

MINUTES OF THE UNLV FACULTY SENATE

Date: 11/18/2025

Location: Student Union Room 208 B & C and via Zoom

Senators Present: Cheryl Abbate, Rabea Alhosh, Djeto Assane, Bobbie Barnes, Wolfgang Bein, Amanda Belarmino, Satish Bhatnagar, Tirth Bhatta, Sheila Bock, Monica Brown, Dan Bubb, Tim Bungum, Jaime Carbajal, Kaitlin Clinnin, Donovan Conley, Patience Crowder, Marni Dow, Nancy Esposito, Jorge Fonseca Cacho, Paul Forster, Kerie Francis, Gina Gamble, Patrick Griffis, Neamat Hassan, Isabel Herrera Pedro, Yvonne Houy, Alethea Inns, Lori Johnson, Tracy Johnson, Barry Kamen, Julian Kilker, Keoni Kins, Necole Leland, Scott Loe, Susanna Newbury, Michael Nussbaum, Rafael Oganessian, Neil Opfer, Jennifer Pfannes, Daniel Proga, Paysha Rhone, Bill Robinson, An-Pyng Sun, Alex Talonov, Jesse Taylor, Nicole Thomas, Craig Topple, Sue Wainscott, Dana Moran Williams, Monica Williams, Minnie Wood, Hassan Ziada

Senator Proxies: Patrick Griffis for Samantha Godbey; Dana Moran Williams for Jason Hortin; Minnie Wood for Margarita Jara; Bill Leavitt for Mahzarine Irani Rohani, Rabea Alhosh for Jill Humphrey

Senators Absent: Honghui Deng, Zhonghai Ding, Jordan Fischette, Taro Ito, Macario Llamas, Tracy Spies

Executive Committee Leadership Present: Debbie Arteaga, Michael Kagan, Maria Roberts

Ex-Officio Present: Lorena Giese, Nic Irwin, Kate Korgan, Devin Lopez

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Roberts at 12:04 p.m.

II. Public Comment

- Past Chair Arteaga: I want to congratulate our Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Maria Roberts, for having the foresight to close the second half of the Faculty Senate meeting last month. I've been on the Faculty Senate for some years, and I have never heard such robust participation. Faculty senators spoke non-stop for one hour and 15 minutes, and I think the discussion could have gone on longer. This is markedly different from discussion in the open segment of the meeting. Senators clearly felt that they could share their opinions in a safe space in the closed meetings. Once again, and this is important, all our sister institutions have completely closed Faculty Senate meetings, because they and their administrators value free and open discourse among senators. At UNR, President Sandoval is an ex-officio member of the UNR Faculty Senate, yet he only attends Faculty Senate meetings when invited. He speaks first, and then he leaves, again, valuing free speech among senators. For those who would say that Faculty Senate closed meetings are adversarial, I would ask why this isn't the opinion of administrators at our sister institutions. For those who would say that we should speak our minds in an open meeting, I again go back to the discussion. If senators truly felt that they could speak their minds with impunity in the open meeting, then they would have participated equally in the open session, which they did not. Again, kudos to Chair Roberts, who has decided to continue closed meetings for the second half of our Faculty Senate meetings for the rest of her term. Her decision will ensure vigorous debate and discussion for senators, which is essential for the senate to fulfill its mission.
- Sue Wainscott, Nevada Faculty Alliance: The UNLV chapter of the Nevada Faculty Alliance's executive committee has watched the public dialog between Senate and the UNLV Administration about free speech and academic freedom with great interest. As this body holds additional discussions with Interim President Heavey today, we ask everyone to consider that one remedy for distrust and uncertainty is due process, such as that afforded by the Grievance Committee and the Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee. We urge Senators and colleagues to review and ensure that these and similar processes are robust, timely, and easily available to employees and students.
- Senator Bubb: I have some positive news. During the government shutdown through the university's efforts, I was able to distribute seven large boxes of food to Harry Reid Airport for Air Traffic Controllers and TSA Agents who were not receiving paychecks. I got a chance to see the room in which they were storing the food. Even though I couldn't take a picture, if you can imagine this entire room filled with food going up two-thirds of the wall - that's how much food was donated to the airport. It was truly heartwarming to see our community come together in times of need.
- Senator Fonseca Cacho: I want to speak today about the proposed change to reduce the inventor's share of net

intellectual property income down from what is now 60% to 40%. This is not a minor update; it's a major point of debate about how we value innovation at UNLV. For those of you who don't know who I am, I work in the College of Engineering, and many of my colleagues voiced strong opposition to this. Even under the current 60%, faculty often feel the commercialization process is a heavy lift and cutting that share to 40% sends a clear signal that the value of the inventor is being diminished. To be honest, the argument that other universities only give 40% as a standard, is not very accurate. Stanford returns about 60%. University of Washington gives 62.5%. Toronto gives 60%. UT Austin returns roughly around 50%. At the top of the spectrum, Yale returns the most if you include what goes back to the unit. These examples matter because they show that the national landscape is not some race to get to 40%. Many institutions maintain this higher incentive or use tiered models. This decision is within NSHE, not UNLV. I would like all of you to reach out to your constituents and ask them to voice their concerns at the Board of Regents in December by submitting a public comment. This is not just about percentages; this is about the future of research culture at UNLV.

- Senator Opfer: I have been on the Senate for several years. I would encourage us to have open meetings most of the time. I realize that there are limited times where we want to have a very free and open discussion and people are concerned with retaliation. However, I think it's a positive when we have administrative members and students present to hear our exchanges. I served two terms in the Faculty Senate when I was a student at Washington State University, and it was a valuable experience for me. It's also good to have direct administrative feedback on faculty concerns. In my opinion, the administration is agreeable and supportive to what we as the faculty are trying to accomplish. As I said, I'm not against closing meetings in limited circumstances, but I would prefer that those circumstances be very limited.

III. Minutes of the October 14, 2025 meeting

Approved with no changes.

IV. Freedom of Speech

President Heavey addressed freedom of speech and academic freedom concerns:

- I appreciate the chance to speak about this important concept that's a bedrock of the university and to clarify any misunderstandings that may have originated from the communications we've sent out.
- This is a challenging moment, and I felt it would be valuable to reaffirm our commitment to the free speech and academic freedom rights of the faculty and staff of UNLV. We're not trying to make policy or introduce anything new. We're trying to tell people, at this charged moment, we have your backs. We believe in the value of the faculty and the importance of academic freedom and free speech rights.
- We did share a draft of the first message with some of the Faculty Senate leadership, and they felt it was generally okay. Once the message came out, there was some concern that there was some wording that suggested something new was trying to be communicated. It was valuable to hear Professor Kagan's perspective as an attorney on how the message was understood by some.
- A request was made to send out a second message clarifying that using the word "political" in the prior message was not meant to signal that there was something else afoot in terms of what would impact free speech rights. Professor Kagan rightly pointed out that many things that happen in universities could be considered political and within the realm of academic freedom.
- After talking with UNLV's legal counsel, our second message used the term "partisan speech" and added language on creating an inclusive environment. While we all have free speech rights, it is important to consider how personal speech may impact how you are seen in the university environment. Just yesterday during my listening session, a student stated that he got into a political argument with a professor during a math class and due to the uncomfortable environment decided to withdraw from the course.
- We work together in this space, and when people say highly charged things in their personal communications, that is within their free speech rights, and we will not sanction people for that. A faculty member can say whatever they want on their personal Facebook page. However, I might e-mail and say, "I'm getting complaints about what you put there. Would you consider the possibility of changing that so that your students who are seeing this message do not feel uncomfortable in your class?"
- The second message where I started with the words, "We're reaffirming your rights to free speech and your academic freedom" was intended to reassure you. We're trying to tell you that in this environment, we will not be doing some of the things that have been seen at other campuses around the country where people have been fired and things have gone very astray from the, I think, bedrock principles we believe in related to academic freedom and free speech. But I understand that there's different ways to understand the language, and it's a challenging thing.

Questions/Comments:

- Senator Robinson: There are continued problems with DRAM. The Lee Business School is the fastest growing college on campus and we only received two positions, and we are down several. The “M” in DRAM stands for model and I would love to see how the model is supposed to work. We should have received an increase in faculty commensurate with our student numbers. How can we get the faculty members in place to effectively serve our students?
 - President Heavey: These are legitimate questions. The Provost oversees the DRAM model. I would like Skip Crooker and Provost Korgan to speak on this showing the DRAM dashboard, numbers, and how positions were allocated.
 - Senator Nussbaum: We are losing faculty members due to retirements. I want to echo the same sentiments as Senator Robinson. We also don’t have a lot of confidence with the DRAM process.
- Professor Irwin: I'm looking for some clarity on the new policy that came down about presence on campus, because we've been told to incorporate it into evaluations.
 - President Heavey: This is a topic that we have been discussing for two to three years. It goes back to the expectation that faculty are needed on-campus to attend events, participate in department meetings, complete service, and teach in-person when requested. Unless you have a specific contract stating a remote status, faculty are expected to have an active presence on-campus.
- Senator Griffis: I have a question from the library staff. In the e-mail, it mentions employees shall not engage in partisan political activities during work hours. What does activities mean?
 - President Heavey: For example, it would be deemed inappropriate and in violation of NSHE policy for you to knock on all your neighbors' doors and ask them to vote for a particular candidate in an election race. That would be partisan political activity where you're trying to promote a particular issue during work hours.
- Senator Oganessian: What is the process when a faculty member engages in political activities within the classroom when it is not part of the curriculum?
 - President Heavey: It would go through the normal administrative channels. In the incident I spoke of, the student dropped the class without going through channels, so we did not obtain the faculty member's name.
 - Senator Oganessian: Does this apply to faculty speaking events outside of the university?
 - President Heavey: Faculty members do have academic freedom rights that I strongly defend. When the faculty members go outside of the classroom, it is a bit ambiguous. A faculty member can say what they want if it is not during work hours.

V. December 6 Memorial Committee Update

Sarah Quigley, December 6 Memorial Committee Member, provided the following updates:

- For the last two years, we have been working on a permanent memorial. As we knew the permanent memorial would take time, we placed the murals on the outside walls of Beam Hall to commemorate the first anniversary.
- We want to both honor the individuals as well as offer peaceful contemplation.
- We are working with an architecture firm for a healing garden. We provided open forums as well as surveys to obtain campus community feedback.
- Three designs were provided. In June, the final selection was made and approved by President Heavey.
- Planning and Construction are doing cost estimates this semester. The architecture did a great job of including our feedback. There will be memorial markers and seating with lots of vegetation native to the victims’ countries of origin.
- We will be revealing the renderings during our December 6 Memorial Event this year with an e-mail following the week of December 8th.

Questions/Comments:

- Senator Opfer: What are we looking at with costs?
 - Sarah Quigley: Don’t quote me, but I believe it is about \$2 million. We are working with the UNLV Foundation for fundraising.
- Senator Robinson: Your original charge was also to look at what to do with the three offices. Is that still the case?
 - Sarah Quigley: Not to my knowledge.
- Past Chair Arteaga: I lost a dear colleague, and I appreciate the committee’s work.
- Senator Clinnin: It is typical to provide more broad feedback for these types of memorials. Why did that not occur?
 - Sarah Quigley: We included community feedback upfront so it could be incorporated in the design from the beginning.

VI. Academic Calendar

Dr. Sam Fugazzotto, Registrar, provided full calendars for 2026 and 2027 and abbreviated calendars through 2031. There were no changes to calendar patterns or structure; only the dates changed.

Questions and Discussion:

- Senator Fonseca Cacho: How do holidays like Veterans Day affect contract hours?
 - Dr. Fugazzotto: We don't account for this during the regular semester. In the shortened time frame of summer, we do account for it.

Motion to Approve academic calendars: Senator Thomas; Second: Senator Opfer.

Motion Approved.

VII. Chair's Report

Chair Roberts provided the following updates:

- DRAM has been completed, and deans have been notified. Please reach out to your dean for information on your unit's allocation.
- Faculty-in-Residence contracts approved at the previous meeting are now complete and finalized.
- There will be an e-mail going out from the President, Provost, and Faculty Senate with the process for by-laws distribution and instructions for how to use the templates. College templates will be completed first, then department templates.
- There is a salary schedule being proposed in the December Board of Regents meeting. Every four years, the Board of Regents conducts a salary comparison to determine if Nevada institutions of higher education are on par with other universities of the same ranking (R1 institutions). The salary schedule includes minimum salary based on rank, multiple columns for different levels and ranks, and range from lowest to highest within each category. Overall, UNLV is well-represented in salary comparisons with most salaries above minimum thresholds. The small number of faculty below minimum will be addressed immediately. The issue was raised about mobility within salary ranges. When hired at a certain level with percentage-based increases (cost of living or across-the-board raises), faculty remain at the same relative position in the range. What opportunities exist for faculty who start at the bottom range to move up to the higher range? If the Board of Regents approves, the new salary schedule takes effect July 2026.
- There was an information session to discuss insurance rates. Discussion also included consideration of reducing the number of plans due to a discrepancy in services and service usage that may go to the Board of Regents in December for consideration. Be sure to keep an eye out regarding any possible changes to the plan.
- Please keep track of what your colleges are doing to improve campus culture so that we can have an idea of what is happening on-campus.

Questions and Discussions

- Past Chair Arteaga: Are they saying if we use our insurance, it is a bad thing? It seems absurd.
- Senator Wood: Generally, when we are looking at combining someone's benefits are changing. We need to be alert of how this will change insurance plans.
- Senator Proga: Insurance companies are for-profit, so it sounds like they want to maximize profits.
- Senator Robinson: We have three plans for a reason. Each plan benefits employees with specific issues. For example, higher deductible plans are good for younger employees with no children or health issues where an HMO is better for individuals with children or health issues.
- Professor Irwin: We have a health economist in the Lee Business School who is an expert in this space. Perhaps invite her to a future meeting.

VIII. Public Comment

- Dr. Bunker: I realize that I am in a small minority, but I showed up for meetings before I served on the Faculty Senate. I think there is a lot of value in encouraging people to attend to hear our debate. It is also good for individuals outside of the Faculty Senate to hear the full range of discussions that are happening.
- Senator Ogan: I would like to echo that comment. What matters is optics. If we continue to have the closed-door meetings, there's this optic that decisions and discussions are done in isolation.
- Senator Robinson: I also agree. Last month, we were talking about volatile situations and I understand concerns about retaliation, so it made sense to have a closed-door meeting, and it worked out well. I think the items for this meeting are non-controversial and should be in an open session.
- Professor Nowak: How would you like your three-credit courses to switch from meeting three hours each week to six hours, and how excited would you be if that decision wasn't determined by a faculty vote in your department but by a directive from upper administration? I am an Associate Professor of Architecture and member of the Faculty Senate ad-hoc committee focused on workload policy over the past two years, and that is essentially what happened in the School of Architecture in 2022 without formal approvals in course or program changes. Some,

but not all faculty, are assigned to teach design studios that are six credits and those courses meet for 11 hours each week. That is in addition to another three-credit seminar to fulfill our nine credits of teaching load each semester for a total in-class teaching of 14-15 hours each week. The school, which does not contain a Ph.D. program, emphasizes education leading to professional licensure, and these teaching loads pull faculty resources from research. Colleagues who do not recognize the disparity between teaching-intensive faculty and research faculty evaluate notable studio professors like myself as having not achieved a vague level of research that is neither codified nor measurable. Part-time instructors who are hired to teach these 6-credit courses have been paid not by credit load but by contact time. The same cannot be said of those tenured and tenure-track colleagues. Within each academic year, these studio faculty work a total of one entire month of 40-hour weeks more than colleagues who do not teach studios. The primary issue is not simply about workload policy, but recognizing that inequitable workloads without simultaneously addressing inequitable tenure and promotion criteria for these variable workloads create a system that allows for the persecution of certain faculty. Other architectural programs across the country do teach longer studios, but their faculty do not teach nine credits every semester. There is also a level of collegiality and understanding of those professional roles that is much harder to find here. Most concerning is the fact that not all of my full professor colleagues adhere to their assigned studio teaching, essentially cancelling two out of their three teaching days each week which further exacerbates the inequities for both faculty and students. Thank you for carefully considering these points in your upcoming discussions on workload policy as it is my opinion that these practices from my academic unit (and perhaps other areas on campus) open the University to significant liability.

Closed Session Began at 1:13 p.m.

IX. Workload By-laws Discussion and Vote

Summary of Discussion Points

- Board of Regents baseline for workload per the handbook is as follows:
 - 5-5 teaching load baseline
 - 4-4 with service obligations
 - 3-3 with research expectations (tenure-track assumption)
 - 2-2 with significant research activity (requires upper-level approval)
 - Below 2-2 requires special approvals
- Three-tier workload policy approach needed:
 - University level: General framework, cannot be too specific or it becomes restrictive at college level
 - College level: Less general, specific to college needs and disciplines
 - Department level: Very specific expectations and requirements
- Faculty-driven process: Regents' handbook mandates workload policy starts with faculty of each unit, not administrators. It is "faculty up," not "dean down" or "chair down."
- The proposed policy defines the FIR workload as 80% teaching and 20% service. A concern expressed was that this does not reflect the reality that many FIRs also engage in research.
- A concern was expressed that if the policy is approved, it may override existing faculty contracts in specific colleges.
- The lack of a policy has led to inconsistencies and increased workloads across the university. A university-level policy, even if imperfect, is needed to allow colleges to move forward and make their own workload decisions.
- It was noted that workload is often perceived as punitive at UNLV.
- A point was raised about the effectiveness of external funding and a campus culture concern about accountability, contrasting some faculty who are heavily engaged with others who are perceived as being non-present.

Motion to Amend sections 4.4.1 (second paragraph), 4.7 (second paragraph), and footnote 8 deleting Nursing. Seconded

Discussion

- What is the rationale?
 - The other professional practice schools have funding that ties in and supports the workload. Nursing does not have an established practice plan.

Motion Approved

Motion to Amend 4.7 (second paragraph) adding research and creative activities. Seconded.

Motion Approved

Motion to Amend Figure 2 changing "doctorate-level involvement" to "terminal graduate degree involvement". Seconded.

Discussion

- Since we have forms that have significant doctoral involvement, should we add versus delete so as not to impact existing processes.

Motion Approved

Motion to approve Workload Policy amending to add creative activities everywhere research is included within the document. Seconded.

Motion Approved

X. Sense of the Senate Opposing the U.S. Department of Education “Compact” on Higher Education

Member: During the December meeting, I will be discussing a Sense of the Senate opposing the “compact”. The proposed Sense of the Senate will be e-mailed to Senators this afternoon.

XI. New Business

- Request for the President/Provost to forward the policy outlining requirements for faculty on-campus presence.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Bobbie Barnes, Secretary