



Faculty Senate

Steering Committee

Minutes for meeting of Thursday, March 12, 2026, 3:00 pm

Location: In person in the Charge on Chamber, Student Union Room 340

1. Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.
2. Roll Call via Qualtrics
3. Approval of Minutes of February 5, 2026 – Minutes are approved as written.
4. Recognition of in-person Guests –

Tim Letzring, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Joel Cramer, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence

Marc Mendonca, Associate Vice President for Research and Scholarship

Rebeca Richards, Vice Provost for Integrated Academic Planning and Resource Allocation

5. Announcements –

Chair King shared the following announcements:

- The 2025–2026 Senate term is nearing its end and one more Steering Committee meeting and one more Senate meeting remain.
- This is the final meeting for submitting resolutions for consideration.

Election update – As outlined in the Steering Committee bylaws, this committee oversees Senate elections. Chair King provided the following update:

- All senators for the 2026–2027 term have been identified.
- Some challenges occurred during the Senate expansion, but issues are being addressed as they arise.

H1B update –

- The BOG has paused H1B visa processing until January 5, 2027.
- Concerns were raised that extending this pause beyond January 5 will pose significant issues.
- The committee communicated the importance of allowing the pause to expire on that date.

Digital accessibility –

- Changes take effect on April 24.
- All online materials must be digitally accessible.
- Guidance suggests completing the spring semester first and then addressing summer and fall requirements.

FCTL Email on AI Wearables –

- FCTL shared new guidance on classroom use of AI wearables. Updated syllabus suggestions will be released soon.

Chair King contacted Dr. John Weishampel, Interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, regarding course applicability for both certificate and degree programs. Responses were affirmative to all three clarification questions.

Discussion on Final Meeting Location – Historically the last meeting is held on another campus, but plans were not made this year. Chair King requested feedback about meeting at UCF Downtown and based on responses, the final meeting will most likely remain on the main campus.

6. Report of the Senate Chair –

Chair King deferred his report to the Collaboration and Engagement Committee Final Report under New Business.

7. Report of the Provost –

Interim Vice Provost Joel Cramer shared the following report on behalf of the provost:

Joel expressed gratitude for the committee's continued hard work.

H1B visa

- The BOG officially approved a pause on new H1B hires until January 5.
- No other visa categories or current H1B holders are affected.
- The pause is intended for data collection.
- UCF continues to post positions with updated H1B language, including revised wording for postings advertised prior to the BOG decision.

UCF regulation amendments for open comment at the next BOT meeting:

- Seven amendments from Faculty Excellence will be presented at the April BOT meeting. The amendments are not posted for comments yet but will be up tomorrow. Faculty Excellence will provide updates to help clarify upcoming changes
- Here are the 7 amendments:
 - 3.0032 – Additional compensation for UCF employees, including dual compensation and faculty overload.
 - 3.010 – Evaluation standards for non-unit and adjunct faculty; aligns adjunct evaluations with the annual cycle and defines scales for non-unit faculty.
 - 3.014 – Administrative leave for A&P employees returning to faculty roles; caps professional development leave at two semesters.
 - Last 4 (3.015, 3.0175, 3.0176, 3.0177) – Promotion and tenure regulations with standardized language regarding eligibility in non-tenure-earning programs.

- An email will be sent once documents are posted for review and public comment.
- b) Digital modalities –
- Modality categories will be streamlined from nine to four to reduce confusion. The transition will occur behind the scenes and take effect in the fall.
 - Faculty will still select the appropriate modality based on course needs.
- c) Compliance and Ethics Culture survey
- The survey is open and provides insights into university compliance and ethical culture. Responses are confidential, and the survey takes about 10 minutes.
- d) Search updates
- COS Dean search – Campus visits have concluded; feedback is under review.
 - College of Graduate Studies – Committee review continues; three onsite interviews are scheduled.
 - Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence – Applications remain open until March 29.
 - Founding College of Medicine Dean – Dr. German announced her retirement; Provost's Office expressed appreciation for her foundational contributions. A search for the next dean is beginning.

Questions and discussion were made.

8. Unfinished Business – None

9. New Business

a) Nominating Committee Update:

Bill Self, Chair of Nominating Committee, reported:

- Chair Self thanked Senators Walters and Gallo for their work.
- The committee met on February 26 and is collecting nominations for 2026–2027 Faculty Senate leadership roles. A slate of candidates will be presented at the next Steering meeting.

b) Dr. Tim Letzring, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, discussed Policy 4-403.5 Required Elements of the Course Syllabus

Please reach out to the Senate office for a copy of the PPT slide presentation.

- c) Collaboration and Engagement Committee Final Report: Stephen King, Chair of the Collaboration and Engagement Committee (materials forthcoming)
- Chaired temporarily by Vice Chair Kauffman so Chair King could present the committee report. See Chair King's report for full details shared during the meeting.
- ci) Senate Agenda for March 26
- Chair King reviewed agenda items for the upcoming Senate meeting. A motion to add Vice President for People and Workplace Experience Rhonda Bishop to the Senate agenda was moved, seconded, and approved.

e) UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement Regarding Civil Discourse and Free Expression

- A motion to approve the statement was moved and seconded.
- A motion to amend Line 6 by adding the resolution number “Resolution 2017-2018-6” was moved and seconded.
- The amendment passed.
- The amended statement was approved.

10. Committee Reports – the following shared committee reports at the meeting:

- a) B&A committee, Jim Gallo, Steering liaison
- b) IT committee, Crystal Maraj, Steering liaison
- c) Personnel committee, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
- d) Research Council, Linda Walters, Research Council chair
- e) Undergraduate Council, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
- f) Graduate Council, Reid Oetjen, Steering liaison

11. Other Business – none

12. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Daniel Seigler

03/20/2026

Daniel Seigler

Date

Secretary, Faculty Senate

March 12 steering committee chair announcements and report

First announcement,

We are getting near the end of the 2026-2027 senate session....with just one last full Senate meetings as well as one more steering meeting after that senate meeting. The April senate meeting on April 23rd is the first meeting of the NEXT senate session, and when we will have our senate officer elections for next year.

Being near the end of the current 2025 session affects the resolution process:

This is last meeting for normal resolutions, unless I get a big surprise, we don't have any on the agenda today

Second announcement: Election update: Remember, from our bylaws, Steering has oversight of senate elections: : all 85 senators have been seated. You can see the list in the email the senate sent on behalf of Bill Self from the Nominating committee

There were a few minor hiccups in elections, due mostly to new allocation within units...Just growing pains for new processes...and we have more growing to do next year when we go to 100 senators

If there are further questions about the elections, please reach out to me or Yaneries

Third announcement H1B update

The BOG approved a pause on hiring faculty or staff that need H1Bs except for faculty in some of the medical fields. Furthermore, there was an openness to them consider addition exception going forward. I believe all of work sharing the scope of the problem made a slight difference now in some fields, but I hope ot also sends a clear message that this regulation really better end as stated on Jan 5th, or there will be significant permanent harm to our universities

Digital accessibility- I hope you saw the email that went to all faculty about the upcoming April 24th date by which a federal mandate requires everyone to have digitally accessible material on all our websites. The key in that UCF message to me was an understanding that faculty don't need to freak and do drastic things for their current spring courses, but can focus on getting summer and fall courses into compliance.

AI wearables: FCTL sent a message to faculty with critical update about AI glasses and other wearable smart/AI devices. Please read that and be prepared now and in the future. I personally really liked the proposed syllabus language they provided.

Last announcement: graduate course usage in certificates and degree programs: this came from a question here at our last steering meeting: I contacted College of Graduate studies interim dean John Weishampel about this:

Specifically I asked about

1-A single course used for an MS degree and also a certificate

2-A single course used for a PhD degree and also a certificate

3-A single course used for an MS degree and also a PhD degree.

The answer was: **Yes, all are acceptable. A single course can be shared between two degrees or one degree and one certificate.**

my report is a presentation of the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement committee final report.

First, I want to recognize and acknowledge the work that the committee members accomplished in a short amount of time.

I know that especially my co-chair Shana Harris is here, I saw Laurie Pinkert and some others on zoom

Before I go into the report of the committee I want to highlight the actions of the committee.

I'll start with this Steering committee, at our August 21st meeting, approved the formation and charge of the ad hoc Faculty Collaboration and Engagement committee. That's a mouthful so I will call it the CnE committee from now on. The committee was formed with the intent to dive deep into specific issues and report back here to Steering, and to the provost before the end of the academic year.

The seating of members on the committee was done via a new mechanism for our senate: we asked the senators from each unit to collectively identify 1-2 people to serve on the committee, and we asked that the members purposely included many faculty NOT in STEM areas. This process worked quite well in identifying the type of faculty we wanted to be on the committee, and I think it may be useful to utilize again in the future. By faculty we wanted,

The committee met for the first time on October 3rd, and we dove right into a discussion of the topics of what does it mean to be at a University that has a focus of becoming the leading engineering and technology university in Florida. For many faculty NOT in what are considered engineering and technology, there is a huge disconnect and we had some very candid, open and honest discussions.

The committee nominated and approved Shana Harris as a co-chair to work with me. Shana was a strong voice in the committee, sharing what faculty outside of STEM are likely feeling at UCF.

The committee met once every two weeks from Oct 3rd to last Friday, with 10 total meetings over that time

We had two presentations to the committee by outside administrators: Kevin Yee, talking about AI, and Winston Schoenfeld, talking about the broad research and scholarship mission at UCF. These discussions provide useful perspectives for the committee to consider and grapple with.

During our discussion we kept coming back to our own individual feelings of what was happening with the broad array of faculty...but those were just our feelings. To obtain a better understanding we developed and fine-tuned a survey and sent it out to faculty across the campus. The information from that survey confirmed some of our thoughts, informed us of additional things to consider, and provided actual examples for us to better understand the faculty experience across all colleges and units at UCF

After all this, a subset of us developed a final report from the committee that took in all of our discussions and thoughts, and ideas, and proposals.

We identified four key areas to focus on:

Collaborations

Recognition and Evaluation

Communication

Resources

As you can see in the light reading of the report, each section described the problem in that area, identifies challenges we have at UCF, and provides suggestions for the provost to consider.

On purpose, the report does not rank or highlight either the challenges or suggestions. It is our hope that in addition to the provost, the faculty at large, chairs, deans, and other key administrators can look at this report and find ideas that resonate with them, that they may be able to address in their own spheres. We felt if we highlighted some, then only those would be thought to have merit...and we feel each suggestion has its own merit, to the right target audience!!

I would like to pick and choose something from each topic... these are my own choices to share with and my choices are based on how these ideas challenges and suggestions were unexpected to me and surprised me. Any of you would likely find other tidbits to highlight

In the collaboration section: I had never really considered one particular type of asymmetry that many of our faculty attempting to work and collaborate with STEM faculty have. This is the idea that in some fields a \$10,000 or \$20,000 grant is a big deal, and in other fields, faculty are focusing only on multiyear multi-million dollar grants. Based on this, many interesting ideas for collaborative work never get off the ground as there is a huge discrepancy in what the grant target of the research may be.

Recognition and Evaluation:

A problem the committee identified was that many departments and colleges have very specific ideas of what journals faculty should be publishing in, including basically penalizing faculty if papers are not in some list of approved journals. If that's the case, then how can two faculty in vastly different units find a way to publish their collaborative work and receive the credit they deserve for the work they did?

Communication:

In addition to the challenges and suggestions in the communications section, communication is a big part of the other three areas. Because of this, and the reality that changing how we communicate may be the "easiest" suggestion to follow through on, I think this a key area for people to see **WHAT CAN BE DONE RIGHT NOW!** One key communication issue we determined was that many faculty don't think of themselves as faculty in the technology side of things. We have faculty doing amazing work, yet their view of what the university thinks is important is extremely limited and does not include their own exceptional work. So they don't see that they **ARE** part of the focus we have. This is a major problem and also one that I believe can be addressed right away. Faculty need to see and experience that their work is innovative, is pushing the envelope, and is helping UCF become that leading technology university in our strategic plan

Finally **resources**: always a problem! The number one complaint holding faculty back from collaborating with others, from being more engaged in their research and scholarship is **NOT MONEY**. It is **TIME**. The time to get away from teaching, service, and the myriad of bureaucratic things hanging over our heads and sucking the time and energy and morale out of us. Time is the most crucial resource faculty want. Time to explore new ideas, time to reach out and work with new colleagues. In the absence of time, one can only continue to do the limited things that we have always done, and we need our faculty to be supported and work in a culture that supports new ideas, new technologies, new avenues of their research and scholarship... and we don't have the time to do that.

OK, last thing I want to mention about the report is that we have the survey data, both quantitative and qualitative, but due to a lack of time, we have not incorporated that in to the report in an obvious way. Our committee will share the survey information with others...when we get some more time.



Final Report of the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee

Executive Summary

The Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee was convened to identify ways to strengthen faculty engagement across disciplines as the university advances its strategic emphasis on engineering, technology, and innovation. Over five months, the committee met regularly, consulted with campus leaders in research and AI utilization, and gathered faculty input through a university-wide survey. The committee's work focused on institutional structures that influence engagement rather than on individual faculty behavior.

The committee identified four interconnected areas that influence faculty engagement: collaboration; recognition and evaluation; communication; and resources. Faculty expressed strong interest in collaboration and innovation but reported uncertainty about how such work is valued, recognized, and supported. Barriers include bureaucratic friction, misalignment between evaluation and compensation systems, limited visibility of faculty innovation, unclear feedback pathways, and perceived concentration of resources.

The committee's recommendations emphasize institutional actions available to the Provost, including clearer signaling of institutional values, improved coherence across evaluation systems, stronger two-way communication, and better alignment of resources with engagement goals. Coordinated action across these areas could significantly enhance faculty engagement, morale, and participation across the university.

Topic Area 1: Collaboration

Overview

Meaningful collaboration across disciplines, units, and roles is widely recognized as a driver of innovation, research productivity, and institutional vitality. During its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee repeatedly heard that faculty at UCF value collaboration and are often interested in engaging beyond their home units. At the same time, many faculty experience collaboration as more difficult, less rewarded, and less sustainable than it could be. These challenges are not rooted in a lack of interest or creativity among faculty, but rather in structural, procedural, and incentive-related barriers that limit participation and long-term collaboration.

The committee's discussions, informed by internal conversations and meetings with campus leaders, suggest that collaboration is often framed as desirable but not consistently supported in practice. Faculty reported encountering bureaucratic friction, uneven access to seed funding, uncertainty about credit and recognition, and differential incentives across disciplines. In some cases, these issues lead faculty to deprioritize collaborative work, even when it aligns well with institutional goals, because the professional risks and opportunity costs are perceived as too high.

For central leadership, collaboration represents a key institutional lever. Clear signals from the Provost regarding the value of collaboration, coupled with targeted structural supports, could significantly lower barriers and encourage broader faculty engagement across disciplinary and organizational boundaries. Importantly, the committee emphasizes that collaboration should remain an opportunity rather than an expectation, and that faculty engagement can take many forms consistent with diverse scholarly traditions and professional roles.

Observed Challenges to Collaboration

Across its deliberations, the committee identified several recurring themes that limit faculty participation in collaborative efforts:

- **Administrative and procedural barriers:** Faculty described collaboration as requiring substantial upfront effort to navigate approvals, budgeting across units, and differing administrative processes, particularly for cross-college or interdisciplinary projects.
- **Uneven incentives and perceived value:** The material and professional value of collaboration varies widely by unit. For example, a modest internal grant or pilot award may represent substantial support in one discipline but be functionally insignificant in another.
- **Unclear recognition and credit:** Faculty are often uncertain how collaborative contributions, especially those that are interdisciplinary, team-based, or nontraditional, will be evaluated in annual reviews, promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review.
- **Implicit de-incentivization:** In the absence of explicit recognition, collaboration may be perceived as risky or inefficient relative to solo or unit-centric work, particularly for early-career faculty or those in units with narrow evaluation criteria.
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These challenges intersect strongly with issues discussed in other sections of the committee's report, including recognition and evaluation, communication, and access to resources. Addressing collaboration in isolation is unlikely to be effective without attention to these broader contexts.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration at the institutional level. These are intended as enabling strategies rather than mandates that could be implemented incrementally or piloted in targeted ways.

- **Clarify and signal the institutional value of collaboration**
 - Issue clear, consistent messaging that frames collaboration as a valued form of faculty engagement, while explicitly acknowledging that not all impactful scholarship or teaching must be collaborative.
 - Highlight examples of successful collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including those outside traditional STEM-focused partnerships.
 - Communicate that the university values collaborations to both STEM *and* non-STEM research, teaching, and service
- **Reduce structural and bureaucratic friction**
 - Explore opportunities to streamline or standardize administrative processes for cross-unit collaborations, particularly related to budgeting, effort allocation, and internal approvals.
 - Assess whether existing policies unintentionally discourage collaboration by increasing administrative burden or uncertainty.
- **Support early-stage and exploratory collaborations**
 - Expand or rethink internal seed funding mechanisms to better accommodate disciplinary differences in scale, cost, and timelines.
 - Encourage flexible models for pilot funding that emphasize relationship-building and idea development, not just immediate external grant competitiveness.
- **Address questions of credit and contribution**
 - Work with academic leadership to encourage greater clarity around how collaborative work is documented and valued in faculty evaluations.
 - Promote guidance that recognizes diverse collaborative roles beyond principal investigator status or first authorship (e.g., conceptual leadership, methodological expertise, community engagement, instructional innovation, etc.).
- **Encourage unit-level flexibility within a consistent institutional framework**
 - Support units in adapting collaborative expectations to their disciplinary norms, while maintaining institution-wide signals that collaboration is legitimate and valued work.
 - Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches that may unintentionally privilege certain disciplines or research models over others.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

When collaboration is experienced as difficult, risky, or unrewarded, faculty engagement suffers, even among those who are otherwise deeply committed to the institution. Conversely, when collaboration is visibly supported and structurally enabled, it can foster a stronger sense of belonging, shared purpose, and institutional trust. Thoughtful action by central leadership in this area has the potential to improve not only research outcomes, but also faculty morale and long-term engagement across the university.

Topic Area 2: Recognition and Evaluation

Overview

Faculty recognition and evaluation systems play a central role in shaping engagement, behavior, and professional priorities. During its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee consistently heard that many faculty perceive a disconnect between the activities encouraged by the institution, such as collaboration, interdisciplinary work, innovation, and engagement and the activities that are most clearly rewarded through evaluation, compensation, and review processes. This misalignment has implications not only for faculty morale, but also for the university's ability to advance its strategic goals in a sustainable and inclusive way.

Faculty expressed that annual evaluations, promotion and tenure standards, post-tenure review, and merit-based compensation are often experienced as separate or loosely connected systems. Strong annual evaluations do not always translate into meaningful recognition or compensation, and activities valued in one evaluative context may be minimized or ignored in another. Collaborative work, in particular, is often harder to evaluate consistently across these systems, especially when unit-level guidelines emphasize narrowly defined outputs. From an institutional perspective, recognition and evaluation structures represent a powerful mechanism for signaling what the university truly values. Even subtle misalignments between what is stated and the actual outcomes or between different review processes can unintentionally discourage faculty from engaging in work that is institutionally beneficial but professionally risky. Addressing these issues does not require uniformity across disciplines, but it does benefit from coherence, clarity, and consistent messaging from central leadership.

Observed Challenges Related to Recognition and Evaluation

The committee identified several recurring issues that affect faculty engagement across colleges and disciplines:

- **Disconnect between evaluations and compensation:** Faculty reported that strong annual evaluations do not consistently result in tangible outcomes, such as merit increases or other forms of recognition, leading to skepticism about the practical value of evaluation processes.
- **Misalignment among evaluation systems:** Annual evaluations, tenure and promotion, post-tenure review, and merit processes may emphasize different criteria, creating uncertainty about which activities are truly valued over time.
- **Limited recognition of collaborative work:** Collaborative and interdisciplinary contributions are often difficult to document or evaluate within existing frameworks, particularly when unit guidelines prioritize individual outputs, sole authorship, or principal investigator status.
- **Unit-level variation with institutional consequences:** While disciplinary differences are appropriate and necessary, highly restrictive or traditional evaluation criteria in some units may unintentionally devalue collaborative or innovative work that aligns with broader institutional goals.

These challenges are closely intertwined with issues discussed in the committee's analysis of collaboration and resources. Faculty are more likely to engage in collaborative or innovative efforts when they have confidence that such work will be fairly and transparently evaluated.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration, recognizing that evaluation systems are complex and varied, but also influenced by central guidance and institutional signaling.

- **Promote greater coherence across evaluation processes**
 - Initiate conversations among academic leadership to better align annual evaluations, promotion and tenure, post-tenure review, and merit-based recognition.
 - Encourage shared principles that clarify how different evaluative processes relate to one another over a faculty member’s career, even when specific criteria vary by discipline.
- **Strengthen the visibility and legitimacy of collaborative contributions**
 - Support guidance that explicitly recognizes collaborative work as legitimate scholarly, teaching, or service activity when it contributes meaningfully to institutional or disciplinary goals.
 - Encourage evaluation frameworks that account for diverse collaborative roles and contributions, rather than relying exclusively on traditional indicators such as sole authorship or principal investigator status.
- **Clarify expectations without mandating uniformity**
 - Emphasize that collaboration and interdisciplinary engagement are valued opportunities, not universal requirements.
 - Encourage units to articulate how collaborative and non-collaborative excellence are both recognized within their disciplinary contexts.
- **Examine unintended disincentives**
 - Assess whether current evaluation and compensation practices unintentionally discourage collaboration, innovation, or cross-unit engagement.
 - Evaluate whether modest structural adjustments such as clearer documentation practices could improve faculty confidence in evaluation fairness.
- **Use institutional messaging to reinforce values**
 - Leverage communications from central leadership to reinforce that high-quality teaching, scholarship, and service take multiple forms and occur across all disciplines.
 - Highlight examples where collaborative or innovative work has been meaningfully recognized within existing evaluation systems.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement is strongly influenced by trust in evaluation and recognition systems. When faculty perceive that the work they are encouraged to pursue is not meaningfully recognized or is inconsistently evaluated across contexts, they are more likely to disengage or narrow their efforts to lower-risk activities. Conversely, clearer alignment between institutional values and evaluation practices can empower faculty to engage more fully, collaborate more broadly, and contribute in ways that reflect both their disciplinary strengths and the university’s evolving priorities.

Thoughtful attention to recognition and evaluation systems by the Provost can, therefore, have a multiplier effect reinforcing collaboration, supporting innovation, and strengthening faculty commitment across the institution.

Topic Area 3: Communication

Overview

Effective communication is foundational to faculty engagement, collaboration, and trust. Throughout its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee observed that many challenges related to engagement are not solely the result of policy or resource limitations, but of gaps in awareness, visibility, and feedback. Faculty frequently develop innovative approaches in teaching, research, scholarship, and service, yet these efforts are often not widely shared across campus or clearly recognized by central administration. Similarly, faculty reported uncertainty about whether institutional leaders are aware of, value, or learn from the work occurring across diverse units and disciplines, especially if it does not align with the university's engineering and technology focus.

The committee's discussions suggest that communication challenges occur in multiple directions: faculty-to-faculty, faculty-to-administration, and administration-to-faculty. In the absence of reliable and transparent communication channels, faculty may feel disconnected from institutional priorities, uncertain about leadership perspectives, or unsure how to provide input that leads to meaningful change. Over time, these dynamics can reduce engagement, reinforce silos, weaken shared governance, and reduce morale.

From the perspective of central leadership, communication represents a high-impact, relatively low-cost opportunity to strengthen faculty engagement. Clear, consistent, and bidirectional communication can improve institutional awareness of faculty innovation, reinforce inclusive definitions of excellence, and build confidence that faculty perspectives inform decision-making at the highest levels.

Observed Communication Challenges

The committee identified several recurring communication-related issues that affect faculty engagement across the institution:

- **Limited self-communication of innovation by faculty:** Faculty do not always effectively communicate the innovative aspects of their own teaching, research, or scholarly work to peers or to administration, which can limit broader awareness, recognition, and institutional learning.
- **Limited visibility of faculty innovation:** Faculty are often unaware of innovative teaching practices, research approaches, or collaborative models being developed by their peers, particularly outside their home units.
- **Incomplete administrative awareness:** Faculty expressed concern that central administrators may not fully appreciate the breadth of innovation and scholarly activity occurring across colleges, especially in areas that do not align neatly with traditional metrics or high-profile initiatives.
- **Unclear valuation of diverse contributions:** Inconsistent messaging can leave faculty uncertain about whether innovation, interdisciplinary work, or service-oriented scholarship is truly valued, particularly when recognition appears concentrated in specific domains.
- **Weak or opaque feedback pathways** Faculty reported limited opportunities to provide feedback to senior leadership that results in visible consideration, response, or change, which can contribute to disengagement over time.

These communication challenges intersect strongly with issues of collaboration and recognition. When faculty do not see their work acknowledged or their input reflected in institutional decisions, incentives alone are unlikely to sustain engagement.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for strengthening communication in ways that support faculty collaboration and engagement across all disciplines.

- **Increase visibility of faculty work and innovation**
 - Develop or expand mechanisms to regularly highlight faculty innovations in teaching, research, and service across a wide range of disciplines.
 - Ensure that institutional communications reflect diverse scholarly models and do not focus exclusively on a narrow set of research outputs, funding sources, or topics.
- **Strengthen two-way communication with faculty**
 - Create structured opportunities for faculty to share ideas, concerns, and feedback directly with senior leadership, with clear expectations about how that input will be considered.
 - Where possible, close feedback loops by communicating how faculty input has informed decisions, even when changes are incremental or constrained.
- **Clarify institutional values through consistent messaging**
 - Use communications from the Provost to reinforce that faculty excellence takes multiple forms and occurs across all colleges and disciplines.
 - Align messaging with evaluation and recognition practices to avoid mixed signals about what is valued.
- **Improve coordination across administrative units**
 - Encourage coordination among central offices (e.g., Academic Affairs, Research, Teaching and Learning, Faculty Excellence) to ensure consistent communication to faculty.
 - Reduce redundancy or conflicting messages that may create confusion about priorities or opportunities.
- **Support faculty-to-faculty communication**
 - Support platforms, events, or forums that enable faculty to learn from one another's work, particularly across disciplines or colleges.
 - Encourage dissemination models that prioritize accessibility and engagement over scale or prestige alone.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement depends not only on opportunities and incentives, but also on whether faculty feel seen, heard, and valued within the institution. Communication practices that elevate faculty voices, make innovation visible, and demonstrate responsiveness from leadership can strengthen trust and reinforce shared governance. Conversely, persistent communication gaps may lead faculty to disengage, even when institutional intentions are positive.

By investing in clearer, more inclusive, and more responsive communication strategies, the Provost can support a culture in which faculty engagement is sustained through mutual awareness, respect, and dialogue.

Topic Area 4: Resources for Collaboration and Engagement

Overview

Access to appropriate resources, in particular time and funding, is a critical determinant of faculty engagement and the sustainability of collaborative work. Throughout its deliberations, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee heard that many faculty are interested in participating in collaborative, interdisciplinary, or innovative efforts, but feel constrained by limited resources, uneven access to support, and funding models that privilege a narrow set of activities or outcomes. These constraints are especially salient for faculty whose work does not align neatly with high-cost, externally funded research paradigms.

The committee's discussions highlight that resource limitations are not solely a matter of overall availability, but also of distribution, structure, and perception. Faculty expressed concern that resources for collaboration and engagement appear concentrated in a small number of areas, often associated with specific disciplines or metrics, while other forms of scholarly and creative activity receive comparatively less institutional support. This perception, whether fully accurate or not, can affect morale, willingness to engage, and confidence that the institution values diverse contributions.

From the perspective of central leadership, resource allocation represents both a practical and symbolic tool. Thoughtful approaches to time, funding, and support infrastructure can reduce barriers to engagement, encourage experimentation, and reinforce institutional messages about inclusivity and shared purpose. Importantly, effective resource strategies need not rely solely on large investments; relatively modest, well-targeted supports can have outsized impact on faculty participation and trust.

Observed Challenges to Resources

The committee identified several recurring challenges related to resources for collaboration and engagement:

- **Time constraints as a primary barrier:** Faculty consistently identified time rather than interest, as a limiting factor for collaboration, innovation, and engagement, particularly in the context of heavy teaching, service, or administrative loads.
- **Uneven access to monetary resources:** Internal funding opportunities may be perceived as insufficient, inconsistently available, or misaligned with the scale and nature of work in certain disciplines.
- **Overreliance on limited metrics:** Funding and support models that prioritize a small number of indicators (e.g., external grant dollars) often marginalize valuable scholarly, creative, or service-focused work.
- **Perceived concentration of resources:** Faculty noted that institutional investments often appear focused on specific areas, reinforcing concerns that other disciplines or forms of scholarship are undervalued or overlooked.

These issues are closely connected to challenges discussed in the committee's analyses of collaboration, recognition and evaluation, and communication. Without adequate resources or confidence that resources will be available, faculty are reluctant to pursue collaborative or innovative work, regardless of institutional encouragement.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration, with the understanding that resource allocation decisions must balance strategic priorities, fiscal constraints, and disciplinary diversity.

- **Recognize time as a critical resource**
 - Create mechanisms that acknowledge time investment in collaboration and engagement, such as course releases, workload adjustments, or flexible scheduling, particularly for early-stage or exploratory efforts.
 - Encourage units to view time allocations as strategic investments rather than short-term costs.
- **Support a range of funding models**
 - Explore internal funding opportunities that are scalable and flexible, recognizing that impactful work occurs at many levels of cost and scope.
 - Support pilot or seed funding programs that emphasize idea development, relationship-building, or pedagogical innovation, not solely immediate external funding potential.
- **Reduce overreliance on narrow success metrics**
 - Assess whether current funding and support structures disproportionately emphasize a limited set of outcomes, such as large external grants.
 - Encourage broader definitions of impact that reflect disciplinary diversity and institutional goals.
- **Increase transparency around resource allocation**
 - Communicate clearly about how and why resources are allocated, including the criteria used to support different types of work.
 - Highlight investments in a wide range of disciplines and activities to counter perceptions of resource concentration.
- **Align resources with engagement goals**
 - Ensure that resource decisions reinforce institutional messages about the value of collaboration, innovation, and engagement across all faculty roles and disciplines.
 - Create targeted investments that explicitly support cross-unit or interdisciplinary engagement, particularly where existing structures create barriers.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement is deeply influenced by whether faculty feel they have the time, support, and institutional backing to pursue meaningful work beyond their immediate obligations. When resources are perceived as inaccessible, narrowly targeted, or misaligned with institutional messaging, engagement may erode, even among faculty who are otherwise committed to the university's mission. Conversely, visible and thoughtfully structured resource support can empower faculty to experiment, collaborate, and contribute in ways that strengthen both individual careers and institutional outcomes.

By attending to resource distribution, transparency, and alignment, the Provost can reinforce the institution's commitment to inclusive faculty engagement and create conditions in which collaboration and innovation are both feasible and valued.

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Treen Huo

Mairelys Lemus-Rojas

Roslyn Miller

Ahmet Oxturk

Laurie A. Pinkert

Kaitlyn Rechenberg

Bulent Soykan

Emmanuel Urquieta

Larry Walker

Alfred Whiffen



University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

University of Central Florida Draft Policy Submission Cover Memo Form

Policy No. and Title:

Initiating Authority:

Initiating Authority Approval Date:

Date of Submission for Review:

Submitted by:

Department:

New Policy

Existing Policy (5-year Review)

Existing Policy (Out of Cycle
Review)

Summary of Revisions: (For a new policy, please provide a summary of the policy. For an existing policy, please provide a summary of the revisions made to the policy.)

Stakeholders included in the Review Process: (Provide a list of departments involved in the review/revision process.)

Stakeholder feedback must also be requested from the [Faculty Senate](#) and the [College Policy Liaisons](#). By checking the boxes below, you are confirming that feedback from these groups was requested, received, and considered in the draft policy.

College Policy Liaisons

Faculty Senate

Regulatory Requirements (if applicable): (Provide information on regulatory requirements pertaining to the policy, including specific statute or regulation number.)

Presenters: (Provide the name(s), position title(s), and email address(s) for all individuals who will be presenting the policy to the university's Policies and Procedures Committee.)



Draft - Required Elements of the Course Syllabus

Policy Number	4-403.45
Responsible Authority	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Initiating Authority	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Effective Date	
Date of Origin	7/13/2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An effective syllabus provides an overview of the purpose of a course, outlines course requirements, and defines expectations for student performance. Faculty members are responsible for developing course content and selecting pedagogical approaches for their courses. Leveraging this policy to develop them will provide a consistent approach for presenting essential information that supports learning, creates a centralized syllabus repository, and ensures that UCF complies with the standards set forth by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\) Higher Learning Commission \(HLC\)](#) and other accrediting bodies.

POLICY STATEMENT

All UCF instructors, regardless of course modality, must post their ~~official~~ syllabus for each course section ~~they teach to their published Webcourses~~ using the Simple Syllabus tool ~~located within Webcourses~~. ~~All syllabi must be publicly posted 45-days before the start of the semester in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.003. Individualized courses, such as directed individual studies, internships, thesis, dissertation hours, and performance, are exempt from this requirement and may use a learning contract in lieu of a syllabus. If these courses use a learning contract, by the first day of the session in which the course is taught. For GEP core courses, syllabi must be publicly posted 45-days before the full semester begins in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.003. The syllabus within the Simple Syllabus tool is the official UCF syllabus for grade appeals and other academic decisions. For courses using a contract in lieu of a syllabus, that contract must be completed within the first two weeks of the semester.~~

The university will maintain a centralized syllabus repository and ~~publicly post store~~ syllabi for

[a minimum of](#) five [academic](#) years. Departments are encouraged to hold regular discussions with all instructional personnel about policies relevant to their student populations to promote consistent communication of expectations to students and to support student and faculty success.

Each syllabus must include the sections outlined in detail below. Some of these sections are automatically populated in Simple Syllabus.

GENERAL POLICY

REQUIRED SYLLABUS CONTENT

1. Information from the official Schedule of Classes

This information will be automatically imported into the syllabus from the UCF schedule of classes and will include the following:

- Course number, section, and name
- Semester and year
- Prerequisites, co-requisites, and any other enrollment requirements
- Meeting dates, times, and place(s) and/or description of course modality

2. Instructor and/or GTA contact information; (DO NOT INCLUDE PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION IN SYLLABI)

- Name(s) of instructor(s) and Graduate Teaching Assistant(s) (GTA)
- UCF email addresses and/or Webcourses messaging
- Department location and university phone number, if applicable

3. Explicit, public description of the course

- Information published in Undergraduate Catalog or Graduate Catalog. The official UCF catalog description will be automatically imported into the syllabus from the appropriate UCF catalog.

For GEP Core courses, the course description in UCF catalog and in syllabus must match the State Course Numbering System course description.

- Overview of the scope and purpose of the course

4. Student learning outcomes

All course syllabi must articulate student learning outcomes that:

- are consistent with the scope and purpose of the course.
- tie as clearly as possible to course assignments and activities.
- reference or link with specific program, department, college, and/or accreditation

standards.

For GEP Core courses, the course student learning outcomes must match those in the State Course Numbering System.

5. ~~Sequence of course activity~~ Course Activities and Assigned Readings

Required readings

- Sequence of course topics
- Due dates for major assignments and exams/assessments
- Method(s) for submitting assignments
- Date and format of final exam

Note: To promote student success, faculty members are encouraged to post at least one major course grade prior to the course withdrawal deadline.

6. Assessment and grading procedures

- Explanation of the grading scheme, weight of course assignments, projects, exams/quizzes, participation, and other components proportional to the overall grade for the class
- Course policies on attendance, make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, and missed assignments, including specific exam policies and procedures.
- Course policies on communication expectations, including preferred communication methods and time in which students can expect to receive a response.
- ~~Make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, including those regarding participation in university activities and religious holidays (See UCF Policy 4-401 and Regulation 5-020.)~~
- To ensure students have prompt feedback, and knowledge of their progress, faculty members must record all grades in Webcourses, and follow student data classification and security standards as addressed in UCF Policies 4-007 and 4-008 when distributing any grade-related information.

7. Course Materials and Resources

- Required and recommended instructional materials ~~the student must acquire.~~

In accordance with Florida BOG Regulation 8.003 and UCF Regulation 2.032, the syllabus submission process contains an attestation that the instructor of record, department, team of faculty, and/or lead faculty has or will review all required materials for appropriateness prior to assigning them to students.

- Specific information about items such as classroom response systems, online tools, and other items that are required or recommended
- Clear explanations of where and how students may access materials and resources provided by the university to all students

8. Core policy statements

Each syllabus will contain policies regarding each of the following topics. Essential policies and faculty resources are available in Webcourses. and will be automatically included in the syllabus template.

- Academic integrity statement.
- [Artificial Intelligence Use policy.](#)
- Statement regarding students needing accommodations.
- Statement regarding emergency procedures and campus safety.

- Statement regarding accommodations for active-duty military students
- Title IX Policy Statement
- Reporting an Incident
- [Make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, including those policies regarding participation in university activities and religious holidays \(See UCF Policy 4-401 and Regulation 5.020.\)](#)

LEARNING CONTRACTS

For special courses, such as independent study, directed research, thesis or dissertation hours, the course instructor may elect to use a learning contract in lieu of a syllabus. If an instructor chooses this option, a written agreement that outlines the conditions, course requirements, and expectations must be created and signed by both the student and the faculty member by the second week of the semester in which the course is taught. A Restricted Registration Form may serve as this type of agreement if it contains the required elements listed below. When completed, that agreement must be submitted to the department or program and should be retained by the department or program for a minimum of five years. Faculty are not required to post these agreements to Webcourses.

A learning contract must include the name of the student, the name and number of the course, the semester offered, course learning outcomes, a list of assignments or activities to be completed during the semester, and the due dates for each assignment. For courses taken for a grade, the contract must clearly articulate what must be accomplished to obtain specific grades. For pass/fail courses, the contract must articulate what must be completed to earn a passing grade. Faculty should rely on the elements of these contracts when determining the final grade for students.

CHANGES ~~IN COURSE ELEMENTS~~ TO COURSE SYLLABI

Faculty members must sometimes make changes to course elements such as schedules or assignment details in response to student needs as well as external events (e.g., severe weather or public health emergencies). Except for extreme circumstances, this policy discourages substantial changes to a class syllabus after [distributionthe first day of classes](#). Instructors of record should consult with their department chair, school director, or program coordinator before instituting any significant changes to the core elements of a course

syllabus so that the process can be appropriately documented, thereby mitigating the risk of student complaints or grade appeals.

CONTACTS

| Timothy Letzring, Sr. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Tim.Letzring@ucf.edu
(407) 823-1750

Amber Mullens, Administrative Project Manager Amber.mullens@ucf.edu
(407) 823-1528

| History: 4-403 7/13/2005; 4-403.1 2/16/2018; 4-403.2 5/30/2023; 4-403.3 4/5/2023; 4-403.4 6/6/2025

AGENDA ITEM:

UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement Regarding Civil Discourse and Free Expression

Excerpts From the BOG Civil Discourse Final Report-2022 (whole report attached)
University Leadership

State university boards of trustees have the powers and duties necessary for each university's operation, management, and accountability. University civil discourse policies, programs, and initiatives should be viewed as strategic priorities by each board of trustees. The Board of Governors also believes that university faculty senates and student governments have a vital role and should participate early and often in the development, implementation, evaluation, and support of civil discourse programs and initiatives.

Recommendation III. The Board of Governors recommends that the leadership of each university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government annually review and endorse the Board's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse.

2026 UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement

approved by the Steering Committee March 12, 2026:

The University of Central Florida Faculty Senate Steering Committee has examined and reviewed civil discourse and freedom of expression within the Faculty Senate. We find that the Faculty Senate has continuously shown support for both civil discourse and freedom of expression as outlined in the University System Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression. The Faculty Senate, via Resolution 2017-2018-6, has endorsed

freedom of expression and civil discourse, and our support for both civil discourse and free expression will continue. A fundamental purpose of an institution of higher education is to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated. It is equally important not to stifle the dissemination of any ideas, even if other members of our community may find those ideas abhorrent.

Stephen J. King, Ph.D.

Chair, UCF Faculty Senate



Final Report of the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee

Executive Summary

The Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee was convened to identify ways to strengthen faculty engagement across disciplines as the university advances its strategic emphasis on engineering, technology, and innovation. Over five months, the committee met regularly, consulted with campus leaders in research and AI utilization, and gathered faculty input through a university-wide survey. The committee's work focused on institutional structures that influence engagement rather than on individual faculty behavior.

The committee identified four interconnected areas that influence faculty engagement: collaboration; recognition and evaluation; communication; and resources. Faculty expressed strong interest in collaboration and innovation but reported uncertainty about how such work is valued, recognized, and supported. Barriers include bureaucratic friction, misalignment between evaluation and compensation systems, limited visibility of faculty innovation, unclear feedback pathways, and perceived concentration of resources.

The committee's recommendations emphasize institutional actions available to the Provost, including clearer signaling of institutional values, improved coherence across evaluation systems, stronger two-way communication, and better alignment of resources with engagement goals. Coordinated action across these areas could significantly enhance faculty engagement, morale, and participation across the university.

Topic Area 1: Collaboration

Overview

Meaningful collaboration across disciplines, units, and roles is widely recognized as a driver of innovation, research productivity, and institutional vitality. During its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee repeatedly heard that faculty at UCF value collaboration and are often interested in engaging beyond their home units. At the same time, many faculty experience collaboration as more difficult, less rewarded, and less sustainable than it could be. These challenges are not rooted in a lack of interest or creativity among faculty, but rather in structural, procedural, and incentive-related barriers that limit participation and long-term collaboration.

The committee's discussions, informed by internal conversations and meetings with campus leaders, suggest that collaboration is often framed as desirable but not consistently supported in practice. Faculty reported encountering bureaucratic friction, uneven access to seed funding, uncertainty about credit and recognition, and differential incentives across disciplines. In some cases, these issues lead faculty to deprioritize collaborative work, even when it aligns well with institutional goals, because the professional risks and opportunity costs are perceived as too high.

For central leadership, collaboration represents a key institutional lever. Clear signals from the Provost regarding the value of collaboration, coupled with targeted structural supports, could significantly lower barriers and encourage broader faculty engagement across disciplinary and organizational boundaries. Importantly, the committee emphasizes that collaboration should remain an opportunity rather than an expectation, and that faculty engagement can take many forms consistent with diverse scholarly traditions and professional roles.

Observed Challenges to Collaboration

Across its deliberations, the committee identified several recurring themes that limit faculty participation in collaborative efforts:

- **Administrative and procedural barriers:** Faculty described collaboration as requiring substantial upfront effort to navigate approvals, budgeting across units, and differing administrative processes, particularly for cross-college or interdisciplinary projects.
- **Uneven incentives and perceived value:** The material and professional value of collaboration varies widely by unit. For example, a modest internal grant or pilot award may represent substantial support in one discipline but be functionally insignificant in another.
- **Unclear recognition and credit:** Faculty are often uncertain how collaborative contributions, especially those that are interdisciplinary, team-based, or nontraditional, will be evaluated in annual reviews, promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review.
- **Implicit de-incentivization:** In the absence of explicit recognition, collaboration may be perceived as risky or inefficient relative to solo or unit-centric work, particularly for early-career faculty or those in units with narrow evaluation criteria.
-

These challenges intersect strongly with issues discussed in other sections of the committee's report, including recognition and evaluation, communication, and access to resources. Addressing collaboration in isolation is unlikely to be effective without attention to these broader contexts.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration at the institutional level. These are intended as enabling strategies rather than mandates that could be implemented incrementally or piloted in targeted ways.

- **Clarify and signal the institutional value of collaboration**
 - Issue clear, consistent messaging that frames collaboration as a valued form of faculty engagement, while explicitly acknowledging that not all impactful scholarship or teaching must be collaborative.
 - Highlight examples of successful collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including those outside traditional STEM-focused partnerships.
 - Communicate that the university values collaborations to both STEM *and* non-STEM research, teaching, and service
- **Reduce structural and bureaucratic friction**
 - Explore opportunities to streamline or standardize administrative processes for cross-unit collaborations, particularly related to budgeting, effort allocation, and internal approvals.
 - Assess whether existing policies unintentionally discourage collaboration by increasing administrative burden or uncertainty.
- **Support early-stage and exploratory collaborations**
 - Expand or rethink internal seed funding mechanisms to better accommodate disciplinary differences in scale, cost, and timelines.
 - Encourage flexible models for pilot funding that emphasize relationship-building and idea development, not just immediate external grant competitiveness.
- **Address questions of credit and contribution**
 - Work with academic leadership to encourage greater clarity around how collaborative work is documented and valued in faculty evaluations.
 - Promote guidance that recognizes diverse collaborative roles beyond principal investigator status or first authorship (e.g., conceptual leadership, methodological expertise, community engagement, instructional innovation, etc.).
- **Encourage unit-level flexibility within a consistent institutional framework**
 - Support units in adapting collaborative expectations to their disciplinary norms, while maintaining institution-wide signals that collaboration is legitimate and valued work.
 - Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches that may unintentionally privilege certain disciplines or research models over others.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

When collaboration is experienced as difficult, risky, or unrewarded, faculty engagement suffers, even among those who are otherwise deeply committed to the institution. Conversely, when collaboration is visibly supported and structurally enabled, it can foster a stronger sense of belonging, shared purpose, and institutional trust. Thoughtful action by central leadership in this area has the potential to improve not only research outcomes, but also faculty morale and long-term engagement across the university.

Topic Area 2: Recognition and Evaluation

Overview

Faculty recognition and evaluation systems play a central role in shaping engagement, behavior, and professional priorities. During its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee consistently heard that many faculty perceive a disconnect between the activities encouraged by the institution, such as collaboration, interdisciplinary work, innovation, and engagement and the activities that are most clearly rewarded through evaluation, compensation, and review processes. This misalignment has implications not only for faculty morale, but also for the university's ability to advance its strategic goals in a sustainable and inclusive way.

Faculty expressed that annual evaluations, promotion and tenure standards, post-tenure review, and merit-based compensation are often experienced as separate or loosely connected systems. Strong annual evaluations do not always translate into meaningful recognition or compensation, and activities valued in one evaluative context may be minimized or ignored in another. Collaborative work, in particular, is often harder to evaluate consistently across these systems, especially when unit-level guidelines emphasize narrowly defined outputs. From an institutional perspective, recognition and evaluation structures represent a powerful mechanism for signaling what the university truly values. Even subtle misalignments between what is stated and the actual outcomes or between different review processes can unintentionally discourage faculty from engaging in work that is institutionally beneficial but professionally risky. Addressing these issues does not require uniformity across disciplines, but it does benefit from coherence, clarity, and consistent messaging from central leadership.

Observed Challenges Related to Recognition and Evaluation

The committee identified several recurring issues that affect faculty engagement across colleges and disciplines:

- **Disconnect between evaluations and compensation:** Faculty reported that strong annual evaluations do not consistently result in tangible outcomes, such as merit increases or other forms of recognition, leading to skepticism about the practical value of evaluation processes.
- **Misalignment among evaluation systems:** Annual evaluations, tenure and promotion, post-tenure review, and merit processes may emphasize different criteria, creating uncertainty about which activities are truly valued over time.
- **Limited recognition of collaborative work:** Collaborative and interdisciplinary contributions are often difficult to document or evaluate within existing frameworks, particularly when unit guidelines prioritize individual outputs, sole authorship, or principal investigator status.
- **Unit-level variation with institutional consequences:** While disciplinary differences are appropriate and necessary, highly restrictive or traditional evaluation criteria in some units may unintentionally devalue collaborative or innovative work that aligns with broader institutional goals.

These challenges are closely intertwined with issues discussed in the committee's analysis of collaboration and resources. Faculty are more likely to engage in collaborative or innovative efforts when they have confidence that such work will be fairly and transparently evaluated.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration, recognizing that evaluation systems are complex and varied, but also influenced by central guidance and institutional signaling.

- **Promote greater coherence across evaluation processes**
 - Initiate conversations among academic leadership to better align annual evaluations, promotion and tenure, post-tenure review, and merit-based recognition.
 - Encourage shared principles that clarify how different evaluative processes relate to one another over a faculty member’s career, even when specific criteria vary by discipline.
- **Strengthen the visibility and legitimacy of collaborative contributions**
 - Support guidance that explicitly recognizes collaborative work as legitimate scholarly, teaching, or service activity when it contributes meaningfully to institutional or disciplinary goals.
 - Encourage evaluation frameworks that account for diverse collaborative roles and contributions, rather than relying exclusively on traditional indicators such as sole authorship or principal investigator status.
- **Clarify expectations without mandating uniformity**
 - Emphasize that collaboration and interdisciplinary engagement are valued opportunities, not universal requirements.
 - Encourage units to articulate how collaborative and non-collaborative excellence are both recognized within their disciplinary contexts.
- **Examine unintended disincentives**
 - Assess whether current evaluation and compensation practices unintentionally discourage collaboration, innovation, or cross-unit engagement.
 - Evaluate whether modest structural adjustments such as clearer documentation practices could improve faculty confidence in evaluation fairness.
- **Use institutional messaging to reinforce values**
 - Leverage communications from central leadership to reinforce that high-quality teaching, scholarship, and service take multiple forms and occur across all disciplines.
 - Highlight examples where collaborative or innovative work has been meaningfully recognized within existing evaluation systems.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement is strongly influenced by trust in evaluation and recognition systems. When faculty perceive that the work they are encouraged to pursue is not meaningfully recognized or is inconsistently evaluated across contexts, they are more likely to disengage or narrow their efforts to lower-risk activities. Conversely, clearer alignment between institutional values and evaluation practices can empower faculty to engage more fully, collaborate more broadly, and contribute in ways that reflect both their disciplinary strengths and the university’s evolving priorities.

Thoughtful attention to recognition and evaluation systems by the Provost can, therefore, have a multiplier effect reinforcing collaboration, supporting innovation, and strengthening faculty commitment across the institution.

Topic Area 3: Communication

Overview

Effective communication is foundational to faculty engagement, collaboration, and trust. Throughout its work, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee observed that many challenges related to engagement are not solely the result of policy or resource limitations, but of gaps in awareness, visibility, and feedback. Faculty frequently develop innovative approaches in teaching, research, scholarship, and service, yet these efforts are often not widely shared across campus or clearly recognized by central administration. Similarly, faculty reported uncertainty about whether institutional leaders are aware of, value, or learn from the work occurring across diverse units and disciplines, especially if it does not align with the university's engineering and technology focus.

The committee's discussions suggest that communication challenges occur in multiple directions: faculty-to-faculty, faculty-to-administration, and administration-to-faculty. In the absence of reliable and transparent communication channels, faculty may feel disconnected from institutional priorities, uncertain about leadership perspectives, or unsure how to provide input that leads to meaningful change. Over time, these dynamics can reduce engagement, reinforce silos, weaken shared governance, and reduce morale.

From the perspective of central leadership, communication represents a high-impact, relatively low-cost opportunity to strengthen faculty engagement. Clear, consistent, and bidirectional communication can improve institutional awareness of faculty innovation, reinforce inclusive definitions of excellence, and build confidence that faculty perspectives inform decision-making at the highest levels.

Observed Communication Challenges

The committee identified several recurring communication-related issues that affect faculty engagement across the institution:

- **Limited self-communication of innovation by faculty:** Faculty do not always effectively communicate the innovative aspects of their own teaching, research, or scholarly work to peers or to administration, which can limit broader awareness, recognition, and institutional learning.
- **Limited visibility of faculty innovation:** Faculty are often unaware of innovative teaching practices, research approaches, or collaborative models being developed by their peers, particularly outside their home units.
- **Incomplete administrative awareness:** Faculty expressed concern that central administrators may not fully appreciate the breadth of innovation and scholarly activity occurring across colleges, especially in areas that do not align neatly with traditional metrics or high-profile initiatives.
- **Unclear valuation of diverse contributions:** Inconsistent messaging can leave faculty uncertain about whether innovation, interdisciplinary work, or service-oriented scholarship is truly valued, particularly when recognition appears concentrated in specific domains.
- **Weak or opaque feedback pathways** Faculty reported limited opportunities to provide feedback to senior leadership that results in visible consideration, response, or change, which can contribute to disengagement over time.

These communication challenges intersect strongly with issues of collaboration and recognition. When faculty do not see their work acknowledged or their input reflected in institutional decisions, incentives alone are unlikely to sustain engagement.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for strengthening communication in ways that support faculty collaboration and engagement across all disciplines.

- **Increase visibility of faculty work and innovation**
 - Develop or expand mechanisms to regularly highlight faculty innovations in teaching, research, and service across a wide range of disciplines.
 - Ensure that institutional communications reflect diverse scholarly models and do not focus exclusively on a narrow set of research outputs, funding sources, or topics.
- **Strengthen two-way communication with faculty**
 - Create structured opportunities for faculty to share ideas, concerns, and feedback directly with senior leadership, with clear expectations about how that input will be considered.
 - Where possible, close feedback loops by communicating how faculty input has informed decisions, even when changes are incremental or constrained.
- **Clarify institutional values through consistent messaging**
 - Use communications from the Provost to reinforce that faculty excellence takes multiple forms and occurs across all colleges and disciplines.
 - Align messaging with evaluation and recognition practices to avoid mixed signals about what is valued.
- **Improve coordination across administrative units**
 - Encourage coordination among central offices (e.g., Academic Affairs, Research, Teaching and Learning, Faculty Excellence) to ensure consistent communication to faculty.
 - Reduce redundancy or conflicting messages that may create confusion about priorities or opportunities.
- **Support faculty-to-faculty communication**
 - Support platforms, events, or forums that enable faculty to learn from one another's work, particularly across disciplines or colleges.
 - Encourage dissemination models that prioritize accessibility and engagement over scale or prestige alone.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement depends not only on opportunities and incentives, but also on whether faculty feel seen, heard, and valued within the institution. Communication practices that elevate faculty voices, make innovation visible, and demonstrate responsiveness from leadership can strengthen trust and reinforce shared governance. Conversely, persistent communication gaps may lead faculty to disengage, even when institutional intentions are positive.

By investing in clearer, more inclusive, and more responsive communication strategies, the Provost can support a culture in which faculty engagement is sustained through mutual awareness, respect, and dialogue.

Topic Area 4: Resources for Collaboration and Engagement

Overview

Access to appropriate resources, in particular time and funding, is a critical determinant of faculty engagement and the sustainability of collaborative work. Throughout its deliberations, the Faculty Collaboration and Engagement Committee heard that many faculty are interested in participating in collaborative, interdisciplinary, or innovative efforts, but feel constrained by limited resources, uneven access to support, and funding models that privilege a narrow set of activities or outcomes. These constraints are especially salient for faculty whose work does not align neatly with high-cost, externally funded research paradigms.

The committee's discussions highlight that resource limitations are not solely a matter of overall availability, but also of distribution, structure, and perception. Faculty expressed concern that resources for collaboration and engagement appear concentrated in a small number of areas, often associated with specific disciplines or metrics, while other forms of scholarly and creative activity receive comparatively less institutional support. This perception, whether fully accurate or not, can affect morale, willingness to engage, and confidence that the institution values diverse contributions.

From the perspective of central leadership, resource allocation represents both a practical and symbolic tool. Thoughtful approaches to time, funding, and support infrastructure can reduce barriers to engagement, encourage experimentation, and reinforce institutional messages about inclusivity and shared purpose. Importantly, effective resource strategies need not rely solely on large investments; relatively modest, well-targeted supports can have outsized impact on faculty participation and trust.

Observed Challenges to Resources

The committee identified several recurring challenges related to resources for collaboration and engagement:

- **Time constraints as a primary barrier:** Faculty consistently identified time rather than interest, as a limiting factor for collaboration, innovation, and engagement, particularly in the context of heavy teaching, service, or administrative loads.
- **Uneven access to monetary resources:** Internal funding opportunities may be perceived as insufficient, inconsistently available, or misaligned with the scale and nature of work in certain disciplines.
- **Overreliance on limited metrics:** Funding and support models that prioritize a small number of indicators (e.g., external grant dollars) often marginalize valuable scholarly, creative, or service-focused work.
- **Perceived concentration of resources:** Faculty noted that institutional investments often appear focused on specific areas, reinforcing concerns that other disciplines or forms of scholarship are undervalued or overlooked.

These issues are closely connected to challenges discussed in the committee's analyses of collaboration, recognition and evaluation, and communication. Without adequate resources or confidence that resources will be available, faculty are reluctant to pursue collaborative or innovative work, regardless of institutional encouragement.

Suggestions for the Provost

The committee offers the following suggestions for consideration, with the understanding that resource allocation decisions must balance strategic priorities, fiscal constraints, and disciplinary diversity.

- **Recognize time as a critical resource**
 - Create mechanisms that acknowledge time investment in collaboration and engagement, such as course releases, workload adjustments, or flexible scheduling, particularly for early-stage or exploratory efforts.
 - Encourage units to view time allocations as strategic investments rather than short-term costs.
- **Support a range of funding models**
 - Explore internal funding opportunities that are scalable and flexible, recognizing that impactful work occurs at many levels of cost and scope.
 - Support pilot or seed funding programs that emphasize idea development, relationship-building, or pedagogical innovation, not solely immediate external funding potential.
- **Reduce overreliance on narrow success metrics**
 - Assess whether current funding and support structures disproportionately emphasize a limited set of outcomes, such as large external grants.
 - Encourage broader definitions of impact that reflect disciplinary diversity and institutional goals.
- **Increase transparency around resource allocation**
 - Communicate clearly about how and why resources are allocated, including the criteria used to support different types of work.
 - Highlight investments in a wide range of disciplines and activities to counter perceptions of resource concentration.
- **Align resources with engagement goals**
 - Ensure that resource decisions reinforce institutional messages about the value of collaboration, innovation, and engagement across all faculty roles and disciplines.
 - Create targeted investments that explicitly support cross-unit or interdisciplinary engagement, particularly where existing structures create barriers.

Connection to Faculty Engagement

Faculty engagement is deeply influenced by whether faculty feel they have the time, support, and institutional backing to pursue meaningful work beyond their immediate obligations. When resources are perceived as inaccessible, narrowly targeted, or misaligned with institutional messaging, engagement may erode, even among faculty who are otherwise committed to the university's mission. Conversely, visible and thoughtfully structured resource support can empower faculty to experiment, collaborate, and contribute in ways that strengthen both individual careers and institutional outcomes.

By attending to resource distribution, transparency, and alignment, the Provost can reinforce the institution's commitment to inclusive faculty engagement and create conditions in which collaboration and innovation are both feasible and valued.

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