

Minutes of the Executive Committee – APPROVED

January 14, 2021 (virtual, held using Zoom, business conducted)

Convener: Tim Tryjankowski

Officers Present: Tim Tryjankowski (Chair), Don Erb (Vice Chair), Hugh Jarvis (Secretary)

Executive Members Present: JD Augustine, Jessica Coram, Lynn Emminger, Rita Ferri, Chris (CJ) Keough, Jenna Lenz, Dom Licata (ex-officio), Rose Mammen, Jill Rexinger-Kuhn, Marlo Roetzer, Virginia Stever, Krystal Testa

Executive Members Absent: RJ Multari

Members/Guests: Tony Waleszczak, Kim Krzemien

Parliamentarian: Rachel Poole

Staff: Jessica Naish

Recorder: Hugh Jarvis

Meeting called to order by Tim Tryjankowski at 3:02 p.m.

Quorum reached: 9 members and 3 officers present.

Supporting documents in Box.com folder in Professional Staff Senate/ Meetings/ Executive Committee Meetings



PRESENTATION OF AGENDA – Tim Tryjankowski

- **Motion to adopt Agenda: Rita Ferri (Jenna Lenz). Passed.**

REVIEW OF PAST MINUTE(S) – Tim Tryjankowski

- **Motion to approve Minutes from December 10, 2020: Rita Ferri (Jessica Coram). Passed.**

CHAIR'S REPORT – Tim Tryjankowski

- Adopt a Family program was a success raising round \$3,000.
- VP for Student Life Search Cmt has about five professional staff members from our contributions.

Office of University Shared Governance
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pssenate@buffalo.edu

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- Pres. Tripathi appreciated receiving a copy of the humor presenter's book.
- Hope for federal money to subsidize UB's budget.
- Talk among units of returning to pre-pandemic budgets.
- March is annual Shared Governance Day. We will highlight in our March newsletter, but no plans for a larger event. Hopefully our Drive for 25 Resolution will be ready by then.
- Celebrated PSS award winners during virtual event. 2021 nominations occurring now
- Looking at our finances, extra money, encouraging Recreation & Wellness Cmt to offer prizes for winners to their activities.
- Chair encouraged UB admin to elevate need for more employee vaccinations in 1B category.
- Plans continue for bench dedication ceremony to honor former PSS Secretary Sarah Piraino. Located on Founders Plaza near Career Services by Talbert Hall.

- **Motion to receive: Chris Keough (Rose Mammen). Passed.**

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT – Don Erb

- Awards Cmt – Will have a virtual event. Outstanding Svc Award nominations due mid-March.
- Inclusion & Diversity Cmt – Changes in leadership and membership and revising charge. Event on Supervisor's Role in Diversity & Inclusion was success. Planning Inclusive Excellence Summit for April 8, 2021.
- Constitution & Bylaws Cmt – We are reviewing their proposed changes today.
- Elections Cmt – Elections underway, nominations will close January 31.
- Staff Development & Engagement Cmt – Gift of Laughter event a success.
- Recreation & Wellness Cmt – Issue with kayaks – will be managed by Student Assn who is currently w/o a budget and thus unable to help us. Looking at additional bike/walking events and wellness activities such as virtual wine tasting.

- **Motion to receive: Lynn Emminger (Jessica Coram). Passed.**

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Hugh Jarvis

- Request from Carl Lam to serve as Area 3 senator.
 - **Motion to appoint Carl Lam as Area 3 senator: Jenna Lenz (Lynn Emminger). Passed.**

- **Motion to accept: Chris Keough (Rose Mammen). Passed.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Special Committee on Redistricting – Tony Waleszczak

- Conducted a survey in December to ascertain support for two proposals on EC reorganization:
 - Results were inconclusive. Only 12 respondents, split 5:7.
 - **Proposal 1: Ranked Voting**
 - Pool all interested candidates and top vote-receivers would be seated.
 - Concerns raised that 'factions' could gain control of EC and poor engagement in some areas would lead to unequal representation.



- **Proposal 2: Committee Chairs**
 - Would seat all committee chairs (currently nine) on EC.
 - This approach is used successfully at some peer institutions.
 - Concerns raised that would result in unwanted load on chairs leading to burnout.
- **Tentative new Proposal 3, “Connecticut Plan”**
 - Seat all committee chairs, as well as seating at least one member through ranked voting.
 - Advantages include freeing up Vice Chair’s time from reporting committee activity (which is currently their main role) and the ability of the ‘at-large’ members to work in new ways.
- Next steps: committee will continue to construct a new reorganization plan. Still need to divide representation among large divisions (esp. medical school and provost’s office) and finalize restructure of executive committee.
- Should be ready to present to EC by February or March, 2021.
- Seeking direction on preferred direction.
- Discussion:
 - Concern with committee chairs serving on board, since they are not elected. This is a routine concern in SUNY governance.
 - Committee chairs routinely report that their work is very demanding already so concern with overload is a significant issue.
 - Perhaps committee vice chair role could be developed to take up more load, and free up chairs to be more involved with EC.
 - How concerned are we with equal representation across the five areas. Limiting our representation to the current five areas may be reducing participation.
 - The loudest voice is not always representative. May be a minority. Has occurred elsewhere.
 - Concern that popular people might not wish to run, because of fear of being then required to be on EC as well.
 - Some committees are only active for part of the year, why should they then take on year-round responsibility.
 - Committee chairs already have a significant load. This will discourage people from serving.
 - Concern that EC represents entire university and not just large units (e.g. CAS). Strict ranked voting would skew EC membership towards units with highest volume of votes.
 - Suggestion that each committee put forward a representative, plus we have several at-large members representing each campus.
 - Committee chairs could be elected by the entire senate. With terms.
 - True democracy requires contested elections and true representation reaching all areas.
 - Why isn’t this discussion being applied to the general redistricting discussion, not just EC?
- Request by chair to return with more information about redistricting in general.

Drive to 25 Resolution – Tim Tryjankowski

- Draft provided for discussion. Still needs editorial review.

WHEREAS (“UB”) University at Buffalo President Satish Tripathi, in his 2020 state of the university address, envisioned that the priority of UB will be to rise to a top 25 rank in nationally regarded publications such as, the US News and World Report : Ranking of US public research institutions,

And WHEREAS, the address was given and accepted as a report to the university community and further accepted as the President's report by the University Council,

And WHEREAS, the metrics highlighted as "areas to improve upon" in those ranking included national and international award recognitions of faculty, retention of students, increase in research activity and growth of student enrollment,

And WHEREAS, the UB Professional Staff Senate (PSS) was established on July 30, 1971, thus marking the 50th Anniversary of the UB Professional Staff Senate on July 30, 2021.

And WHEREAS, The PSS was established by proclamation of President Robert L. Ketter, the PSS Constitution ratified in 1972, defining the purpose of the Senate to "seek an active role for the professional staff in the governance of the University; provide advice and counsel in administrative matters; and assist in the development of administrative policies and procedures",

And WHEREAS, many of these ranking factors (including those we are currently rated highly in) will involve direct and indirect input, and support of the highly educated, dedicated and talented professional employees of UB, as stated in the PSS charter;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that we the professional staff of the University at Buffalo commit to:

-work to enhance the academic reputation of UB by:

- Continuing to invest and devote professional services to research endeavors
- Look to move away from UB investments in fossil fuels
- Prioritize student experiences and academic offerings

Promote initiatives to diversify the UB community at every level, to increase representation and bring new perspectives and continue to grow a global community

Influence campus decision making as it relates to sustainability issues and issues of campus beautification

- Promote participation in larger sustainability initiatives to promote awareness throughout UB community (i.e. <http://www.buffalo.edu/sustainability/keyinitiatives/sustainability-month.html>)
- Help to plan and support ALL UB campus beautification initiatives
- Promote awareness and education through various modes of delivery including social media, videos and events sponsored through the PSS and other campus groups, such as UB's Office of Sustainability <https://system.suny.edu/capital-facilities/energy-management/sustainability/campuses/>)

influence university policies to offer and promote a most robust system of physical, mental and emotional well-being of students, faculty and staff by the most accessible means across our varied locations in cooperation with Counseling Services, Accessibility Services, Student Conduct & Advocacy, EDI, Wellness Office, TASS, EAP Employee Assistance Program, HR virtual workshops, Career Services, Navigate, Blue Table, Emergency Funds, Scholarship Portal, etc.

--strive to offer exceptional service to students, parents, faculty researchers and all UB community members so as to increase satisfaction, recruitment and retention outcomes. Achieving this through careful planning and assessment of services in student advising, community engagement, employee professional development, alumni relations and outreach and UB professional rank retirees, in order to create life-long learners, educators and service providers as full time members of our UB community

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- *Aim to improve undergraduate four-year and six-year graduation rates by extending additional support to at risk students starting their freshman year, providing a clear pathway to graduation.”*
- *“Identifying and take active steps to eliminate any gaps in student retention and graduation rates influenced by race, ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, disability status, and veteran status”*

-continue to elect members of the Professional Staff Senate to serve as active members of campus committees and hiring search committees to promote a diverse work force on campus that better reflects the diversity of our students and of us all.... in areas of race, religion, and gender... as diversity and awareness of social and societal issues can in some part be addressed through the lens of diversity of faculty and staff – leading to a more diverse and comfortable student body.

And WHEREAS, *this body commits to these standards as well as offering our own professional flexibility to solve unforeseen challenges as they materialize, such as remote learning and instruction with the myriad of support services and technologies necessary “behind the scenes” to allow for faculty and students to thrive, based on the efforts and expertise of UB professional staff*

WHEREAS *we the membership of the over 3,000 professional staff members of the UB community work force submit this resolution to president Tripathi, his administrative cabinet and the UB Board of Trustees on this the 10th day of February 2021, and be it further resolved that we welcome every opportunity to;*

-work with campus and community partners at every occurrence as it relates to our shared goal of achieving a top 25 national public university ranking for the University at Buffalo

And BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED *that we present this resolution as a sign of our good faith in all devoted partners working together to achieve the best for UB and the entire Western New York community in which we all live, work and thrive.*

THEREFORE be is resolved *that we the officers and Executive Committee members of The University at Buffalo Professional Staff Senate, backed by a motion and vote of support of our elected area senators and our general membership, present this Resolution of Professional Staff Action in Support of UB’s Drive to 25 to UB President Satish Tripathi and the University at Buffalo Council as a gesture of exemplary shared governance practices and shared action as we seek to attain the goals outlined in the 2020 State of the University address.*

- A number of issues were raised, including structure, redundant clauses, grammar, and typographic errors. Chair will take another pass through it, email a revised version, and we will discuss again at February meeting.

Review of By-Laws and Standing Order Changes – Don Erb

- Shared final version for approval (provided below the minutes).
- Discussion raised several typographic errors and clarified rationale for some of the changes.
- Note: EC participation is now part of regular senate attendance. Remote meeting guidelines are now part of standing rules and can be invoked by the chair.
- **Motion to accept all changes as presented (with correction of typographic errors): Jessica Coram (Rose Mammen). Passed unanimously.**

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- Discussion: How will this be circulated and then voted upon. All members need adequate time to consider the changes?
 - Parliamentarian: Will need to provide 15 days advance notice. Can then discuss at general meeting. If no changes, can then be approved and adopted.
 - Chair: We have missed the cutoff for January, but we can disseminate in newsletter and on website with plan to review at January general meeting and if there are no changes, can be reviewed and possibly approved at February general meeting. Can also hold Zoom forum(s).
 - Hope to have it sufficiently vetted before the meeting so that it can then just be adopted.
 - Will hold Zoom meeting then disseminate 15 days before February 25th general meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Jan 28 general meeting – Despina Stratigakos (VP Inclusive Excellence) and D’Ann Keller (Athletics)
- Feb 25 general meeting – bylaws changes; Dr. Gale Burstein (Erie Co. Health Commissioner)
- Mar 25 general meeting – possibly Laura Hubbard (VPFA)
- Apr 22 general meeting – Pres. Tripathi
- May 27 general meeting – open
- Jun 24 general meeting – open

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn: 4:34 p.m.

Attendance sign in sheet(s) available through the PSS office.

Meeting audio recording available through the PSS office.

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Proposed Amendments to the *Bylaws of The Professional Staff Senate* and the *Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate*

Prepared by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and submitted to the PSS Executive Committee, December 9, 2020.

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Bylaws of The Professional Staff Senate

Article III: Membership of the Senate

Section B — Allocation of Senators Among Areas

4. Representation from the areas shall be according to the ratio of one senator for every 30 members of each electoral area **with a minimum of 1 senator for each area**. Only a full multiple of 30 will entitle an area to an additional senator.

Rationale:

Clarifies that even if an area has fewer than 30 members they are entitled to one senator.

Section D — Election of Senators

1. **Any member of the Professional Staff can nominate themselves or other professional staff members from their respective Area to serve as a Professional Staff Senator in that Area. Elections shall be held within 10 days after the nomination process to fill the number of vacant senator seats in each of the respective areas.**

Rationale:

New paragraph clarifying the nomination process for senators within an electoral area.

3b. **No person senator shall serve as an alternate. concurrently to more than one senator nor shall any senator serve as an alternate.**

Rationale:

Simplifies language, and breaks second point into a new paragraph (c.).

3c. **Alternates may only serve as a proxy for one individual senator at any meeting where business is conducted.**

Rationale:

Separates the second point from the formerly preceding paragraph for clarity. (Former paragraphs c. and d. now become d. and e., respectively.)

Section E — Attendance

1. **If a senator is unable to attend a meeting of the Senate, the senator shall notify the PSS Office in advance, if possible, and request to be excused prior to the scheduled meeting.** Proposed Amendments to the **Bylaws of The Professional Staff Senate 4**

Rationale:

New paragraph requiring (as has been requested in practice) notification of the PSSS office. (Subsequent paragraphs are renumbered.)

4. If both a senator and that senator's chosen alternate are absent from **two consecutive meetings or** any three meetings all year (beginning July 1st), that senator shall lose their seat in the Senate. The Executive Committee may move to reinstate the Senator.

Rationale:

Previously paragraph 3. Eliminates the requirement of not missing two consecutive meetings thus loosening the circumstances under which a senator may lose their seat.

Article V: Executive Committee of the Senate

Section B — Membership

4. One senator, elected by and from the senators representing each area, who shall serve as a non-voting alternate member of the Executive Committee, except when serving as substitute for one of the area senators described in the preceding paragraph, **under which circumstances they will have a vote.**

Rationale:

Clarifies that Executive Committee alternates shall be considered as regularly attending members of the committee, without a vote, unless they are actively serving as a proxy for an absent senator in their area.

Section E — Attendance of Executive Committee Members

1. **If a senator who is a full member of the Executive Committee cannot attend a meeting of the Executive Committee, they must notify the elected alternate from their area and ask that they act as their proxy.**

2. **An alternate may only serve as proxy for one of two senators in from their area.**

3. **If a full member is absent and the area alternate is not able to attend, or if the alternate has already been asked to proxy for the other senator, then that senator's absence shall be counted towards the three allowed, as described above.**

Rationale:

Adds attendance requirements for full members of the Executive Committee and the role of the elected alternates. Proposed Amendments to the *Bylaws of The Professional Staff Senate* 5

Section F — Vacancies

1. When a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee in any of the respective Areas, the alternate executive committee member will move up to committee member and the new alternative will be the senator with the next highest number of votes in that respective Area.

Rationale:

Codifies recent practice of filling vacancies within the Executive Committee.

Article VI: Senate Committees

Section A — Membership

1. Members of committees shall be approved by the Executive Committee Chair, and shall serve for such terms and shall perform such duties as the Executive Committee shall determine.

Rationale:

Removes the burden of requiring the Executive Committee to approve of all changes to committee rosters and gives more authority to each committee chair. The Executive Committee retains ultimate authority in that it appoints each committee chair, and such chair must make changes to their roster known to the Vice Chair of the PSS, as established in the Standing Rules. Proposed Amendments to the *Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate* 6

Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate

Article III: Meetings of the Professional Staff Senate and General Membership

Section C. Remote Meetings

Business of the Professional Staff Senate may be conducted remotely via synchronous video teleconferencing whenever deemed to be appropriate by the chair. Meetings will be announced in accordance with timeframes specified in the Bylaws. The meeting link will be sent to participants by the Secretary in line with current meeting notification requirements.

Remote meetings will be conducted via synchronous video technology that allows all participants to see, hear and speak with one another. Members shall be considered present if they have joined the meeting and can be both seen and heard by all participants. Quorum will be determined by a roll call of the senators present at the beginning of the meeting and members joining or leaving after will directly notify the Secretary via chat. The secretary will be responsible for monitoring the presence of quorum so that business may continue to be conducted.

Motions and voting shall take place in line with the Senate's Governing Board documents. Motions will be put forth and seconded by voting members and will be open for discussion through the video connection as well as through the chat, and when appropriate the chair will ask for a verbal yay/nay vote. If the vote cannot be called from the verbal vote an individual count vote will be taken, allowing the Chair time to visually confirm each members' vote via their video stream. If necessary, the Chair can ask for clarification from the member on their vote.

Procedure:

1. Secretary will prepare a spreadsheet in advance with all the names of senators and include any alternates that are standing in based on emails received. Meeting will start by reading the roll, requesting "present" (or we announce "absent"), and then request anyone who is acting as an alternate to self-identify.
2. Secretary will then quickly adjust the master spreadsheet and email it to the officers while meeting continues. This spreadsheet would be used to support an individual vote count.
3. For vote count, this would happen any time there is not a straight no contest yay vote. However, a simple verbal yea/nay in the cases where there is no contest and a full vote for yes.

Rationale:

Authorizes the conducting of remote meetings whenever deemed necessary and enumerates procedures. Proposed Amendments to the **Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate 7**

Article V: Meeting Attendance

Section A: General Procedures

3. Absences

- a. Immediately following a meeting at which a senator or their respective alternate was not present, the Secretary shall send the senator a notice, reminding them of the attendance bylaws, and that if **one more consecutive meeting (or three meetings during a fiscal year)** are missed, they will forfeit their seat, as per the Bylaws.
- b. Immediately following **two consecutive meetings (or a total of three meetings during a fiscal year)** where a senator or their alternate was not present, the Chair shall notify the senator that their seat has been forfeited.

Rationale:

Removes the “two consecutive meeting” stipulation to be consistent with proposed Bylaws change.

Article VIII: Nominations and Elections

Section A – Nominations for Elections

1. In accordance with the PSS Constitution, members and senators will be provided with a nomination ballot upon which nominations for the officer, executive senator, and senator positions may be submitted.
2. Each member may nominate a single member for each office.
 1. Officers: In accordance with the Constitution of the Professional Staff, members will be provided with a nomination ballot upon which they nominate one individual for each open seat.
 2. Senators: In accordance with the Bylaws of the Professional Staff Senate, members will be provided with a nomination ballot upon which they may self-nominate or may nominate other members from within their respective area.
 3. Executive Committee: Senators will be provided with a nomination ballot upon which each member may self-nominate or nominate other Senators from their respective areas.

Rationale:

Delineates the different nominations procedures across each cohort. Proposed Amendments to the *Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate* 8

Section B – Nominations to Fill Senate Vacancies

2. Any Senator may nominate a member of the Professional Staff to the Executive Committee serve as a Senator in their respective area by emailing pssenate@buffalo.edu.

Rationale:

Corrects an error. Nominees to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee must be current senators from that area. This section pertains to Senate vacancies.

Section C – Electoral Areas

As per Article III, Section B of the Bylaws of the Professional Staff Senate, the Executive Committee shall determine electoral areas and the allocation of senators within those areas.

The electoral areas and the organizational units contained therein, can be found in the Appendix.

Rationale:

The method of determining electoral areas and senator allocations is not codified elsewhere. A critical review of organizational units and their grouping together within electoral areas should be conducted at least annually.

Article IX: Transitions

Section C: Professional Staff Senate

1. Appointments to vacant seats.

1. New senators shall go through an orientation process.

2. Beginning of term — The Chair should send out letters to new senators (letter to supervisor for release) with expectations, etc. and a letter to their supervisors, noting the significance of the valuable service the employee will be providing, and requesting appropriate release time for university sanctioned activities, in accordance with UB policy.

3. End of term – letter suitable for their personnel file.

Rationale:

Removes misplaced first paragraph. Former subparagraphs become numbered paragraphs.

Establishes the requirement of an orientation process, as has been the practice.

Adds details to the letters that should be sent to senators and their supervisors at the beginning and end of their service. Proposed Amendments to the *Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate* 9

Article X: Budget

Section A: Reports

1. Budget reports are provided to the PSS Chair upon request to assist and inform the officers and Executive Committee on fiscal matters.

Rationale:

Establishes the expectation that the PSS Chair may request reports as needed.

Section C: Procedures for Funding Requests

1. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Budget Advisory Committee solicits funding request from committee chairs for pre-planned or expected expenses using the “PSS Committee Budget Projection” spreadsheet, which is available on the PSS Website under the “Committee Toolbox” tab.

2. On a case-by-case basis thereafter, committee chairs may submit requests for PSS funds by completing the form entitled “PSS Budget Request for Committee Activities” spreadsheet, which is available on the PSS Website under the “Committee Toolbox” tab.

3. The Budget Advisory Committee can vote to approve committee expenditure requests that do not exceed \$500.00.

4. If a request exceeds \$500.00, the Budget Advisory Committee must first vote on the request and then, if approved, forward to the Executive Committee for final approval.

5. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the PSS Chair reserves final approval of all expenses from the PSS Budget.

Rationale:

This is a codification of previous practice and consolidation of recent Executive Committee motions.

Article XII: Committees of the Professional Staff Senate

Section B: Membership

3. Committee Members

a. Each committee will have at least **three two** members, in addition to the Chair of the committee and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Professional Staff Senate who serve as *ex officio* members on all committees. Proposed Amendments to the **Standing Rules** of *The Professional Staff Senate* 10

Rationale:

In practice, several committees have functioned with two members plus the committee chair. The new language reminds that the bylaws place the PSS Chair and Vice Chair as full members on all committees.

Article XIII: Communication with Members

Section B: Regular Correspondence

3. **The Office Assistant and PSS Secretary shall update email lists and ListServes** The Staff Assistant and Secretary of the Professional Staff Senate shall update email lists and ListServes whenever the membership lists are updated as specified herein in Article XV Membership Lists.

Rationale:

Requires that email lists accurately reflect updated membership lists.

Section C: Use of ListServes

3. **No senator, or member of the Staff may elect to be removed from ListServes utilized for official purposes.** No senators or members of the Professional Staff should be encouraged not to unsubscribe from ListServes utilized for official business purposes of the Professional Staff Senate.

Rationale:

Recognizes the importance of members remaining on the official lists, even though nothing prevents them from unsubscribing themselves.

4. **ListServes utilized for official purposes shall be curated by the Office of Shared Governance.**

ListServes utilized for official purposes shall only be used by the Professional Staff Senate Officers for official notifications.

Rationale:

Clarifies the intention of "curated".

Article XV: Membership Lists

Section A: Generating Membership Lists

1. PSS membership lists shall be **generated updated** quarterly, **thought with** the assistance of the Human Resources Offices. The Staff Assistant shall initiate request and coordinate with HR to complete the list compilation. Proposed Amendments to the **Standing Rules of The Professional Staff Senate** 11

Rationale:

Emphasis on updating lists rather than creating from scratch.

2. The list shall contain a comprehensive inventory of current professional staff employees and the following data:

9) Organizational Units (See Appendix, to be updated at least annually)

3. Generated lists shall contain the Organizational units (as recently supplied by your office):

Rationale:

The list of organizational units is outside of the purview of the PSS. Moving it to the Appendix will allow it to be updated as necessary without amending the Bylaws. Appendices 12



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APPENDIX IV: Organizational Units

Last updated 10/27/2020

- 1) Academic Affairs
- 2) Architecture and Planning
- 3) Athletics
- 4) Chief Information Officer
- 5) College of Arts and Sciences
- 6) Dental Medicine
- 7) Engineering
- 8) Finance and Administration
- 9) Graduate School of Education
- 10) Law
- 11) Library
- 12) Management
- 13) Medicine
- 14) Nursing
- 15) Pharmacy
- 16) Advancement and Alumni Engagement
- 17) President
- 18) Provost
- 19) Public Health
- 20) Research
- 21) Social Work
- 22) University Communications
- 23) University Life

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