
The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Faculty Advisory Committee on the Health Sciences (FACHS)

May 6, 2025

Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents. The University Senate Office utilized notes taken during the meeting, video recording and transcript of the meeting, and AI to assist in summarizing substantive parts of the meeting transcript to compose these minutes. Minutes are reviewed by the committee before posting.

[In these minutes: NIH Funding Changes and Indirect Cost Issues; Co-chair Election; Committee Discussion; Discussion with HS SCC Co-chairs]

PRESENT: Pawel Mroz (co-chair), Julie Olson (co-chair), Jessie Barnett, Donna Eull, JP Leider, Cliff Steer, Tim Stratton

ABSENT: Corey McGee, Brian Sick

REGRETS: Carolyn Porta, Jeff Todd

OTHERS: Jaclyn Adair, senate associate, University Senate Office; April Coon, director, Sponsored Projects Administration; David Hagen, associate director, Office of Cost Analysis; Makayla Maher, co-chair, Health Sciences Student Consultative Committee

1. Welcome

Pawel Mroz, co-chair, called the meeting to order.

2. NIH Funding Changes and Indirect Cost Issues

Mroz introduced the guests, April Coon, Director of Sponsored Projects Administration, and David Hagen, Associate Director for the Office of Cost Analysis. Coon shared a [short slide deck](#) and started by explaining the significant changes and challenges faced by the research team since the new administration took office. She highlighted the rapid changes and the impact on research, noting that new guidance and executive orders were being issued frequently. She mentioned that the National Science Foundation (NSF) had recently terminated several awards and that the Department of Energy (DOE) had attempted to cap the F&A rate at 15%, which led to legal challenges. She mentioned that the NIH had implemented a notice of Civil Rights Term and Condition of Award causing confusion and concern among faculty. An announcement from SPA to principal investigators at the University stated every grant award must include a term requiring the grant recipient to agree that it is in compliance with Federal anti-discrimination law, and a term requiring grant recipients to certify that they do not operate any programs promoting DEI. Hagen elaborated on the NIH funding issues including the termination of awards and the new executive orders affecting foreign subawards. He also discussed the ongoing legal battles and the University's efforts to appeal the terminations and participate in lawsuits. He and Coon acknowledged the difficulties faced by the faculty and assured them that the research team was working diligently to navigate these challenges.

Following the presentation, Mroz asked the speakers how they are managing the workload, recognizing the immense challenges posed by frequent policy shifts and legal uncertainties affecting University operations. Hagen shared that the past two weeks had been particularly intense with daily consultations with the Office of General Counsel due to lawsuits and ongoing administrative changes. Pamela Webb's retirement added to the workload, and both Hagen and Coon described an environment where each day presented new complications requiring extra hours and adaptability. Mroz expressed appreciation for their efforts noting the strain of managing funding disruptions and

handling negative reactions from faculty impacted by grant terminations. Hagen emphasized their commitment to appealing terminations despite slim chances, ensuring the university remains proactive in legal challenges.

The conversation shifted to the broader effects of executive orders on federal funding agencies. Hagen explained disparities in how agencies like NSF, NIH, and USAID were impacted. He stated that universities receiving widespread attention risked harsher funding cuts leading President Cunningham to adopt a low-profile approach. Julie Olson raised concerns about communicating grant losses to the public. Hagen explained that direct press engagement was limited with only select cases being highlighted in a Board of Regents presentation. Olson also shared insights from a recent NIH conference, warning that cost extensions would likely be unavailable and spending scrutiny would increase. Hagen agreed that while official guidance was lacking, rapid use of existing funds was a prudent strategy. The discussion concluded with Mroz expressing gratitude for their hard work and hopes for a more stable working environment in the future.

3. Co-chair Election

Next, Mroz reminded members that his service as co-chair is ending in June. Prior to the meeting, members submitted nominations through a Google form. One nomination was received from Cliff Steer. The committee voted unanimously via Zoom poll to approve Steer as the co-chair with Julie Olson next year.

4. Committee Discussion

Following the co-chair election, Mroz opened the floor general discussion. Olson brought attention to the upcoming preliminary version of the University strategic plan mentioning that certain individuals may be asked to review and provide feedback, though it remains unclear if general input will be solicited. She emphasized the importance of health sciences contributing to the discussion, adding that the plan's expected approval by early fall leaves limited time for formal committee input. Mroz added his concerns about shared governance operations during summer months when committees are largely inactive, noting the challenges this poses in timely decision making. Tim Stratton shared news of his upcoming retirement in August after 21 years

of service at UMD. Conversation shifted to other topics including potential collaboration between St. Cloud and the Duluth campus, the impact on indigenous healthcare focus, and faculty apprehensions regarding evolving curriculum changes. Steer noted uncertainty surrounding the Fairview Medical School Agreement which has financial implications for the Department of Medicine.

5. Discussion with HS SCC Co-chairs

Next, Mroz welcomed Makayla Maher, a 4th year medical student and co-chair of the Health Sciences Student Consultative Committee (HS SCC). He invited Maher to provide an update on the issues and topics that the HS SCC has covered over the past year. Maher mentioned that the primary point of discussion was the hospital and its impact on their training, as well as the Medical School's relationship with the hospital. Other points included the school's designated space for relaxation and community building, curriculum changes, and the inclusion of satellite campuses.

Mroz provided updates from FACHS including the ongoing conversations between the administration, Fairview, and Essentia. He noted that the discussions were confidential due to the involvement of the Attorney General's Office. Donna Eull expressed concerns about clinical placements if the agreement with Fairview was not renewed, but mentioned that the deans were confident in continuing to work with Fairview regardless of the agreement. Maher inquired about contingency plans if the agreement was not reached. Mroz responded that there were no clear answers yet. Stratton added that pharmacy students had clinical sites at various locations including Essentia, St. Luke's, Allina, Walgreens, the VA, and the Indian Health Service, and would still have opportunities even if Fairview shut its doors.

The conversation also touched on the challenges faced by students on the Duluth campus in terms of representation on committees and participation in events. Maher highlighted the difficulties in ensuring equal participation and funding for students at campuses outside of the Twin Cities. Stratton mentioned that pharmacy students had events where Twin Cities students could visit Duluth, and suggested that collaboration with other health sciences groups could help address these challenges. Mroz thanked

Maher for joining the meeting and encouraged the HS SCC to reach out if they faced any challenges.

6. Adjournment

In closing, Steer expressed his gratitude for Mroz's leadership and looked forward to working with the committee in the coming year. Hearing no further business, Mroz adjourned the meeting.

Jaclyn Adair

University Senate Office