Faculty Senate

Steering Committee

Minutes for meeting of Thursday, October 23, 2025, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

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

1. Call to Order at 2:59 p.m.
2. Roll Call via Qualtrics
3. Approval of Minutes of September 18, 2025
4. Recognition of In-Person Guests –

    Provost John Buckwalter

    Joel Cramer, Interim Vice Provost

    Scott Marrow, Communications for the Provost Office

5. Announcements –

    Chair King shared the following two announcements at the meeting:

    a) First announcement – Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting
        i) The next BOG meeting will be held November 5–6 at the University of South Florida campus in Tampa, and approval of the 45-day syllabus regulation will be one of the agenda items
        ii) Due to the meeting's schedule, the Chair will not return to Orlando in time for the start of the November 6 Faculty Senate meeting, so Vice Chair Jeff Kauffman will preside over that meeting
        iii) The Chair plans to join via Zoom while traveling and participate remotely in Senate votes

    b) Second announcement – Faculty Collaboration and Engagement (CnE) Committee
        i) The committee is having productive discussions on several topics related to faculty collaboration and engagement
        ii) A short faculty survey is being developed to explore barriers to collaboration, perceptions of technology, and other relevant issues
        iii) The goal is to distribute the survey before Thanksgiving; if delayed, it will be released in early January

6. Report of the Senate Chair –

Chair King focused his report on the topic of committee quorum and membership and discussed concerns regarding committee quorum and membership vacancies across several Faculty Senate committees

a) Purpose of Quorum: The Chair reminded members that, under Robert's Rules of Order, quorum exists to prevent a small number of members from taking action on behalf of the entire body and to protect the rights of those unable to attend a meeting
b) Current Challenges: Several committees are currently unable to meet quorum, preventing them from voting or conducting official business, and the main causes include:
    i) Member absences among seated voting members
    ii) Unfilled committee seats in some units, particularly smaller units that prioritize service on a limited number of committees
    iii) Difficulty recruiting graduate students and non-faculty representatives for certain committees

7. Clarification on Quorum Calculation: Following a review of Robert's Rules, the Chair noted that unfilled seats are not counted toward total committee membership when determining quorum
    a) For example, if a small unit (e.g., CREOL) chooses not to fill an assigned seat, that position does not count toward quorum; however, if a member is officially appointed but absent, that seat still counts toward the quorum calculation
    b) Chair King indicated this clarification will be shared with all committees to assist those struggling to reach quorum due to unfilled seats.
8. Quorum Requirements per Bylaws: The Chair reviewed relevant sections of the Faculty Senate Bylaws:
    a) Full Senate Meetings: A majority (over 50%) of current senators is required (currently 75 current senators, quorum is 38 members)
    b) Steering Committee: Quorum is 50% of voting members (currently 9 of 18); however, if the committee acts in executive session, a majority (10 of 18) is required

c) Joint Committees: These require a majority of voting members for quorum

   i) FCTL, Library – have meetings but don't report to Senate

d) Operational and Curricular Committees (e.g., Budget & Administration, Personnel, IT, Research, Graduate, and Undergraduate Committees): No explicit quorum standard is stated in the bylaws

   i) Proposed Options for Committees Without Explicit Quorum Guidance:
   ii) Option 1: Apply the same 50% quorum rule used by other operational committees
   iii) Option 2: Use the Robert's Rules default, which defines quorum as a majority of the members

9. Chair King invited feedback from senators to determine an appropriate quorum standard for committees not specifically addressed in the bylaws before concluding his report
10. Report of the Provost –

Provost Buckwalter expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to address the committee and provided several updates:

a) College of Sciences Dean Search
   The provost announced that the national search for the next Dean of the College of Sciences has officially begun, facilitated by Funk Associates

   i) The search committee membership announcement was distributed earlier in the day
   ii) He emphasized efforts to create a balanced and representative committee and shared that the first committee meeting will be scheduled soon
   iii) The committee's initial task will be to draft a national position announcement
   iv) The provost highlighted that the ideal candidate should be a strong communicator, an active listener, and a champion of shared governance who can represent both the College and the broader university enterprise, and the dean should engage alumni, community partners, and enrollment management teams while focusing on student recruitment, retention, and post-graduation success, in alignment with college and institutional priorities

v) Campus visits are anticipated for January and February, with the goal of an appointment announcement in early March
vi) The provost acknowledged that this is an accelerated timeline but expressed confidence that it will yield a successful outcome.

b) Search for Vice Provost
The Provost shared that preparations are also underway to launch a national search for the position currently held by Interim Vice President Joel Cramer
   i) The incumbent is welcome to apply, as national searches are viewed as beneficial even when internal candidates are under consideration
   ii) Invitations to serve on this search committee will be distributed this week.

c) The provost introduced Mr. Scott Marrow, who will assist with communications from the Provost's Office, including assembling and managing information about both searches and related website content.

d) Campus and Community Engagement
   i) The provost noted that he has been visiting various colleges, events, and partners to strengthen relationships and visibility across the university and state
   ii) Recent engagements include:
      (1) Rosen College Career Fair
      (2) College of Arts and Humanities activities
      (3) Attendance at the *Yurin Town* musical
      (4) Meetings with the Center for Digital initiatives
      (5) Leadership of Finance and Administration retreat
      (6) Visit to Valencia College to reinforce partnership collaboration
      (7) Visit to the College of Central Florida in Ocala
      (8) Engagements with state colleges across Florida
      (9) Participation in Advanced Turbomachinery activities
      (10) Brown bag sessions with university leadership
      (11) Honors College event recognizing faculty contributions
      (12) Participation in homecoming events

(13) Upcoming events include meetings with the College of Community Innovation and Education (CCIE), the Luminary Awards, and Space Week.

e) Strategic Plan and RCM Model

i) The provost reaffirmed continued progress on revitalizing the university's Strategic Plan and refining the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) model, with a target for draft completion and discussion in Fall 2026

ii) He addressed several questions about the RCM framework, clarifying that UCF will adopt a hybrid version of the model. He emphasized that while financial responsibility is important, colleges cannot be treated strictly as independent businesses and still be expected to thrive

iii) Within the university's structure, operations are generally categorized as service centers or revenue centers. The provost acknowledged that some academic programs, such as small or high-cost programs, may not be self-sustaining but are essential to the institution's mission. Likewise, student support units like the Writing Center and Math Launch are vital to student success, even if they operate at a financial loss

iv) To sustain these mission-critical but non-revenue-generating activities, the university will use a form of strategic investment funds (subvention) as a form of seed funding

v) The provost emphasized that this process will be more transparent and systematically managed than previous funding approaches

f) The provost concluded by expressing appreciation for faculty contributions to advancing UCF's mission and reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining open and ongoing communication with faculty and governance bodies.

11. Unfinished Business – None

12. New Business –

There were three items discussed at this meeting

a) First item: Past Chair William Self shared his perspective on the purpose and role of the Steering Committee based on what it has traditionally done in the past pre-Covid

i) His goal was to talk about the type of business handled by the steering committee in the past and help to strengthen what we do moving forward
ii) He shared several examples of past work conducted by the committee that had impact on leadership level decisions
iii) Generally, steering committee does not debate resolutions; we should be voting on whether it goes forward to the full senate or go back to the committee (we "steer" it)
iv) We have a great opportunity to work with the provost on university level decisions as a committee
v) Past Chair Self finished by going through the bylaws of what the steering committee does including some of the following key roles:
   (1) Serve as executive committee for the Senate
   (2) Monitor elections
   (3) Creates the senate meeting agenda
   (4) Serves as the Bylaws committee
   (5) Serves as the faculty advisory body to the president and provost of the university
   (6) Establishes ad hoc committees
vi) After his presentation, discussion took place on the following items related to this topic:
   (1) Meeting in person may be difficult for everyone, but we can look at better hybrid options
   (2) Should the steering committee take back the Bylaw responsibilities?
   (3) What role should the steering committee play in receiving budget reports?
   (4) Functioning as an executive committee to address faculty issues with leadership

b) Second Item: adding a Campus Climate Report on AI to the Senate Agenda for November 6th
   i) We already have Resolution 2025-2026-3 Bylaw Amendment: Faculty Student Success Council on the agenda
   ii) We would like to include a Campus Climate Report on Artificial Intelligence by Kevin Yee, Special Assistant to the Provost for Artificial Intelligence to the agenda
      (1) Motion to add this item was seconded and approved

c) Third Item: The Vice Chair presided during this portion of the meeting while Chair King presented on the Commission on Public Higher Education, a New Accreditation Body
   i) Chair King provided an informational update regarding the Commission on Public Higher Education (CPHE), a new accrediting body being developed across several states.
   ii) Overview and Purpose

(1) CPHE originated with participation from six state university systems (Texas A&M, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida)
(2) The goal is to create an accreditor that focuses specifically on public state university systems, rather than private institutions
(3) The initiative emerged from concerns that current regional accreditation processes are overly burdensome, arbitrary, and place excessive emphasis on fiscal independence rather than educational outcomes
(4) CPHE seeks to establish a streamlined, student-outcome-focused accreditation model
(5) Louisiana has recently joined or is in the process of joining the consortium.

d) State and Faculty Involvement

i) Florida has contributed approximately $4 million toward CPHE's development
ii) Other participating states are contributing expertise and personnel, particularly from UNC and the University of South Carolina, whose administrators and legislators are helping draft accreditation standards
iii) Leadership from the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS), including the Chair and Kim Dunn, engaged with counterparts in other states to:

(1) Express shared concerns with the existing accreditation system
(2) Discuss improvements that could make CPHE more effective

iv) Emphasize the importance of faculty participation to ensure CPHE is not politically driven or detrimental to institutional integrity

e) Formation of FREA

i) In response, faculty from several states formed FREA (Faculty for Responsible Education and Accreditation) to provide a collective faculty voice
ii) Strengths: Deep academic expertise and existing communication lines with individuals drafting CPHE standards
iii) Weakness: The group consists only of faculty, which limited perceived influence

iv) FREA members have since been invited to assist in reviewing and editing proposed accreditation standards

f) Progress and Impact

i) Many of the developing standards are student- and outcomes-focused; however, some proposed standards raised serious concerns

ii) FREA submitted detailed feedback, leading to several substantive changes, including removal of a clause stating that state law would take precedence over Commission standards in the event of a conflict

iii) Ongoing revisions continue, and additional rounds of feedback are anticipated

g) Next Steps

i) CPHE is now recruiting initial accreditation teams even before standards are finalized

ii) Approximately ten institutions, including Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and another member of the State University System, have been identified for early participation

iii) The Chair concluded the report by noting that faculty engagement through FREA has already made a meaningful impact on the evolving standards and that continued faculty involvement will be essential as CPHE progresses.

13. Committee Reports –

B&A committee, Jim Gallo, Steering liaison
IT committee, Crystal Maraj, Steering liaison
Personnel committee, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
Research Council, Linda Walters, Research Council chair
Undergraduate Council, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
Graduate Council, Reid Oetjen, Steering liaison

All Committees except Grad Council shared their reports.

14. Other Business – None
15. Adjournment – 5:02 p.m.

Faculty Senate

Daniel Seigler　　　　10/24/2025

Daniel Seigler　　　　Date

Secretary, Faculty Senate

Oct 23rd steering committee chair announcements and report

First announcement, the next BOG meeting is Nov 5th and 6th at the USF campus in Tampa. The BOG agenda will include topics such as potential approval of the 45-day syllabus regulation.

Based on expected timing that the BOG meeting will end, I will not be back in Orlando in time for the start of our senate meeting on the 6th. Therefore, Vice Chair Jeff Kauffman will be presiding at that Senate meeting.

Second announcement: Faculty Collaboration and Engagement committee. CnE committee-

We are having great conversations on several topics:

To gather more information, the committee is developing a short survey for faculty. It will look at barriers to collaboration, perceptions of technology and other topics of interest.

If all goes well, we will distribute the survey before thanksgiving.

If all goes slowly, we will distribute in early January

OK, time for my report today.

I want to talk about our faculty senate committees and quorum.

The idea behind quorum according to Roberts rules is to prevent a small number of members from passing something when few members are present. It specifically preserves the rights of those members that cannot attend a meeting.

Why am I bringing this up?
Several of our committees are having trouble making quorum, and this is stopping the committees to act and to vote on items and take care of committee business.

Part of the problem reaching quorum is absences of committee members, there are always some voting members that cannot make a meeting. Not much we can do there

The other part of the problem reaching quorum is that for some of our committees, multiple seats have not been officially filled.

For example, some of our smaller academic units have the ability to seat a faculty member for a committee but decide not to do so since they have small numbers of faculty and they prioritize committees and service to the most critical ones for their concerns.

Furthermore, we are having problems with getting grad students and other non-faculty to serve on some of our committees.

To look into this in more detail I did a deep dive into Roberts rules.

There is an important nuance for Quorum that I believe is underappreciated.

And that is that when you examine committee rosters to determine the number of members needed for quorum, you **DO NOT** include seats that have not been officially filled. This means that if a small unit like CREOL decides not to seat a faculty on the academic calendar committee, then the total membership of the committee does not include them and quorum is adjusted.

However, if an official committee faculty member is seated but just decides not to come to a meeting, their seat on the committee roster is still filled and therefore, they would still be part of the calculation for quorum.

Ok pause there. That make sense?

I am letting all of you know this now, as I will be sending this information out to all our committees. I hope this guidance will help a few of our committees that don't have official members identified to fill all the seats and therefore have not been achieving quorum.

But wait. There's more:

Lets go see what our bylaws say about quorum:
What is the actual number of members we need in the Faculty senate for quorum?

For our full senate meetings: Our Bylaws state a majority is needed. So just over 50% of 75 current senators…50% is 37.5 so we go to 38 senators needed for quorum

For committees, steering has a requirement that 50% of members constitutes a quorum. We currently have 18 voting members on steering 15 from units plus 3 officers…. Bill self is a non-voting member on the committee since he is not a current senator as he fills the role of past chair. In this case we need 9 voting members for quorum. If Bill was also a current senator, then we would have 19 voting members and we would need 10 voting members for quorum.

However, if the steering committee is acting in executive session when the Faculty Senate is not in session, then a majority of voting members is needed. Same math as before. 18 voting members means we need 10 members for a majority quorum of steering if we act in executive session when the Full Senate is not in session.

The only other reference to quorum in the bylaws is in regards to all of our joint committees: these are the committees that DO NOT report to senate at our monthly meetings (think FCTL, travel awards, master planning, academic calendar and so on). The bylaws require all of these joint committees to have a majority of voting members present for quorum.

The other operational and curricular committees (B&A, personnel, IT, Research grad committees and undergrad committees) have no reference to quorum AT ALL.

So a question to you: what should those committees require for quorum in the absence of explicit bylaws

Option 1) since the one operational committee that reports to senate requires 50%, we could have those other operational committees also require 50%.

Option 2). In the absence of explicit information, the committees could resort to the default designated in Roberts Rules. And that would be a majority.

I would welcome your feedback as I have to make a determination on this quorum requirement at the request of our committee chairs.

I will end my report there.

Thank you.