retirement programs which benefit staff and participants.

This RFP will provide prospective Offerors (consultants) with sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit proposals for consideration by the NU Retirement plan review committee to achieve the goals stated above.

The awarded Bidder will perform the following services: a review of the recordkeepers, evaluation of the plan investments, and communication and education support for the program. Based on the findings of the review, the awarded Bidder will provide recommendations on next steps which should include:

- 1. Evaluation of the current University of Nebraska retirement plan governance structure and recommendation of best practice guidelines with clearly defined policies and procedures, recognizing NU's exemption from ERISA requirements.
- 2. Performance of an in-depth review of the program's recordkeepers from a service and fee perspective.
- 3. Collaboration with the Office of General Counsel to provide a formal fiduciary training program for individuals responsible for plan oversight.
- 4. Review of the investment platforms and fund options available to plan participants.
- 5. Review contribution options with the plans such as Roth, rollovers, after-tax contributions, etc.
- 6. Following the identification of an appropriate investment structure, development and recommendation of a formal investment policy that could be utilized to govern the program's investments.
- 7. Development and recommendation of a strategic plan to address the future state of the program's education and advice.
- 8. Recommendation of the best communications strategy and channels for facilitating effective change management and for educating plan participants and institution benefits administrators about the University of Nebraska

Retirement Plan Program.

- d. Calendar of Events:
 1. September 1st–Release RFP to the bidders
 2. September 15th–Vendor questions due to the University
 3. September 22 –Responses due to Vendor questions
 4. October 2nd–RFP proposals due
 5. November –Notification of intent to award
 6. December –Contract Execution
 7. January –Start Contract

D. Committee on Goals & Directions: Senator Schulz

1. Committee met after the conclusion of the Faculty Retreat via Zoom
 - a. Confirmed Steve Schulz as the Chair for 2020-2021
 - b. Discussed last year’s activities
 1. Career path for Full-time Instructors
 2. Career path for Adjunct Instructors
 3. Sustainability on campus
 - c. Identified activities for this academic year
 1. Continue the review of the development of career paths for Full-time Instructors
 2. Continue discussions about the career paths/support for Adjunct Instructors
 3. Identify opportunities to improve sustainability on UNO’s campus

E. Committee on Committees: Senator Anderson

1. **Election slates and ballots will be included as an attachment when available**
2. **Amendment 1** to replace Jen Sinclair (Teacher Ed), who is unable to serve on this committee, with Joshua Kearney (CFAM) on Judicial Committee.
3. **Amendment 2** - to replace Gwyneth Cliver (A&S) with Tracy Bridgeford (A&S) on the University Committee on Technology Resources, Services & Planning.
4. **Resolution 1** – Faculty Grievance Committee – Rank: Associate Professor- to replace Donna Dufner (retired)
 - a. One Associate Professor to be elected from the following two nominees to serve three-year terms from October 14, 2020, through October 11, 2023, to replace Donna Dufner (retired), whose term has expired.
 1. Janice Rech, A&S (Math)
 2. Gwyneth Cliver, A&S (FLL)
5. **Resolution 2** – Professional Conduct Committee – Rank: Tenured Professor
 - a. One tenured faculty members to be elected from the following two nominees to serve three-year terms from October 14, 2020, through October 11, 2023, to replace Harmon Maher (A&S, Geology), whose term has expired.
 1. Kerry Ward, IS&T
 2. Sofia Jawed-Wessel, CEHHS (College of Education, Health and Human Sciences)
6. **Resolution 3** – Academic Freedom and Tenure ballot – Rank: Tenured Professor
 - a. **NOTE: This is to approve the ballot for full time UNO Faculty and Staff.**
 - b. That the ballot for distribution to full-time UNO faculty, which is to elect two tenured faculty members from the following three nominees to serve three-year terms from October 14, 2020, through October 11, 2023, (replacing Nancy Kelley (CPACS) and Lisa Scherer (A&S, Psych), whose terms have expired) list

1. Shari DeVney (EHHS)
2. Nancy Kelley, (CPACS)
3. Andrew Swift, (A&S, Math)

7. Working On/Future Issues

- a. Finding the replacement for Howard Paine on the Faculty Senate (CFAM), who retired
- b. Finding a replacement for Jennifer Sinclair on the Judicial Committee
- c. We will work on a new committee around tech issues once/if committee parameters are provided by Jaci Lindburg.
- d. Tweak last things with cHarmony, check committee structures.

Further Discussion: Amendment 1 was unanimously approved with 26 out of 26 votes. Amendment 2 was also unanimously approved with 26 out of 26 votes. For Resolution 1, the Senate voted to elect Gweneth Cliver to serve on the Faculty Grievance Committee; Cliver won 73% of the 26 votes that were cast. For Resolution 2, the Senate voted to elect Sofia Jawed-Wessel to serve on the Professional Conduct Committee; Jawed-Wessel won 65% of the 26 votes that were cast. For Resolution 3, the Senate unanimously agreed to approve the ballot.

V. **Other Faculty Senate Committees**

A. **Ad hoc Committee on Faculty Advancement: Senator Hale**

- a. The Ad hoc Committee on Faculty Advancement stalled in the spring because of the immediate need to respond to online instruction and university operations. However, with Collective Bargaining beginning in the fall, the committee is set to pick up where we left off. The primary focus of the committee is to develop a promotion and advancement system for non-tenure track faculty. (Attachment/Resolution)
- b. **Tentative language for resolution:**
WHEREAS the Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Faculty Advancement has met with instructional faculty (instructors and lecturers), spoken with cognizant campus officials, and examined other institutional models of laddering advancement
WHEREAS the committee has identified a need for continued instructional faculty advancement through career laddering
WHEREAS the committee has constructed a model of advancement to meet this need and provided the attached Instructional Faculty Ladder Rank System Proposal
WHEREAS the Faculty Senate has review the proposal and finds that it would improve the careers of instructional faculty and help retain talented educators on the UNO campus
BE IT RESOLVED that the UNO Faculty Senate does hereby endorse the Proposal and recommend that a) the AAUP collective bargaining unit advocate for its adoption at the next collective bargaining session and b) that the UNO Administrators involved in collective bargaining accept and implement this model on behalf of the campus faculty.

Further Discussion: There was a question about whether or not the advancement system would include a grandfather clause for faculty that have been in a certain position for more years than the new system allows so that they can continue on in the advancement process. Senator Hale responded that a grandfather clause is not included in the current language but would most likely be addressed in the final draft. Senator Ghandi asked if there would be a budget limit for how many faculty in each college could progress in the system in a given year and how will college's account for the pay increases. Vice Chancellor Kopp did not have an answer for that at this time. Senator King requests that adjunct professors be addressed in contract and Senator Siy asked if Professors of Practice would be addressed. Senator Hale responded that neither are addressed in this model but could be addressed

in. the future. The Ad Hoc committee will continue to meet to work on the official language and will give an update at the next meeting.

VI. For the Good of the Order

VII. New Business

Further Discussion: Senator Nero seeks a resolution from the Senate stating support for social justice training in all aspects of the university (i.e., for faculty, staff, and students) and in public institutions (i.e., city, state, and nation). The Committee of Professional Development has been assigned this task.

VIII. Announcements

IX. Adjourn at 3:23 p.m.