MINUTES OF THE UNLV FACULTY SENATE
Date: 01/20/2026
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, Dan Bubb, Tim Bungum, Jaime Carbajal, Donovan Conley, Patience Crowder, Honghui Deng, Zhonghai Ding, Marni Dow, Nancy Esposito, Jordan Fischette, Jorge Fonseca Cacho, Paul Forster, Kerie Francis, Gina Gamble, Patrick Griffis, Neamat Hassan, Isabel Herrera Pedro, Yvonne Houy, Jill Humphrey, Alethea Inns, Margarita Jara, Lori Johnson, Tracy Johnson, Barry Kamen, Julian Kilker, Necole Leland, Scott Loe, Gilberto Murillo, Susanna Newbury, Michael Nussbaum, Rafael Oganesyan, Neil Opfer, Jennifer Pfannes, Paysha Rhone, Bill Robinson, An-Pyng Sun, Jesse Taylor, Nicole Thomas, Craig Topple, Sue Wainscott, Dana Moran Williams, Monica Williams, Minnie Wood, Hassan Ziada

Senator Proxies: Sheila Bock for Kaitlin Clinnin; Patrick Griffis for Samantha Godbey; Yvonne Houy for Jason Hortin, Paul Forster for Daniel Proga; Bill Leavitt for Mahzarine Irani Rohani

Senators Absent: Monica Brown, Taro Ito, Keoni Kins, Tracy Spies, Alex Talonov

Executive Committee Leadership Present: Michael Kagan, Maria Roberts

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

I. Call to Order
Meeting called to order by Chair Roberts at 12:01 p.m.

II. Public Comment
- Doug Unger, Professor and Immediate Past President of the Nevada Faculty Alliance: I'd like to join Bill Robinson in honoring the passing of Dr. John Filler. As I recall, the term "Lion of the Senate" first entered our shared language as a description specifically for Senator Filler, and he certainly earned this distinguished title for his many years of service along with the way he actually did roar in support of faculty issues and faculty governance. He did a lot for us all. Requiescat in Pace.

  I'm also here to alert the Senate and UNLV faculty to the new proposed plan designs from our PEBP Board that governs our health insurance. At the meeting I just came out of today, there is a proposed increase to employee premiums of 84% for next year, nearly doubling our monthly outlays. Already approved by PEBP is an increase of $1,000 in out-of-pocket maximums per year for individuals and $2,000 for families, and these high maximums also might go up. The reason is a combination of increasing cost trends and a serious shortfall in plan reserves that need to catch up that employee advocates, including me, have been raising alarms about for the past three years. These proposed increases will cause a financial shock to our lower income tier faculty and staff, especially the about 7% who suffer acute medical issues or chronic illnesses. What employee advocates recommend is very strong public responses, including from NSHE faculty and staff, to ask for more gradual, measured increases in premiums combined with an increased employer cost-share from the state. The PEBP Board will meet again to finalize next year's plan design on Wednesday, February 18, at 1 p.m. I hope the Faculty Senate can help organize a solid response to these unacceptable proposed increases. Also, right now, the costs and benefits of our three choices of plans are not equitable. The CDHP plan is subsidizing the LDPPO plan, and premium costs for families across all our plans are high compared to plans available to state employees in 12 other states in the western region. These issues also need to be addressed.

  More generally, I hope this Senate considers a future agenda item to designate a faculty representative to PEBP who will attend board meetings, report to the Faculty Senate, and recommend faculty responses and actions, as a PEBP representative by this body is urgently needed. Serious changes to our health plans and plan administrations are surely coming. An effective employee advocate representing this Senate could save our faculty and staff time, hassle, and money. Employee advocates are effective in influencing PEBP decisions. Our faculty should have a strong contributor to this advocacy.

III. Minutes of the December 9, 2025 meeting
Motion to Approve: Senator Opfer; Second: Senator Leland
Unanimous verbal approval with no changes.

IV. In Memoriam for John Filler
Senator Robinson provided a tribute to Dr. John Filler, former Faculty Senate Chair, who passed away on January 3, 2026.

V. ADA Title II Compliance
Bryan Hilbert, Director of the Disability Resource Center, Bob Soulliere, Assistant Vice President for Digital Services and Solutions, and Rex Suba, Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources, presented on required accessibility updates for all instruction content.

- We currently work with over 2,000 students with disabilities making these updates even more critical. There are hundreds of thousands of documents on campus that are not accessible.
- We are currently using the Ally score to determine the accessibility of a WebCampus class. It is important that you don't by-pass WebCampus (i.e. - using Google Drive) as all documents need to be accessible.
- ADA Title II prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities by state and local governments, ensuring they have equal access to all public programs, services, and activities, including education, transportation, and courts, and mandates digital accessibility to WCAG 2.1 AA standards by 2026/2027 for physical and digital spaces. Public entities must make reasonable modifications to policies and provide effective communication unless it poses an undue burden, covering everything from accessible buildings to online course materials. Below are specifics on the requirements.
    - Digital Accessibility: Mandates that all online information and services from state/local governments must be usable by people with disabilities, aligning with existing ADA non-discrimination principles.
    - Specific Standards: Sets WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the technical benchmark for accessibility, covering aspects like captions for videos, proper labeling for screen readers, and keyboard navigation.
    - Who's Affected: Applies to public entities like city/state governments, public transit, universities, and services provided by third parties.
    - What's Covered: Websites, web apps, mobile apps, e-learning, PDFs, videos, and other digital materials. This applies to syllabi, PDFs, slides, videos, LMS content, and more.
    - Key Deadlines:
        - April 24, 2026: For state/local governments with 50,000 + people.
        - April 26, 2027: For smaller entities (under 50,000 population) and special districts.
    - What Needs to Happen:
        - Audit and Improve: Identify inaccessible content (PDFs are a big focus) and remediate it.
        - Proactive Design: New content must be made accessible from the start.
        - Training & Policies: Implement processes to ensure ongoing compliance and monitor vendor accessibility.
- Faculty Action Items:
    - Review and update active teaching materials
    - Use accessible formats (e.g., tagged PDFs, captioned videos)
    - Avoid scanned or image-only documents
    - Ensure LMS content (including content from faculty websites, Google Drive, etc., distributed by email) is screen-reader friendly
    - Archive-Eligible Documents - A document is archive-eligible if:
        - Created before April 2026
        - Not actively used in instruction or advising
        - Clearly labeled as archived
        - Includes a contact for accessibility support
        - Items that qualify include: (1) syllabi from past semesters not in use, (2) lecture notes from retired courses, (3) historical memos not referenced in current operations (note: If reused, these must be updated for accessibility)
- Support/Resources
    - The UNLV of Accessibility Resources offers training sessions, templates and tools, and course material audits.
    - Contact the Office of Accessibility Resources at accessibilityresourceteam-request@unlv.edu for support resources and assistance.

Questions/Comments

- Senator Opfer: (1) UNLV has 30,000+ students. Would we fall under 50,000 or over 50,000 group? (2) We have been using Canvas, but you mentioned another technology.
    - Rex Suba: (1) When calculating the number, public reach is also a factor. As such, we are considered 50,000+.
    - Rex Suba: We use Ally Blackboard technology.
- Doug Unger: Will you be looking at past courses for inaccessible content?
    - Rex Suba: We are not going to be looking at anything older than 2026 content.
    - Bryan Hilbert: This becomes an issue when you copy over an old Canvas course
- Doug Unger: What is the policy on printed copies?
    - Rex Suba: Our office may have to use our resources to make it accessible. We are focused on digital content.
- Senator Houy: Thank you as accessibility is important and your on-going support is deeply appreciated. With the deadline only three months out, it may be difficult for faculty to meet this deadline. What communications will be sent to faculty moving forward? For future deadlines, can we have the information earlier?
    - Rex Suba: We have monthly Rebel Accessibility Heroes, and our current training schedule is shared through UNLV Today. Faculty are encouraged to reach out with concerns about their Ally scores.
- Senator Barnes: What Ally percentage score is considered acceptable?
    - Rex Suba: Everything should be accessible. With that being said, we are striving for an Ally score of 85% or higher.

VI. Chair's Report

Chair Roberts provided the following updates:

A. Increase in Tuition and Fees: This is an item that is coming up at the Board of Regent meeting. Provost Korgan will be presenting information and during our closed session we will discuss how we plan to support.
B. Vice President for Health Affairs & Dean of Medicine Search: We need two senators to serve on this important search.
    - Senator Hassan and Senator Esposito volunteered to serve on this search committee.
C. Bylaws will be voted on the week of the January 26th. Additional information will be sent.
D. Chapter 1, Section 2.1 - Academic Policy - Not Approved: The President and Provost are not willing to sign off on the proposed policy as UNLV General Counsel felt that the statement was too broad. We are planning to meet to discuss verbiage.

VII. Increase in Tuition and Fees

Provost Korgan provided the following information regarding the proposed tuition and fees increases.

- Enrollment is at its highest point in UNLV's history with 30,434 students enrolled. In addition, UNLV received again the Carnegie designation. We have a lot to be proud of!
- In 2024 - 2025, we benefited from a 23% cumulative increase in salaries which allowed us to be nationally competitive at an R1 level. The discussion today is a continuation as we need to cover the 35% of the salary increase cost not funded by the state at an amount of approximately $12 million.
- State appropriations currently cover 65% of state-received dollars, while student tuition and fees cover roughly 35%.
- The Board of Regents is considering a student fee increase to bridge the unfunded COLA gap.
- While every year sees a standard fee increase based on the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), this proposal would exceed the predictable pricing model for the next four years (year one = 3%, year two = 4%, and year three = 5%) in addition to the HEPI increases.
- Even with the proposed increases, the university's tuition would remain among the lowest in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).
- Approximately 16% of students (those receiving no financial aid or specific scholarships like Millennium) would feel the most direct impact of the hike.
- If the fee increases do not pass, the administration will be forced to have tough conversations regarding operating budgets and organizational restructuring. Calculations suggest the gap is equivalent to roughly 37 full-time instructional positions, though there are currently no formal plans for cuts.
- 15% of tuition dollars are designated for access that are issued for financial need (80%) or merit-based (20%) for undergraduate and 50/50 for graduate students. If we reduce this percentage, it will directly impact the student support we are able to offer. There is a proposal to potentially lower the mandated access fund floor (currently 15% of tuition) to 10%, which would allow the university to reallocate those funds, but might hurt the most at-need students.

Questions/Comments

- Senator Robinson: The idea that we didn't know we had a problem is just not correct. I've been going to these Board of Regents meetings for a long time now, and the truth is we haven't done anything over the years to right-size colleges where enrollments have been falling. I don't hear anyone talking about drastic measures like the Hotel College moving into the Business School eliminating college leadership. We keep hearing that no positions have been taken away from any colleges, yet we have departments with fewer students where we just continue to hire even though there's no money across the system. The faculty, staff, and students aren't the ones responsible for creating this crisis, so what are the consequences for senior administration not acting for all this time? If you look at the common data set reports for degree-seeking undergraduates in 2024, it's clear: our international students are the ones who are going to get hit the hardest by this fee increase. Between that and the way we handle out-of-state fee waivers, the whole fee situation is just a mess.
    - Provost Korgan: There is a lot of truth in that account. The structural foundational challenges have been in discussion for many years with the COLA increases exasperating the issue. We can dig more into the numbers and can look into reorganization. If the student fees are not passed, we will need to have these conversations. I can tell you that combining a couple of dean's offices will not get us to the $12 million mark. Our perspective is that if the tuition increase was so significant that it would put UNLV beyond the middle range of tuition, we would reevaluate. The total a student would pay is $1,704 more. It is more money, but we need to put it in perspective. Only about 16% would pay this high amount as most of our students have Pell, Millenium, and other scholarships. We estimate that 23% of students would have no impact. The remainder of students would have cost between $0 and $1,704.
        - Senator Robinson: This is in addition to HEPI, correct?
            - Provost Korgan: This amount is adding the HEPI and the proposed increase.
- Senator Esposito: The bottom-line is the principal. It seems that we turn to students when there is a budget shortfall. I would like to see how we could delay construction of an academic building or look at ways we can cut administrative budgets. It seems there is a historical trend to handle the short fall through increasing student costs.
    - Provost Korgan. I have a different perspective. Every day we look at ways to reduce our budget. I look to see how we are staffed/funded in comparison to our peers. Across the board, we are well below the national average. We do remarkable things being resourced at the level we currently are at. We also look at budgets. An example is a new purchasing system that has saved us $1 million this year and DRAM which strategically allocates positions.
- Senator Sun: When was the last time we increased student tuition?
    - Senator Robinson: Tuition goes up every year based on the HEPI increase. Board of Regents approved a 2.9% increase in addition to HEPI in 2026.
- Senator Topple: The former Summer Term Department generated $10 to $12 million per year. Now that it has migrated to the Office of the Registrar, do we continue to benefit from self-supporting funds? We have also talked about a winter break option, which would provide additional self-supporting funds.
    - Provost Korgan: We reorganized for efficiency, with no other changes made. Due to a Faculty Senate vote, we don't currently have the option of having winter break instruction.
- Senator Online: Would a lower income student pay more?
    - Provost Korgan: For the 23% of students who are Pell eligible, they would pay slightly more in tens of dollars. If access is reduced, there would be a significantly impact to low-income students.
- Kelechi Odunze, CSUN President: We understand that there is a gap that needs to be filled. We are always punching down to students versus punching up to the legislature. We need to work better with the legislature to provide funding for NSHE. The governor wanted to provide funding, but it was not approved by the legislature. We always seem to put it on students and students are over it. CSUN representing the 27,000 undergraduate students at UNLV did write a resolution opposing this tuition increase. There a lot of data points saying that we won't see decrease in enrollments, but I don't believe that will be the case.
- Senator Oganesyan: If this passes, how do we prevent this from happening again two to three years down the road?
    - Provost: The COLAs were supported with an understanding that it will be funded by the state. We will have these conversations again if we have decline in enrollments. These will be different conversations. We have a strong Government Relations Office, and we are working with NSHE for the 2027 legislative session. We welcome the Faculty Senate's partnership.

Closed Session Began at 1:31 p.m.

VIII. Special Board of Regents Meeting Item #5 – Faculty Senate Response to Increase in Tuition and Fees for Academic Years 26, 27-28, and 28-29: Discussion and Vote

The following information was provided for the proposed statement that will be read by Chair Roberts at the January 23 Board of Regents Meeting:

- We are taking advantage of the delayed Board of Regents meeting to align our feedback. While the President and Provost remain uncertain about the results of the increased student fees proposal, our dialogue today will allow Chair Roberts to speak decisively for the Senate.
- Undergraduates have voiced objections to the funding structure, stating that the burden should be placed on the legislature. To address the Provost's focus on affordability, our proposed statement supports the tuition increases only on the strict condition that financial aid remains fully intact.

"The UNLV Faculty Senate supports a Board of Regents decision to raise student fees incrementally for a total of 12% over three years, recognizing that that if the raise is not approved the resulting operations budget will cut 50 to 80 faculty positions at UNLV. Our support is with the understanding that the increase of revenue from fees will proportionally increase the 15% access funds which are used to support our students in the most need. It is also with the understanding that administrative hiring and salary increases receive that same level of urgent purview, restraint, and accountability that is being demanded of students and academic units. We do not believe we should be pitting students against faculty, while administration continues to grow and siphon off huge salaries from our budget.

Our actions today stem from our desire to support our students after the Nevada legislature cut our funding from 80% to 64% with a clear understanding that this would mean heavy student increases. The legislative action forced us into an untenable situation.

To summarize, we only support fee increases if one - they do not result in additional executive positions or raises, and two - they are used for student success and for faculty positions."

Summary of Discussion Points

- Significant frustrations and confusion over the state's rationale for not providing adequate funding, especially since even 80% funding would still leave a deficit.
- Suggestion to reframe the argument to the Legislature that funding higher education is not just an expense, but an essential investment in Nevada's economic future.
- Consensus that the relationship between the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and elected officials is strained, meaning the institution cannot solely rely on NSHE to advocate effectively.
- There is deep concern for students, particularly undocumented students who are ineligible for Pell Grants and will bear the full weight of tuition increases. Discussion noted that tuition hikes are happening alongside rising costs for housing and food, creating an unsustainable burden for students working low-wage jobs.
- The current process is described as rushed and top-down, contrasting it with previous years where year-long committees and diverse representation were used to plan increases.
- Critics argue that the administration has failed to address budget issues for years, continuing to hire faculty and staff despite known deficits.
- There is a call to distinguish between administrative faculty, who are viewed as valuable, and senior leadership (deans and above), where participants feel cuts should be focused.
- Approving an 11% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) without secured funding is viewed by some as bad behavior by the Regents and a primary driver of the current crisis.
- Expressed concern that there has been no formal research or due diligence regarding how these increases will impact future enrollment.
- Graduate students are in a particularly difficult position; while they worry about tuition, they also fear that if increases aren't passed, faculty cuts will directly impact their education and Graduate Assistant (GA) roles.

Motion to:

- Endorse student opposition
- Conduct a study analyzing the student impact for students and on enrollment
- Make cuts first to senior leadership roles
- Involve students, faculty, and staff in collaborative discussions

Summary of Discussion Points:

- Concern expressed that by making the statement we are potentially voting on firing colleagues.
- Working with senior leadership is needed (i.e. - dividing us is not a solution).

Motion to amend removing point #3 regarding cuts to senior leadership roles.
Motion Not Approved.

- Motion to Approve first statement:
    - Endorse student opposition
    - Study analyzing the student impact for students and on enrollment
    - First cuts are made to senior leadership roles
    - Involve students, faculty, and staff in collaborative discussions

Motion Approved.

IX. Essential Functions of Faculty - Moved to February Meeting

X. Annual Evaluations of Supervisors - Moved to February Meeting

XI. Faculty Climate Survey - Moved to February Meeting

XII. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Bobbie Barnes, Secretary