
The University Senate

FACULTY • STUDENT • P&A • CIVIL SERVICE

2021-22 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

University Senate Minutes: No. 2

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

9:30 - 10:25 a.m.

The second meeting of the University Senate for 2021-22 was convened on October 6, 2021, online via Zoom, and was also live-streamed and recorded on [YouTube](#). At the time of this meeting, there were 254 voting members of the University Senate. 184 were present.

1. University Senate Call to Order

Professor Carol Chomsky, vice chair, University Senate

Professor Carol Chomsky, vice chair, University Senate, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Motion to Approve Special Rule (*Action by the University Senate*)

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee

The Senate Consultative Committee proposes the following special rule during this meeting:

- Speakers are limited to two minutes each time they are recognized.

A $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of those present and voting is required to approve the special rule.

The clerk will interject when speakers have thirty seconds left and when time is up.

Motion: To approve the special rule.

Approved.

3. Resolution on Classroom Health and Safety under COVID-19 (*Discussion by the University Senate*)

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee

Professors Ellen Messer-Davidow and Michael Minta, representing the resolution authors

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee, introduced the topic, stating that 18 faculty senators had put forth this [Resolution on Classroom Health and Safety under COVID-19](#), which reflected many of the concerns that members of the University community had voiced to senate leadership. He noted that, according to senate practice, the resolution was listed on the agenda as a discussion item, with the intent of holding a second special meeting for

a vote. However, he added, senators were empowered to vote to hold a vote at this meeting instead.

Next, Professor Ellen Messer-Davidow, faculty senator from the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), who was one of the sponsors of the resolution, gave some background information on why it was needed. In particular, she cited the following:

- On August 18, 2021, the University administration held a town hall in response to covid-related concerns, garnering over 1,000 views.
- The local chapter of the Association for American University Professors (AAUP) held a town hall on September 4, 2021, in which about 250 people participated.
- On September 7th, the coalition of Student, Staff, and Faculty United for Health and Safety (SSFUHS) published an open letter to President Gabel, asking for stronger safety measures, which over 750 individuals signed.
- Graduate students circulated their own petition calling for stronger measures, which included 28 pages of single spaced signatures, estimated to be about 1500-2000 signatures.

Messer-Davidow turned the floor over to Professor Michael Minta, CLA faculty senator, who outlined the proposed measures in the resolution and explained why the resolution authors felt they were superior to the status quo.

Professor Chomsky then opened the floor for discussion.

Professor V.V. Ganeshanathan, CLA faculty senator, yielded time to Cherrene Korazuk, president of AFSCME 3800, who expressed support for the resolution and shared stories about the impacts of covid-19 in the workplace on AFSCME-represented staff.

Professor Jack DeWaard, CLA faculty senator, encouraged people to support the resolution, and added that mental health needs to be considered as well.

Scott Creer, chair, P&A Senate, made a motion to vote on the resolution without further discussion, given that the Faculty Senate had already approved it, and faculty make up the majority of the members of the University Senate. Professor Jason Kerwin, faculty senator from the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, seconded.

Professor Karen-Sue Taussig raised a point of information, asking if discussion could continue after a vote on whether to vote on the resolution at this meeting. Professor Chomsky ruled that discussion of the actual resolution would continue after the vote on whether to vote at this meeting, regardless of the outcome of that vote, until close to the end of the allotted meeting time.

Justin Goetz, vice chair, Student Senate, raised a point of order and said that the motion to call the question was not debatable and required a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority for approval. Professor Chomsky explained that since she had planned to entertain, after discussion, a motion to hold the vote at this meeting, she considered the motion on the table a motion to revise the agenda, rather than

calling the question. She ruled that the body would hold the vote, but it would be on whether to vote on the resolution at this meeting, not immediately.

Jeremy Jenkins, P&A senator, moved to overrule the chair. Creer seconded. Chomsky asked Jenkins for his alternate ruling, and he said that the vote should be whether to call the question, and if that motion was approved, then the body should proceed immediately to the vote on the resolution.

Michael Minta raised a point of order that the poll said “Do you approve the motion to vote on the resolution today?” rather than “do you approve the motion to vote on the resolution *now*?” He asked that it be amended.

Sarani Millican voiced support for the motion to overrule. Several faculty members expressed support for the chair’s ruling, as well as chagrin that so much of the time had been taken up by parliamentary procedure, rather than discussing the issue at hand. Chomsky noted that the senior leaders who were present to answer questions had had to leave, as they were only available for 30 minutes.

The motion to overrule the chair did not carry, with 32 ayes, 127 nays, and 8 abstentions.

Chomsky announced that she would now take questions and comments on the substance of the resolution, and a vote would be held later on whether to vote on the resolution at this meeting. Questions and comments on the resolution were as follows:

- Concern about possible false vaccination cards
- Concern that the authors of the resolution did not follow the process, which demonstrated lack of respect for shared governance.
- Clarification about whether the resolution was asking for everyone to be tested regularly, even if they are vaccinated (yes).
- A clear signal is needed from this body on covid safety; the administration can work out the details.
- General support for the resolution.

Professor Colleen Flaherty Manchester, SCC vice chair, made a motion to divide the vote. The motion carried (76 ayes, 71, nays, 18 abstentions).

Separate votes were then held on each clause of the resolution:

1. Be it resolved that the University immediately implement a vaccine mandate requiring all University faculty, staff, and students to submit proof of vaccination, with exemptions as allowed under Minnesota law, and requiring those exempted from the vaccine mandate to enroll in a regime of weekly testing as a condition for attending in-person classes.

Approved (152 ayes, 20 nays, 3 abstentions).

2. Be it resolved that the University implement a robust COVID-19 testing policy in which all employees and students who are physically present on campus will be tested routinely and to address current capacity shortfalls in on-campus testing, including long delays for appointments and lack of rapid testing options.

Approved (114 ayes, 51 nays, 9 abstentions).

3. Be it resolved that the University administration disclose which campus spaces have been tested for adequate ventilation and whether they meet CDC, OSHA, and ASHRAE guidelines. A timeline for ensuring adequate ventilation in all campus spaces must be developed, while ensuring that ventilation systems do not compromise instruction.

Approved (148 ayes, 17 nays, 7 abstentions).

4. Be it resolved that the University administration immediately provide employees and students with adequate PPE for their work and learning environments and not leave this to individual departments and units, an approach that has resulted in uneven distribution of such equipment because of differences in the financial resources available to departments

Approved (155 ayes, 13 nays, 5 abstentions).

5. Be it resolved that instructors be permitted to disclose, without divulging or suggesting any information about any student's identity, the existence of a positive test in classrooms that are large enough not to endanger anonymity so as to facilitate timely testing of all who have potentially been in close contact.

Approved (147 ayes, 22 nays, 6 abstentions).

6. Be it resolved that the University administration respect the authority of unit or department level faculty to make decisions collectively—with administrative oversight but without administrative interference—about course modality based on factors such as information about covid exposures, the needs and desires of students, the particular circumstances of instructors and the ability to maintain required physical distances in a classroom until such time that the vaccination requirement becomes an effective reality.

Approved (133 ayes, 30 nays, 11 abstentions).

7. Be it resolved that instructors who care for family members who are immuno-compromised or unvaccinated must be permitted to teach remotely during the pandemic.

Approved (141 ayes, 23 nays, 9 abstentions).

4. University Senate Adjournment

Chomsky adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office