

UNO Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

November 30, 2023

Attendance

Present: Nicola Anthony, Brian Beabout, Laszlo Fulop, Tina Johnson, John Kiefer, David Lambour, Marc Landry, Linxiong Li, James Logan, James Marchant, Andrea Mosterman, Brendan Mott, James Mokhiber, Dinah Payne, Connie Phelps, Greg Price, Lindsey Reno, Steve Rick, James Roe, Dan Rule, Brian Seeger, Chris Summa, Lisa Verner, Michelle Wade, Vincent Yu, Ting Wang, Phoebe Zito

Absent: Mayar Amouzegar, Donald Barbe, Rachel Clostio, Adlai Depano, Kabir Hassan, Simon Lailvaux, Ariya Martin, Steve Rick, Ray Rodriguez, Robert Stufflebeam,

Updates from the Provost's Office (D. Kruger)

It has been a budget priority to ensure that F and A goes back to departments and units and that has been achieved. Next week is the UL System Board meeting and UNO has two items on the agenda. We are asking that UNO be added to the list of other UL institutions that offer in-state tuition to international students. A BS in Neuroscience is also to be approved by the Board. There has been a conversation about relaunching the council of Chairs and Directors group and it should start meeting early in the calendar year.

Updates from the President's Office (K. Johnson)

Kathy Johnson provided a quick overview of her first month of presidency. It was prefaced by 5-6 weeks of Zoom meetings with the leadership team. She has met with the Senate Executive Committee, Staff Council, and Student Government. She believes that enrollment services is a big area for opportunities for improvement and is a big priority. There was a resolution passed by SGA about the challenges regarding disbursement of financial aid funds. A vacant position caused a problem with Financial Aid and Blue Icon has been engaged to help fill in this gap in operations. A focus will be to understand the culture, values, and programs that are most important on campus. KJ is creating a new leadership group to look at the budget, which will consist of DK & KJ's leadership teams plus senate and staff council leadership. She also wants to build a very strong data infrastructure.

Updates from the Faculty Senate President (C. Phelps)

Governor JBE approved parental leave for State employees, which specifically exempts employees in higher education. SEC will be working on a letter from the senate to send to the System board to express our support for parental leave within the UL system.

Updates from Committees

The International education advisory committee has withdrawn their resolution to create a standing committee. They will continue to operate under the previous senate resolution.

Academic Committee

Chris Summa presented the results of the survey on sabbaticals (PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes).

Comments and discussion followed. The committee does not yet have a plan for going forward, but this is something that they will discuss. The committee also discussed course evaluations, but doesn't have a presentation at this point.

Administrative Committee

Connie Phelps reported that the Committee went over the international committee proposal. They will also be revising faculty senate bylaws and the grievance procedures.

Budget Committee

Phoebe Zito reported that the committee discussed a proposal brought forward by the Computer Science Department for a schedule of faculty pay increases. They don't believe that the proposal would work. They also believe that the burden of addressing salary inversion/compression should be brought back to the University administration.

New Business

Nicky Anthony brought up an issue regarding the minimum requirements for international student admission to UNO. Clarification is needed on what types of degrees are accepted when much of the rest of the world grants three year bachelor degrees. She asked other faculty what kinds of challenges they face in admitting international students. Discussion followed. Nancy Biggio reported that the University of Louisiana System requires Bachelor's degree or equivalent. Each institution is allowed to evaluate these applications using their own criteria. UNO requires outside evaluation of international transcripts by companies that are approved by NASIS. Discussion followed.

Jim Mobkiber asked whether or not UNO still has the space utilization committee? DK reported that we do have the committee and that there is faculty representation on it.

Marc Landry reported that there have been complaints about Faculty member parking spots being blocked. Dean Samuel Gladden stated that he did communicate with faculty about the parking issues that would happen due to the solar array construction.

Brian Seeger reported that departmental websites are terribly out of date, including listings for faculty who no longer work at UNO. Discussion followed.

Brendan Mott reported that parking problems and broken links have also been discussed in Student Government.

Results of Sabbatical Survey of UNO Faculty

Data Collected Fall Semester 2023

Total Responses: 109

1. What College do you belong to?

[More Details](#)

● College of Business Administrati...	19
● College of Engineering	6
● College of Liberal Arts, Educatio...	49
● College of Sciences	30
● Library	2



Awareness of Sabbatical Policy: 39/109 36%

2. Were you aware of the UL System's sabbatical leave policy (1 year of sabbatical after 6 or more consecutive years of service, or 1 semester of sabbatical after 3 or more consecutive years of service, at 75% salary)?

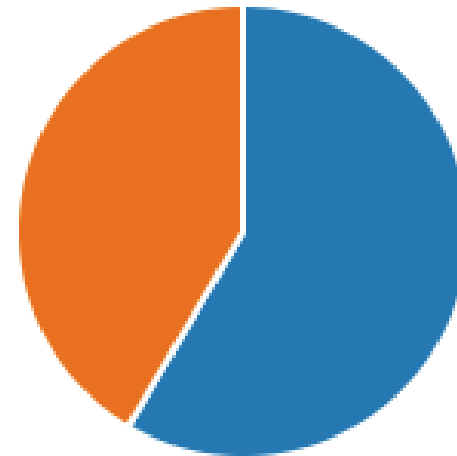
[More Details](#)



Eligibility for Sabbatical: 62/109 57%

3. Have you been eligible to take a sabbatical since UNO entered the UL system in December of 2011?

[More Details](#)

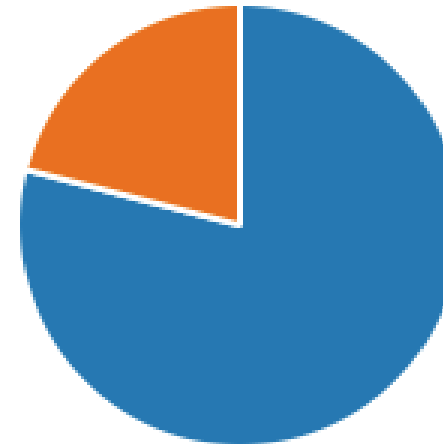


Interest in Sabbatical: 49/62 79% of eligible

4. Have you had interest or intent to take a sabbatical since UNO entered the UL system in December of 2011

[More Details](#)

 Insights




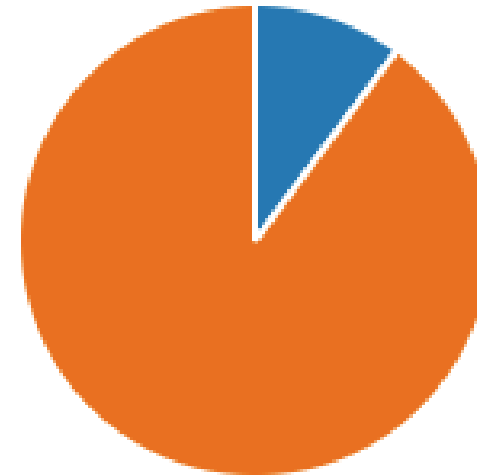
Actually took Sabbatical: 5/49 10% of interested

5. Have you applied for and taken a sabbatical since UNO entered the UL system in December in 2011

[More Details](#)

 Insights

	Yes	5
	No	44



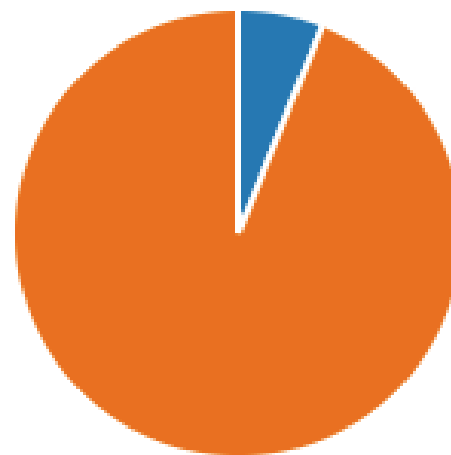
Denied Sabbatical: 3/8 38% of applicants

6. Have you applied for, but been denied, a sabbatical since UNO entered the UL System in December of 2011?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

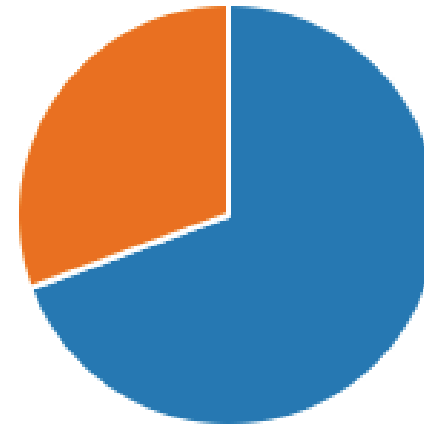
 Yes	3
 No	46



Discouraged from Sabbatical: 34/49 : 69% of interested faculty

7. Would you have liked to apply for a sabbatical, but been discouraged from doing so, since UNO entered the UL System (either explicitly or based on extenuating circumstances)

[More Details](#)



Sabbatical Accomplishments (2/5 responded)

- AY 2020 -- not a great time to take a sabbatical ...
- I did not travel. During my 2015 sabbatical, I conducted extensive research for a new interdisciplinary monograph on place studies and fiction of the N.A. West. I have not had leave to pursue this project, however.

Stated Reasons for Sabbatical Denials (3/5 responded)

- We only have two. (UNO has only sabbaticals to allot this year...)
- For the first three times I applied, I received no notice nor any explanation at all -- not even that my application was reviewed, evaluated, or denied, until the chair of my department inquired on my behalf. The fourth time I was notified by the Dean of my college, explaining that most sabbaticals were going to be denied for financial reasons (with only one being awarded for a faculty member on a Fulbright, although when I was awarded a Fulbright, the university deducted my benefits while I was gone). The fifth time, the dean cordially met with me to explain that he could not recommend my proposal -- not for its lack of merit but because he knew in advance it would be denied by the upper administration, and he could not in good conscience mislead me, even though he expressed that he endorsed my proposal and has done what he can to support my work. Despite this experience, each year I have been eligible for sabbatical leave the university has continued to post it as available to professionally active faculty , so I have continued to apply.
- None (Assuming this means "no stated reason")

What are the perceived barriers to taking a sabbatical? (Overview)

Knowledge that sabbaticals are rarely approved (Lost cause)	7
Budget Issues	4
Extreme and Chronic Understaffing	9
Administration	9
Pay Cut Unaffordable	3

Example Responses to “Barriers”

- I was under the impression that sabbatical leaves are rarely approved under the UL system.
- Told that administration not granting leave because of UNO long standing budget problems.
- Was told not to bother applying by my Chair because they would not support it or be able to afford hiring a temporary instructor
- Upper administration doesn't want to approve
- lack of care by UNO's upper admin.

Example Responses to “Barriers”

- It is almost impossible for most people to afford to take a cut in salary to do a sabbatical. Most grants do not allow us to charge that much of our salary. Also during this time 2011-2018, there were no faculty raises, making sabbaticals unaffordable. If you hold a Chair position, it's also impossible to do....yet we only get paid 9 months of the year (sometimes getting some summer salary).
- Told that administration not granting leave because of UNO long standing budget problems.
- Extreme Personnel shortages

Example Responses to “Barriers”

- I perceive as the main "barriers" to be an upper administration that has come systematically to strip the academic operations of UNO in order to support a budget that favors a burgeoning administration (more and more new deans and vice-presidents), while the ranks of the faculty get depleted, especially those faculty engaged in research that is not oriented toward remuneration but toward pure research and/or creative production.
- A sabbatical would be somewhat irresponsible at a time when our programs are so low on full-time faculty. The loss of faculty is the barrier.
- *Not explicitly* but given we are chronically understaffed in my department; how would I take a sabbatical? How would UNO pay for a sabbatical when the budget is so grim every year.

Example Responses to “Barriers”

- When I inquired about a sabbatical after receiving promotion with tenure, I was told "it wasn't a good time by several administrators despite colleagues having sabbatical approved in previous years.
- First, I was told the UL System wasn't granting any. Then, I was told UNO wasn't supporting any applications. Then, I was told we had to complete our strategic plan and accreditation. Then, I was told we were too short of faculty. All of this was from whatever dean we happened to have at the time. A sabbatical would be somewhat irresponsible at a time when our programs are so low on full-time faculty. The loss of faculty is the barrier.

Where Does Denial Happen?: 62/109 57%

9. If you have applied for, but have been denied a sabbatical, at what level of administration was your application denied?

[More Details](#)

● The Departmental level	0
● The College level	1
● The University level	2
● The UL System level	0

