Chair Teal called meeting #20 to order at 3:31. A motion (Stoll/Wolf) to accept the minutes from the February 23rd meeting passed without objection.

Chair's Report: Chair Teal reminded Senators that their colleges need to start the process of elections for next year's Senate. There is a list of FAQs on Senate elections included in this week’s packet. New Senators need to be elected by April 15th.

There has apparently been some concern expressed that the new teaching evaluation forms passed by Senate last week were going straight to the President. This is not the case. Approval of the student evaluation forms will follow the regular procedure and be on the agenda of the next UFM. The Teaching/Advising committee has clarified that the optional questions will still be available.

Provost’s Report: There was no Provost Report this week.

FS-16-042 (UCC-16-034): Regulation J. This proposal involves course additions to the catalog categories for general education courses (Humanities-Social Sciences-American Diversity-International). A question was raised about the process of accepting these courses. Secretary Crowley (speaking for Kenton Bird) briefly explained the process. Faculty (or departments) submit proposed courses to UCGE for the various categories. Proposals should address the stated criteria for inclusion into a particular category. Sometimes courses may fit into more than one category. Once a course receives approval from UCGE the proposal goes to UCC and, if approved, comes to the Senate. The proposed course additions passed unanimously.

FS-16-018: FSH 3710 Leave Policy – Parenting. This proposal reflects an attempt to address some of the concerns raised by the Provost at the meeting several weeks ago. Secretary Crowley noted that it was not our intention to vote on the revised proposal today. These proposed revisions have been approved by FAC and cover the following:

- Allows the primary caregiver to take parenting leave (FMLA) upon hire (C-7 f, M-3). If both parents are UI employees only one is eligible to take parenting leave upon hire.
- Includes language about extending the probationary period if an employee takes parenting leave during a period of probation (C-7 f, M-3).
- Allows employees who take parenting leave to maintain a balance of 80 hours of annual leave if they choose (E-3, M-2). This proposed revision is an attempt to find the compromise point between the view that employees must use all their annual leave before going on leave without pay and the current language in FSH 3710 which allows employees to go on leave without pay while reserving annual leave.

Senators raised several questions. One question asked about the use of the word “suspended” when referring to the probationary period. It was suggested that we should include the words “initial
probationary period”. This Senator also wondered whether there was some other word than “suspended.” He suggested postponed. Vice-Chair Brandt responded that suspended was the better word to indicate a pause.

Another Senator asked whether this included faculty coming up for tenure. It was suggested that faculty coming up for tenure who had taken parenting leave under this policy could still decide whether they wanted to come up for tenure at the expected time. If a faculty member wanted to delay the tenure clock they could apply under the existing policy (see FSH 3520 F-9).

There was some discussion of the term “primary care-giver”. Secretary Crowley suggested that the term might be awkward, but was an attempt to suggest that only one parent would be eligible for the parenting leave on arrival. The policy would leave it up to the newly arriving couple to decide who qualified as the primary care-giver.

Ubuntu: After a slight pause in the proceedings, Professor Erin James, Chair of Ubuntu, arrived to discuss the current activities of this committee. Ubuntu’s responsibility is reviewing and promoting university policies on diversity. Ubuntu also recommends changes in diversity programs on campus. Professor James discussed this year’s MLK Art & Essay contest. This was the 2nd year of the contest which is designed to get students involved in discussing diversity on campus. The contest is well-funded by a cross-section of the University. They give awards in four categories and the 1st place prize in each category receives $500. This year’s contest asked participants to take inspiration from Alicia Garza who was this year’s MLK speaker. Students were asked to consider creating artwork that imagines how we might work to create a more caring and diverse campus community. Professor James considered the contest a success, but they had a small number of participants and thus they had money left over. She asked the Senate to help promote the contest in the future to get more participation and campus involvement.

The discussion that followed focused on ways to get more campus participation and more widespread displays of the art submitted. There was also a discussion of finding better methods of promoting the contest through campus communications and other means. Professor James expressed a desire to get more faculty involved in assessing and judging the art submitted.

Other activities Ubuntu has been involved with include obtaining space on campus for lactation rooms and searching for rooms for meditation. The committee has been reviewing benefits for transgender faculty, staff and students. They are conducting a survey of the benefit packages provided by peer institutions to compare them to what we offer. Finally, Ubuntu is working with Disability Support Services to create better guidelines for online courses that comply with the ADA.

Adjournment: With no other business on the agenda, a motion (Latrell/Flores) to adjourn passed unanimously at 4:20 leaving Senators time to search for Spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Crowley
Secretary to the Faculty Senate and Faculty Secretary