
The University Senate

FACULTY • STUDENT • P&A • CIVIL SERVICE

2021-22 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

University Senate Minutes: No. 3

Thursday, November 4, 2021

2:30 - 4:40 p.m.

The third meeting of the University Senate for 2021-22 was convened on November 4, 2021, online via Zoom, and was also live-streamed and recorded on [YouTube](#). At the time of this meeting, there were 258 voting members of the University Senate. 213 were present.

1. University Senate Call to Order

President Joan T. A. Gabel

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.

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

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

Motion: To approve the special rule.

Approved.

3. Administrative Responses to University Senate Actions (*Information for the University Senate*)

- [Covid Safety Resolution](#)

4. Tribute to Deceased Members of the University Community

Faculty/Staff

Leonard Ferrington

Professor

College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

1948-2021

Laura Johnson
Executive Accounts Specialist
Carlson School of Management
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
1949-2021

Kristi Lecy
Administrative Manager
College of Biological Sciences
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
1959-2021

Bert Stromberg, Jr.
Professor
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
1944-2021

Students

Robert Bradley Hanna
University of Minnesota Crookston

5. Approval of Minutes (*Action by the University Senate*)

Professor Rachna Shah, clerk, University Senate

Motion: To approve the minutes from the following meetings:

- [University Senate, September 30, 2021](#)
- [Special University Senate, October 6, 2021](#)

Approved.

6. President's Report

President Joan T.A. Gabel

President Gabel gave her report, which covered the following topics:

- COVID-19:
 - There have been no clusters, surges, or outbreaks in any classrooms on any campus.
 - The percentage of positive tests on campus is very low, lower than the surrounding counties. This is especially encouraging, because those who are testing are typically doing so because of symptoms or exposure (rather than for screening purposes).
 - Self-reported vaccination rates are at about 96% systemwide (including staff and students).

- Contract tracing is shifting. There is a link to updated guidance on that topic in the [administrative response to the covid safety resolution](#), as well as updated resources on how to notify contacts for those who test positive.
- The attestation requirement will be replaced with a vaccination requirement as of early December. Proof of vaccination will be required for all staff and faculty, including student workers and graduate assistants. There will be a process for exemption requests, and a testing requirement for those with exemptions. Students will not have to upload vaccination cards; the University will audit the data students already provided (dates and type of shot) against the state's records.
- Strategic Plan:
 - The administration will be reporting out on year one at the December 2021 Board of Regents meeting, as well as providing the yearly accountability report to the state legislature.
 - Campus Safety: The M Safe Implementation Team's work is underway. The administration is also addressing the uptick in crime around the Twin Cities campus. Although the two initiatives do not always coexist easily, efforts are being made to navigate each situation with respect for the other, tackling the question of how to do policing differently while also responding to emergencies and crime issues. Recent efforts to increase safety in Dinkytown include providing access to the RAVE Guardian app (a virtual escort service), creating the safety ambassadors program, and reinstating the Gopher Chauffeur service.
 - The PEAK Initiative is underway. The purpose of this initiative is to make sure staff are put in positions to be as successful as possible and therefore are doing their best work. Functional leads have been identified and the Office of Human Resources will serve as a pilot for this program.
 - Last week, President Gabel charged a systemwide task force on faculty misconduct. Professor Jenn Goodnough is leading it. This task force will be working closely with the one that Professor Phil Buhlmann is leading on the faculty advisors.
 - The President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (PIPSM) and the President's Initiative for Student Mental Health (PRISMH) are still underway; officials are being intentional about working together and preventing overlap.
- Equity and Diversity: Board of Regents Policy: *Namings* will go to the All-University Honors Committee for consultation on November 18, 2021; the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) on November 22, 2021; and to the University Senate on December 2, 2021.
- Leadership turnover: Michael Goh, vice president for equity and diversity, has announced his intention to return to the faculty in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD); Duluth Chancellor Lynn Black will be retiring this summer; a search is underway for a permanent vice president for research. The search for the new director of the University Senate Office is coming to an end and will be announced shortly.
- November is Native American Heritage month. The University is launching the Native American Promise Scholarship program in Fall 2022, which will essentially expand Morris's tuition waiver for indigenous students to other campuses. The scholarship will give substantial financial support and in many cases free tuition for first-year

undergraduate students and transfers from the tribal colleges who are enrolled citizens in one of Minnesota's eleven federally recognized tribal nations.

7. Questions to the President

President Joan T.A. Gabel

Emily McGuire, student senator from the School of Public Health, asked whether it was true that voting is not considered an excused absence and if so, why. Gabel said that is correct, and administrators regularly ask instructors to consider reasonable accommodations for students who need to go vote, as well as encourage people to use early voting and absentee voting. Gabel also noted that the provost had charged a task force on academic calendars, which had been asked to look at whether Election Day should be a holiday, among other things.

Ellen Messer-Davidow, faculty senator from the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) asked for clarity on point 7 in the administrative response to the covid safety resolution, regarding permitting remote work for people who have immunocompromised people in their household. Gabel responded that there were many requests to this effect in fall 2021. Each was explored on a case by case basis, and many were honored. Some decisions were made within units, some were appealed, and some happened through the Disability Resource Center. There was no across the board policy, and the administration has declined to create one, but are committed to working together to address these needs.

Scott Creer, P&A Senate chair, asked whether it would be possible to include Native American staff in the recently announced U of M Native American Promise Tuition program. He noted that currently, Native staff have an avenue to pursue higher education through the Regents Scholarship, but this is not meeting everyone's needs. Gabel replied that the program was developed in response to a request from the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MAIC) and was designed in consultation with them. The focus was on students, she said, but it could possibly expand to staff in the future. In the interim, Gabel expressed a desire to understand why the Regents Scholarship presents barriers and try to address that.

Eric Daigre, CLA faculty senator, asked when the University would test work spaces (besides classrooms) for adequate ventilation and release information about that? Gabel said that she would hold that question for the HVAC presentation later in this agenda.

Michael Minta asked when information about contact tracing and notification would be released. Gabel deferred to Jill DeBoer, deputy director, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), who directed senators to a [website](#) containing information about case investigation and exposure notification. She noted that a communication had also gone out.

Will Jones, CLA faculty senator, asked what could be done about long waits to get tested. DeBoer and Dave Golden, director of public health, Boynton Health, both said that next day (and sometimes same day) appointments are readily available on the Twin Cities campus. Test results are coming in usually within 24 hours, but occasionally longer over weekends or holidays. However, they acknowledged that there is variability across the campuses, which officials are working to address. Jones said that did not align with what he was hearing from colleagues.

Karen-Sue Taussig, CLA faculty senator, said that she had also heard about long delays in test availability, and also requests for remote teaching being denied to those with vulnerable individuals in their households. She then asked how the administration would ensure that faculty have authority over course modality without interference by deans and other administrators. Gabel responded that she did not consider oversight over course modality interference.

Jonathan Sachs, faculty senator from the College of Science and Engineering, asked how the administration would ensure that proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is distributed to faculty and staff? Gabel deferred to Katharine Bonneson, assistant vice president, University Health and Safety, who stated that faculty, staff, and students have access to KN95 masks, if they choose to use them. Departments cover the cost for faculty and staff, and the University covers the cost for students.

Emily Vraga, CLA faculty senator, noted that evaluating requests for remote teaching on a case by case basis creates the opportunity for real or perceived differences in treatment between different faculty members or different departments. She asked President Gabel to comment on why this approach had been chosen, rather than an overarching policy that would ensure that everyone is treated equally. Gabel responded that there is a balance between top-down decisions, which are not often desirable, and decisions made at the local level that can give the appearance of inequity. The administration has tried to strike that balance through the appeals process, she said, while acknowledging that the system is not perfect.

8. Provost's Report

Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson

Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson gave the following updates:

1. Her office recently sent a message to all faculty and instructors scheduled to teach in spring reminding them of the process for requesting a change in modality for the spring.
2. Last year, a group was convened to look into strategies to discourage academic dishonesty, especially in light of increased use of remote assessment. Croson said that the group's recommendations would be released shortly. She added that the Office of Student had created and communicated a message with a video on the topic, with students as the target audience.
3. At the request of the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) and The Graduate School, she had charged a task force to address the challenges with the power dynamic between faculty advisors and graduate students. Professor Phil Buhlmann is chairing this task force.
4. Croson also convened a task force to look at the systemwide academic calendar with regard to equity and diversity and possibly aligning the calendar across the system
5. A committee will soon be charged to look at revising the liberal education requirements.

9. Questions to the Provost

Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson

None.

10. Senate Consultative Committee Report

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee (SCC), gave the following updates:

1. SCC met with Provost Croson about the covid safety resolution response, and provided input prior to it being finalized.
2. SCC leadership is planning a work session with the leaders of the consultative committees on how to ensure that all voices are heard, especially when time sensitive issues arise.
3. SCC received a letter from the Senate Committee on Committees containing recommendations regarding the Campus Safety Committee, and spoke with Professor Edgar Arriaga, chair, Campus Safety Committee, about possible changes to that committee's membership.
4. All consultative committee leaders were invited to interview and provide input on the finalists for the director of the University Senate Office position.

11. Introductions to the Senate

President Joan T.A. Gabel

Calvin Phillips, vice president, Office for Student Affairs, and Ken Horstman, vice president, Office of Human Resources were introduced to the senate.

12. Proposed New Administrative Policy: *Discrimination (Action by the University Senate)*

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committee

Motion: To approve the proposed new [Administrative Policy: *Discrimination*](#).

Comments: This proposed new policy was discussed at the last regular senate meeting, on September 30, 2021.

Approved (130 ayes, 1 nay, 15 abstentions).

13. Presentation on Classroom Safety (*Information for the University Senate*)

James Cotner, professor and chair, Classroom Advisory Subcommittee

Jay Denny, principal commissioning engineer, Energy Management, Facilities Management, Neil Carlson, industrial hygienist, University Health and Safety

President Gabel turned the floor over to Professor James Cotner, chair, Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS), who stated that at its last meeting, CAS had heard a presentation on classroom safety during COVID-19 from Jay Denny, principal commissioning engineer, Energy Management, Facilities Management (FM), Neil Carlson, industrial hygienist, University Health and Safety (UHS). Members found the presentation extremely helpful and informative, and felt that it would be beneficial for a broader audience to hear this information.

Denny and Carlson gave their [presentation](#), emphasizing the following points:

- Factors that determine the risk of transmission in any given space include how many people are in the space, for how long, whether they are vaccinated, etc., as well as what mitigation strategies are in use (masking, social distancing, ventilation, etc.).
- Mitigation strategies operate on a law of diminishing returns. At a certain point, mitigation strategies that require a lot of effort are overkill in terms of how much they reduce the risk.
- UHS has evaluated the effectiveness of several types of masks, including all those available through UMarket. They also provide free fittings for N95s, which are available to faculty, staff, and students at no cost to the individual.
- UHS has evaluated all classrooms and spaces in which for-credit activities take place for adequate ventilation, and installed portable HEPA filtration units in those spaces that needed them to meet CDC guidelines. Spaces that did not meet CDC guidelines even with portable HEPA units are not currently in use. University members should be assured that all spaces in which they are teaching or learning meet CDC guidelines in terms of air filtration.
- The CDC guidelines on ventilation are a minimum; most University spaces exceed these guidelines.
- For fall 2021, FM completed evaluations for all 872 classrooms that were scheduled for use on the Twin Cities campus. 313 failed to meet the minimum requirements, so at least one HEPA filtration unit was installed in each of those 313 rooms prior to the start of fall semester. When it starts to get too cold to bring in the current volume of outside air, an additional 17 classrooms will require additional mitigation; HEPA units are being installed in those classrooms now. The same process was completed on each system campus.
- UHS has also evaluated many non-classroom spaces, and will do so at the request of a community member.
- Clinic and lab spaces have also been evaluated; because these spaces typically have greater ventilation and filtration requirements to begin with, little was needed in the way of enhancement.
- There is no documented evidence of multi-room ventilation systems transferring infectious material from one room to another in sufficient quantities to drive transmission.

Carlson and Denny then opened up the floor for questions:

- Was this presentation recorded and available to share with colleagues? Gabel affirmed that it was recorded and [available on the University Senate's YouTube channel](#).
- Is there any activity in terms of monitoring happening, to ensure that spaces continue to be in compliance? Denny said that the built-in ventilation systems are monitored and controlled electronically, so they are monitored in that way. With regard to the portable HEPA units, he said they were not concerned yet, but were developing a process to sample rooms to check that they continue to function adequately. Carlson added that FM goes into each room daily to make sure the portable units have not been accidentally turned off; if they have, they turn them back on. He cautioned people not to turn off these units, and not to turn on the ionizer function.
- Has there been thought about putting signage in classrooms to indicate that a space had been inspected and meets the guidelines? Carlson said that had been considered, but the

goal was not to have a graduated system, but rather a binary: either a space met the guidelines, or it would not be used.

14. Administrative Policies (*Information for the University Senate*)

Professor Ned Patterson, chair, Senate Consultative Committees

Committees have recently consulted on and approved changes to the following policies:

- [*Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Relationship Violence*](#)
- [*Activities Involving Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents*](#)
- [*Early and Select Appointment Terminations for Academic Professional and Administrative Employees*](#)

15. Old Business

None.

16. New Business

None.

17. University Senate Adjournment

President Gabel adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Amber Bathke

University Senate Office