

UNO Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2024

Note: Secretary Chris Summa was not present, having traveled to Baton Rouge to attend, as a member of the public, the UL System Board Meeting. Summa submitted a question and read a statement authored by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) regarding FSEC concerns about the restructuring plan. In Summa's absence, Senator Jim Mokhiber (FSEC COLAEHD) took the following notes at the full Senate meeting, held the same day.

Attending: see below

FACULTY SENATE ROSTER / SIGN IN

		Representation	First	Last	Term	Committee	Sign In
1	1	Administration	N. Tina	Johnson	24-25		
2	1	Staff Council	Coleen	Maidlow	24-25		an
3	1	SG President	Joshua	Trochez	24-25		
4	1	Alumni Assoc	Dinah	Payne	24-25		
5	1	Adjunct	David	Lambour	24-25		
6	1	COBA	DJ	Min	24-25	D	
7	2	COBA	Cherie	Trumbach	24-27	SE, B.	
8	3	COBA	Greg	Price	23-26	C	
9	4	COBA	Randy	Kearns	22-25	D	
10	5	COBA	Kabir	Hassan	23-26	A	
11	1	COE	Ting	Wang	23-26	SE, D	
12	2	COE	Damon	Smith	24-27	B	
13	3	COE	Satish	Bastola	24-27	C	
14	1	COLAEHD	Juana	Ibáñez	24-27	B	
15	2	COLAEHD	Andrea	Mosterman (Pres)	24-27	SE, C	
16	3	COLAEHD	Ariya	Martin	22-25	A	
17	4	COLAEHD	Dan	Rule	22-25	B	
18	5	COLAEHD	Max	Krochmal	24-27	B	
19	6	COLAEHD	Brian	Beabout	23-26	A	
20	7	COLAEHD	David	Beriss	24-27	B	
21	8	COLAEHD	John	Kiefer	23-26	A	
22	9	COLAEHD	Roberto	Barrios	24-27	D	
23	10	COLAEHD	Marc	Landry	23-26	Gen Ed.	
24	11	COLAEHD	James	Mokhiber	24-27	SE, D	
25	12	COLAEHD	Michelle	Wade	23-26	A	
26	1	COS	David	Podgorski	24-27	SE, C	
27	2	COS	Phoebe	Zito	23-26	Gen Ed.	
28	3	COS	Steve	Rick	23-26	B	
29	4	COS	Simon	Lailvaux	23-26	D	
30	5	COS	Chris	Summa (Sec.)	23-26	SE, A	
31	6	COS	Rachel	Clostio	23-26	A	
32	1	Library	Connie	Phelps (VP)	24-27	SE, D	
33	2	Library	Lindsey	Reno	22-25	B	

KEY: **Bold** : Elected Senate Governance
Blue : Senate Executive Committee
Committees: A – Academic C – University Curriculum Committee (UCC)
B – Budget D – Administrative

Thursday, December 5, 2024

UNO Faculty Senate President Andrea Mosterman opened the meeting.

A motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes was seconded and approved by voice vote.

Library Issues/Book deaccessioning

Mosterman noted that concern had been expressed to the Senate regarding the discarding of texts by the library. She noted a statement by the UNO Library's Lora Amsberry-Augier regarding the ongoing deaccessioning project made more necessary by the need to make space for the transfer to the library of the Archeology Collection and Archives. Amsberry-Augier noted that the library is eliminating approximately 1/3 of the documents and journals on the second floor. Some journals are more than 30 years old. Use statistics are helping to guide this process, and many of these materials to be discarded are available via JSTOR.

Budget Meeting Update

Mosterman then noted that Upper Administration was in Baton Rouge presenting to the UL System Board. Tiffany Soublet, who had been scheduled to present on the budget, will come to a different Senate meeting. Mosterman noted that there would be an additional, previously unscheduled Senate meeting next Monday from 12:30-1:30 and expressed hope that senators would arrange to be present. At the time it seemed not worth seeking to reschedule this meeting. This an additional meeting not required to attend. Should have a calendar invite. Mosterman planned to provide the most recent budget information she had received.

Milneburg Hall Decommissioning

Mosterman then turned to the decommissioning of Milneburg Hall. She related that faculty, staff and students have continued to share concerns with her. She discussed these concerns with UNO President Kathy Johnson, who agreed to delay the move-out deadline to January 15. Mosterman acknowledged that concerns remained, and that there were still aspects unclear about the move but urged affected faculty to contact Mark Pyle.

General Updates

Mosterman then turned to the UNO Restructuring plan. She noted that the document that had been publicly shared was brief, totaling 2 pages. Few people on campus were aware a plan was being prepared for UL System consideration. She noted that it had been presented to the Administration's Executive Cabinet, which Mosterman attends as Senate President, with the provision that the restructuring remained secret until presented to and approved by the UL Board. After the Executive Cabinet meeting, Mosterman began to hear that word of the restructuring had already begun spreading. Mosterman contacted the president to note that such discussions were now underway within the UNO community and beyond.

Mosterman said President Johnson had expressed the hope that the restructuring would be seen as an effort to address the budget crisis with the least impact on faculty and students. For the Spring semester, no faculty are to be let go, and all scheduled classes will still be taught. Mosterman noted as background to the restructuring that the UL Board continues to see our university as “too top heavy.” How disruptive this restructuring will prove to be is unclear, and Mosterman expressed concern regarding the Administration’s lack of transparency and decision to not engage the Faculty Senate on the issue. If the Senate had been engaged in the spirit of shared governance, useful contributions might have been included in any plan taken to the UL System. Mosterman noted that the Administration claims that there will be an opportunity for faculty input, but it is unclear what this will look like at this point. Mosterman said that she had shared the information about restructuring with the SEC once it was up on the UL System’s website and public. The FSEC had together discussed the need to schedule an emergency meeting to determine a response.

Mosterman noted that the FSEC sent a statement to President Johnson yesterday; this Faculty Senate Executive Committee statement was shown to the full Senate. [See **FAC SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT**]. Mosterman noted that, on behalf of the FSEC, Chris Summa has gone to the UL System meeting to register our concerns, question the process and note the lack of faculty input.

Mosterman then opened up the restructuring issue for discussion by the full Senate.

FSEC member and Senator Ting Wang asked that the ULS comments by Chris Summa be shared more widely. FSEC member and Senator Cherie Trumbach noted that the College of Business has reached out to the UL System but is not clear if the inquiry had been received. Senator Juana Ibanez asked about the restructuring plan’s treatment of faculty and tenure.

Former Faculty Senate President Christy Corey noted that she is on the SACS Accreditation task force. Corey stressed that our 10-year extension ends in March, and that more disruptions at this point may well introduce problems with regard to accreditation. Years of preparation have gone into this process, with a report having been submitted in September. March is just around the corner. With UNO standing to lose staff from units like Payroll and more, who is going to meet with the evaluators? If we are placed on probation, it will be a bigger storm than Katrina for this university.

Discussion ensued regarding which departments are to be affected by the changes. Senators observed that the savings will reach even less than \$2million, as the Administration did not account for the costs of administrators who returned to the faculty. It appears that there will not be program eliminations. Mosterman noted that it is still not clear where the rest of the budget deficit will come from. Senators observed that it is hard to have confidence in leadership when they fail to communicate with us clearly. It is unclear what kind of collaboration is occurring even within the upper administration.

Senators discussed the place of Low Completer plans within the restructuring. Two deans in attendance at the Senate expressed the belief that Low Completers were a separate issue, and part of the general review of ongoing programs. The Senate should not read too much into that, they urged.

Senators noted that the restructuring will affect the continuing Workday problems, at least with regard to the designation of those who approve things within the system. Debbie Charrier indicated that she would seek to work with the deans on this.

Mosterman noted that there would be no changes to the UNO website. Everything is to remain the same.

Senator Marc Landry expressed concern regarding the speed with which these changes occurring. Was it truly unknown to the UL how bad the situation at UNO was? The UL System has a responsibility to be monitoring the situation. I would want to know what the System knew, or why it did not know. Why is this responsibility not being acknowledged by the System? Mosterman noted that she had brought up this point directly with UNO VP Edwin Litolff, but he had not provided a clear response.

Senator Max Krochmal thanked the FSEC for its action. He expressed concern with both the speed with which the restructuring was being proposed and the lack of shared governance behind it. The plan does not seem well conceived and should not have been created in secret. All are willing to make sacrifices, and some changes have to be implemented from the top, but only collaboration will make such plans successful. He expressed concern about the lack of information about the rest of the University budget, the lack of cuts to athletics, the Bernhard contract, the Arena, other auxiliary services and more. Instead, this is an attack on the academic mission of the university. Why was the Provost not addressing this? Vice President Edwin Litolff was hired without a search. How can we have confidence in the president and provost?

Senator and FSEC member Ting Wang asked if the restructured number of Colleges might affect accreditation. Former Senate President and Senator Steve Rick concurred with Max, but thought we should distinguish between aspects of the plan we can endorse and others we cannot.

Mosterman noted that the Provost was constrained from discussing the plan with the Senate until approval and the President's subsequent announcement. Mosterman noted that President Johnson envisions this as a potentially temporary change. Senators discussed whether this was feasible. Senators discussed the lack of clarity regarding the implementation of a new University College, as suggested in the restructuring plan.

Krochmal noted that there had been a request from a faculty colleague that he raise the issue of Executive Session to allow for free discussion.

Vice President Connie Phelps noted that it was important to keep the quorum for election purposes.

Tenure and the UL Board action

Mosterman then projected to the Senate the Termination language that had been submitted to the UL System. Senators noted that the changes included language regarding gross misconduct and whether advance notice was needed for non-renewal of faculty. This has to do with when notices go out. Senators noted that earlier this year people were given letters with termination dates. Senators discussed whether we could implement internal review dates, even if not required by the UL System. Senator Min noted that the text indicates that the language has already been reviewed by all nine institutions in the system. We should address questions to Chief Academic Officers such as the Provost. Senators agreed that through our subcommittees and FSEC we should urge the Provost to create internal deadlines for renewal.

Committee Updates

For the Budget Committee, Steve Rick noted that Max Krochmal would read a resolution on Shared Governance and budget issues. Senator and FSEC Member David Podgorski expressed concern that the budget breakdown was still unclear. Senator Randy Kearns noted that the College of Business did take a 15% hit. Senator Juana Ibanez introduced a motion to suspend the rules for the purposes of voting. Senator Beriss seconded and the motion was approved. Discussion on the resolution was opened. Senator Brian Beabout said the resolution outlines what should already be seen as standard practice. Ibanez moved to close discussion, and was seconded. The resolution was unanimously adopted. Mosterman indicated it would be sent to the President.

For the Academic Affairs Committee, Brian Beabout noted that the Committee had met with someone slated to be let go. He noted that the Senate and wider faculty need to begin to assume more authority for academic program review, to prepare for what may be to come.

For the Administrative Committee, Connie Phelps noted that it has a large number of entries in its docket. Key is the need for a 306-degree evaluation of the president. Phelps noted we have looked at policies and processes as posted online by other institutions. Phelps has created a spreadsheet, posted to Teams, summarizing such processes. Phelps noted that the Committee needs to meet to undertake this and other pressing matters, but that scheduling has proved challenging.

Elections

Mosterman noted that, due to her receipt of a one-semester sabbatical, Connie Phelps will move from Vice President to President. As a result, the Senate needs to elect someone to replace her as VP. There are two candidates for Vice President: Senator Roberto Barrios

and FSEC member and Senator Chris Summa. With Summa in Baton Rouge, Mosterman asked Barrios to speak.

Barrios noted that he had graduated from UNO and was troubled by the current situation. UNO is needed, as is the Faculty Senate. President Johnson has claimed she believes in shared governance, and while he personally likes the president and provost, Barrios feels that we should still be able to ask them difficult questions and not rubber stamp their actions.

Summa submitted a written statement regarding his candidacy. He noted he is currently in Baton Rouge to represent the Senate at the UL System Board. He detailed his personal background and aspects that have shaped his perspective and professional training. He stressed that he would represent all faculty as Vice President.

FSEC members Cherie Trumbach and James Mokhiber distributed ballots for the election. The votes were tabulated and confirmed by both, and Roberto Barrios was elected Vice President. Chris Summa will continue as a member of the FSEC.

UNO Compensation Discussion

Mosterman then raised the issue about faculty compensation at UNO. She noted that the President had raised the issue at an Executive Cabinet meeting, had projected a PowerPoint slide of a comparative table, and suggested that UNO salaries were slightly higher at other UL Schools. Mosterman countered at the EC meeting, and again before the full Senate, that Cost of Living had not been taken into account when comparing different universities and their cities or regions. She projected the President's slide and commented on it. When we make this kind of contextualized comparison, Mosterman noted, the real wages of UNO faculty are actually inferior to those of other faculty in the system.

Senator DJ Min, who had also been in attendance at the EC meeting, noted that it was important that we clarify differences between UNO and other institutions. Why did the Administration only compare faculty salaries? He was told it was because they are easier to compare between institutions than administrative salaries. Senators questioned why this would be the case. Min noted also that important nuances were missing from discussions of chair stipends, when contextualizing information about the size of department and more was clearly relevant.

Senator Greg Price urged the Senate to insist we use different benchmarks. If we are who we think we are, we should use AAUP salaries annually. UNO, he noted, is a public, Carnegie-designated R2 university, not Delgado or McNeese. Beriss noted that we have the Southern Regional Average, computed by the SREB, that we can reference. He noted that there are full professors being paid less than people were 20 years ago. Senator and FSEC member James Mokhiber noted that the FSEC had discussed calling for a full compensation study to shed light and provide more reliable data on such issues, but that some are concerned that a full study might be too big an ask given the urgency of the

current crisis. The need for a resolution to this effect was discussed, as well as the idea to present such concerns to VP Litolff.

The Senate entertained a motion to then go into Executive Session. There was 1 Abstention, with all remaining Senators in favor.

[End of Minutes]
