



University Faculty Council

Meeting: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 - 4:00-5:00 PM

Location: G204 | <https://neomed.zoom.us/j/97592756946?pwd=mqrxS6oUNTHbu2fm9ACJXmG02HFTeK.1>

ZOOM Information: Connection time 3:55 PM

<https://neomed.zoom.us/j/97592756946?pwd=mqrxS6oUNTHbu2fm9ACJXmG02HFTeK.1>

Or Telephone: +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll); +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 975 9275 6946 | Password: 928357

Members (attendance in bold): Jeffrey Mellott (chair), Petrea Cober (vice-chair), Timothy Barreiro, Natalie Bonfine, Yeong-Renn Chen, Lukas Everly, Sheila Fleming, Alex Galazyuk, Kristen Knepp, Yong Lu, Jennifer McKay, Vahagn Ohanyan, Matthew Smith, Erica Stovsky

Speakers: Ms. Maria Schimer

Administrative Support: Andrea Coard, Deborah Loyet

4:00 p.m.- 4:10 p.m.	1	Welcome <i>Jeff Mellott, Ph.D., Chair, University Faculty Council</i>	Dr. Mellott opened the meeting at 4 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He announced that there would be no leadership report and that the meeting would conclude earlier.
	2	Approve previous UFC minutes 10.01.2024 <i>(Approved minutes located on NEOMED website)</i>	Dr. Lu moved to approve the minutes; Dr. Cober seconded. The minutes were approved by the council members.
	3	Executive Management Team Notes Executive Management Team Spring 2025 meeting sign ups	Dr. Mellott reminded council members to submit their notes from the EMT meetings to Andrea within one week, emphasizing the importance of these notes. He also informed them that the sign-up sheet for Spring FY25 is available online, with the expectation that each representative attend at least one meeting per semester.
4:10 p.m.– 4:30 p.m.	5	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) <i>Maria Schimer, M.P.H., J.D., General Counsel and Chief Technology Transfer Officer</i>	Dr. Mellott advised the council members that Ms. Maria Schimer, General Counsel, was in attendance to provide an update on DEI following a request from faculty members. Ms. Schimer discussed the President's Statement on Diversity on NEOMED's website with the council members. This was published in June 2024 after the Supreme Court ruled on the Harvard Admissions case. We cannot use race/ethnicity in admission decisions.

We issued a statement in 2023 that said we embraced diversity and will abide by State and Federal Law. Then updated the statement in 2024.

We modified to further define diversity as follows:

- First Generation college students
- Students from Rural Backgrounds. This could be challenged as largely the population in rural Ohio is Caucasian, which is a race factor. Ms. Schimer, would make a case for this being more related to economic or education issues.
- Economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. This will be identified by Zip Code.
- Military affiliated. This is unique and not seen in many other universities.

A statement at the bottom says that NEOMED is a Public University which subscribes to best practices in holistic admission approaches.

Mr. James Barrett, Director of Admissions, Senior Executive Director for New Student Enrollment Initiatives has advised of these diversity categories. The largest number is from the First Generation. For College of Pharmacy students, 56% are coming in under one of the diversity categories.

Following the Supreme Court decisions involving Harvard and the University of North Carolina, we reviewed the issue of scholarships awarded based on race. Can scholarships be awarded based on race? The answer is no. Shortly after the rulings were issued, we received a letter from the Ohio Attorney General advising that scholarships based on race, ethnicity, or gender are prohibited. Furthermore, any attempts to circumvent these restrictions could result in legal action by the Attorney General's office. We will be subject to action by the Ohio Attorney General's Office if we enter into subterfuge. We have 22 scholarships initially intended to be awarded based on race, ethnicity, or gender. Our plan is to reach out to the donors of these scholarships to discuss the possibility of reformulating them to comply with the new legal requirements.

A council member inquired about which branches of the military are included. Ms. Schimer clarified that all branches, including the Reserve Corps, are covered. Regarding poverty, individuals may be considered economically and educationally disadvantaged, which could place them into one of two categories.

The College of Medicine has its own [statement](#) located under the President's Statement. It mirrors closely to the University statement. The other three colleges do not have separate statements and have adopted the University statement.

			<p>A question was raised about accreditation requirements and the corresponding statements. Ms. Schimer explained that the College of Medicine (COM) developed its statement to ensure compliance with LCME standards. Similarly, we collaborated with the College of Dentistry to meet CODA accreditation requirements. The university's statement was reviewed and deemed appropriate and acceptable by the accreditation team.</p> <p>As colleges implement changes to definitions, these updates are reviewed and approved by the President and Provost. The Board of Trustees has requested regular updates on any such changes and the evolving definitions. This has become a regular topic of discussion during Board of Trustees meetings.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. The committee's name will remain unchanged, and it continues to operate under the defined diversity elements. One of the recent issues the committee is addressing is the enactment of the Campus Act, which includes provisions related to harassment based on religious beliefs. Training on religious affiliation and related topics will be provided by the Ohio Department of Higher Education in the near future.</p> <p>Another question was asked regarding the scholarship situations, particularly those involving gender-specific criteria. In response, Ms. Schimer stated that, at this time, we have been prohibited from awarding these scholarships. As a precaution, we have temporarily paused their distribution and are holding them in a "safe harbor" status until we receive further guidance or observe additional developments.</p> <p>In Ohio and other states, there exists a specific legal action, referred to as 'cy-près' meaning as near as possible, which allows the court to reformulate donor agreements. This process involves petitioning the probate court to modify the terms of the agreement in a manner that aligns with the donor's original intent while ensuring compliance with current legal and operational requirements. You may revise or rephrase this language as necessary to ensure it adheres to applicable legal standards.</p> <p>How do these changes impact HR, faculty hiring, etc? The statement primarily addresses student admissions. We do not believe the Harvard case has any direct impact on affirmative action in hiring practices. However, we are tweaking our policies to avoid the use of the term "affirmative action". Affirmative action typically applies when considering two equally qualified candidates. As of now, we have not been advised that we are prohibited from using affirmative action in our hiring processes but have been asked to provide our hiring policies .</p>
--	--	--	--

			<p>A question was asked about posting job vacancies in multiple locations. This practice has not changed, as we aim to attract applicants from a wide geographic area.</p> <p>The Faculty Empowerment Plan is not posted on the Portal. It is posted on the intranet. Ms. Schimer confirmed it should be posted on the portal. We will reach out to Human Resources regarding this.</p> <p>A council member inquired about the status of Senate Bill 83. The bill has not passed yet; we are waiting to see the outcome of the election, as it depends on who will be the next Speaker of the House. While the bill has passed the Senate, it still needs to pass the House. It is currently in its 11th version, with a vote scheduled for December. The latest version looks quite different from the original. Once the bill passes, we will bring it back for discussion with the faculty. If it passes the House, it will become law.</p> <p>Dr. Mellott thanked Ms. Schimer for her update.</p>
4:30 p.m.– 4:40 p.m.	6	<p>Faculty Workload Policy <i>Jeff Mellott, Ph.D., Chair, University Faculty Council</i></p>	<p>Dr. Mellott informed the council members that the workload policy is being revised in some form, though it's unclear whether the changes will be better or worse. Many faculty members have voiced concerns to the President, and he is making adjustments in response.</p> <p>The revised policy will be more simplified. Once we have more details, we will share them with you. Ultimately, the goal is to use the workload policy to justify faculty hires and support Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB).</p>
4:40 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.	7	<p>Open Forum and Department updates from Council members <i>Group Discussion</i></p>	<p>The Anatomy/Neurobiology and Integrative Medical Sciences departments will be merging into a single department. Since UFC membership is based on the department count, Dr. Mellott has initiated an inquiry into how this change should be addressed. No decisions have been made at this time, and it is assumed that the UFC will play a role in the process. It is likely that the bylaws will need to be revised to accommodate this change. The group will contain around 30 individuals when merged.</p> <p>As new centers and institutes are established, faculty will be incorporated.</p> <p>Questions were asked about the timeline for the department mergers. Dr. Mellott said it will be soon.</p> <p>Dr. Mellott shared that the pillars of the strategic plan are still progressing, with the research pillar actively moving forward. A survey regarding the research pillar will be distributed soon. He strongly encouraged everyone to complete the survey once it becomes available.</p>

		<p>The College of Dentistry is conducting a search for a permanent Dean. Most dental hires will take place in January.</p> <p>Dr. Langell is exploring ways to enhance the appearance of hallways C, D, and E. Faculty with cabinets or other items stored in these hallways are encouraged to review their necessity and remove any nonessential items.</p> <p>A meeting took place today regarding the BMS program, with the KSU Provost and the Dean of Biology. The discussion was productive, though monetary concerns raised by KSU remain an issue, as they are requesting additional funding. The next step will involve revisiting the partnership to draft a new agreement that benefits both institutions.</p> <p>The current agreement is set to expire in 2029. When asked how students starting the program in 2025 will be impacted, it was confirmed that these students will be protected and allowed to complete the program, regardless of the agreement's expiration.</p> <p>Dr. B inquired about the UFC seat on the University Research Council (URC). The question was raised whether a new person will be nominated for this role. While no one initially volunteered, Hans Thewissen, a department chair, expressed interest. Dr. German is currently reviewing the matter, but no official letter of appointment has been issued at this time. This matter will be addressed at the next UFC meeting in December.</p> <p>Dr. Mellott said Dr. German will be providing the leadership report at the December meeting.</p> <p>Dr. Mellott hopes to have more information regarding the workload policy to discuss at the December meeting.</p> <p>Dr. Cober moved to adjourn the meeting and Dr. Galazyuk seconded. The meeting concluded at 4:52 p.m.</p>
--	--	---

Upcoming Agenda Items

December 3 – Leadership Report – Dr. German

SAVE THE DATE: Upcoming Faculty/Professional Development Opportunities

Current faculty who will be teaching in the Bitonte College of Dentistry have been invited to these sessions. Additional faculty interested in attending are welcome to email Dr. Hillyer, jhillyer@neomed.edu, or teachingexcellence@neomed.edu, for the Outlook/Zoom invite.

- Assessment Overview - Monday, November 18 (10 - 11 a.m.)
- Active Learning Strategies - Monday, December 2 (9 - 10 a.m.)