

A MEETING
OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021

NEEMA KUDVA: As Jill puts the slides back up again, I just wanted to make an announcement. Is Charlie gone, Jill?

JILL: Yeah.

I am very proud to be making this announcement. It is a historic announcement at one level, that the dean of faculty elections this year has an all-women slate. It will be the first time in Cornell's history, and I am so pleased to be the one who is actually making this announcement.

We have two wonderful candidates, Risa Lieberwitz and Eve De Rosa. They are both here today with us, and they will be presenting sort of their positions. I'm not going to introduce them. I'm going to let them introduce themselves, but I just am absolutely thrilled the two of them have agreed to stand for election. We start with Risa, because we didn't know whether Eve would be back from vaccination or not. Risa, if you want to -- yeah, please stop sharing now. Risa is at ILR, and Eve is at the College of Human Ecology. I'll let them explain who they are.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Thanks a lot. Thank you, Neema. I appreciate having the opportunity to speak today and look forward to hearing from Eve and also hearing questions and having a chance to have discussion.

I'm going so start with stating the obvious. Charlie and Neema both referred to it; this is a stressful year. The crises of this past year have heightened our attention to the essentials of life, personal relationships and societal structures. What I'd like to do is to first spend a few

moments reflecting on the connections between the crises of this past year and our work in the university.

The University cannot and should not seek to isolate itself from dealing with societal crises. That includes crises of public health, police violence and political turmoil. In fact, the crises of this past year have reminded us of the important role of the university. Through our teaching, research and service, we seek to fulfill higher education's mission, which is to serve the common good.

This includes, for example, studying racial inequality in our classes, engaging in research on medical challenges in a pandemic, caring for the health and welfare of our students and our colleagues, and taking actions, both in words and deeds, to confront crises in democracy.

A reminder of the University's role in these times can also bring us back to first principles. For faculty, that means protecting and preserving the values and norms of the academic profession that enable the University to fulfill its public mission; that is, academic freedom, job security and shared governance.

These values and norms are interrelated and interdependent. Faculty need academic freedom to do meaningful teaching and research and to engage in shared governance. All faculty need job security to fully exercise their academic freedom in all these areas. Shared governance, strong shared governance, including through the Faculty Senate, is essential to protecting faculty academic freedom and the faculty's central role in deliberations and decision-making on matters of educational policy. Shared governance is always essential, and it may be even more essential at times of crisis, to preserving the university.

It's my great honor to be a candidate for dean of faculty at this moment. I believe that I have the expertise, the experience and the dedication needed for the position of dean of

faculty. For many years, my teaching, research and service have focused on academic freedom, shared governance and the role of higher education in a democratic society.

I have actively engaged in shared governance at Cornell in the Faculty Senate and its committees over the many years I've been here. Since 2019, I have been President of the Cornell Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, the AAUP. I have a great deal of experience at the national level as well. Since 2014, I have been general counsel of the National AAUP, and I'm a member of the AAUP Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

As dean of faculty, I would draw upon my expertise and my experience, in order to advocate for faculty rights and for shared governance. I would work with the Faculty Senate to increase the effectiveness of shared governance.

I'd like to highlight now several recent examples that show the importance of strong and healthy shared governance. The antiracism initiative that we've just been talking about is one example. The initiation of the antiracism initiative could have, and I believe should have involved faculty governance more actively from the start, but I think it's very good and very positive that we've had important faculty senate discussions and debates on the multiple prongs of this initiative, and it's good that we're going to continue doing that.

I'd also note that the Antiracism Center proposal includes democratic government structures, which remind us once again of the importance of governance principles throughout the university. In another recent example, shared governance worked well when the administration and Senate jointly developed the Cornell Policy Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech and Expression.

I played an important role in working with the university counsel to strengthen the statement, and the Senate had excellent discussions of the statement prior to its favorable vote and subsequent board of trustee approval.

Then, third, in an example about international programs, the Senate has had very important discussions and votes very recently supporting resolutions to ensure the active role of shared governance to evaluate whether international dual and/or joint degree programs meet Cornell's ethical principles. And it's my hope that this can be the foundation for positive proposals to strengthen shared governance in these areas.

These examples reveal both that we have successes that we can build on and that we have a lot of work to do to strengthen shared governance. By working together to expand a deepened faculty participation in shared governance, I believe that we can make progress towards these goals.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions and to our discussion.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thanks so much, Risa. Eve? And we have time for questions after we hear from Eve.

EVE DE ROSA: Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. I think you'll see a lot of overlap, actually, in Risa and I's perspectives; but obviously, I'm taking a different perspective in the sense that I come into this from a different lived experience.

I'm honored to have been nominated for the dean of faculty position. I was recruited here to the College of Human Ecology from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Toronto, just in time for Cornell's sesquicentennial, which is not easy to say when you're nervous.

After a decade of success at the top university in Canada, one might ask what moved me to take the risk of re-establishing both an animal neuroscience lab and a human neuroscience lab at a new institution. I was compelled by the founding principle of any person, any study; the particular favor of our College of Human Ecology, and its execution of the land grant mission.

I've had many leadership roles in my relatively brief time at Cornell, some of which I listed in my biography, but I was recently appointed to a leadership role in October 2020 as the Dean's Fellow for Racial and Social Justice. As evidence of my dedication to solutions, my first step was to meet with all of the administrative leadership in the college, to not only share my vision, but more importantly, to listen and learn.

Then I collaborated with them to shape the college-wide faculty cohort hiring initiative. I named this Pathways to Social Justice, and I shared that also with the committee of the senate. I was really pleased that a short time after, we were able to publicly release this initiative, in January 2021. We're currently going through the search process, and it looks like some wonderful scholars who are committed to having a positive impact on communities in and outside of Cornell will be on this campus in July.

The reason I'm sharing this initiative with you is because it's the most recent evidence of my ability to help an entity to arrive at a solution that not only respects the faculty's voices here, because each year it will select its own scholar, but also how solutions can align faculty from very diverse disciplines.

In our college, we have molecular biologists, engineers, economists, fashion designers, but all of the faculty were willing to align to this common mission. This process of conversation and collaboration is obviously scalable and can be flexibly applied here to shape university-wide missions, like the antiracism efforts that were discussed here in the senate.

And obviously, that's a work in progress. That's exactly what the senate is for. We hold many identities, our affiliation with Cornell, our college, our department, our scholarship, our communities, our roles in our families. And I encourage us to continue to bring all of those identities here to the senate.

However, I know that we can continue to expand the impact of the Faculty Senate to include new voices, more discourse -- maybe disagreements in this space; it's possible -- but I really should share with you that I'm using the current dean of faculty position to also advocate for resources, to build more mentorship structures for the incoming faculty, so they can be here long-term to contribute to the faculty voice, much like the tenure track project that's been discussed in the senate over the past few years.

The college faculty emeriti and emerita don't know this yet, but they are a big part of my mentorship vision. I just want to make sure that I belong to a department that will be dissolved into a super-department on July 1st, and that is not by choice. And I belong to a college that was in an existential crisis, so I'm well aware of the need for bottom-up counterweight to the administration, and I want and maybe even need for the faculty to be more impactful on these decisions.

I believe I was nominated because of my evidence of my ability to advocate. The dean of faculty position is not part of the administration, it does not have a budget, so persuasion is the primary weapon in our arsenal. I am a researcher in career and at heart, and the dean of faculty position has the superpowers of the expertise and insights of our faculty to propose thoughtful, insightful solutions.

The Faculty Senate has been revitalized under the leadership of Charlie, Neema and the recent membership of the committees. I think we can continue to grow that and amplify the faculty voice to the trustees, president and provost. I have appreciated and will continue the public chairing of the work in progress, and how they come to resolution has been fascinating to follow their trajectory.

From my perspective, shared governance is all about community involvement. For this group, this group should continue to provide remote attendance so you meet quorum. I know

in the past, that's not always been so easy. This group should engage more faculty and bring additional voices through the senators, so that this process becomes really democratized.

Just want to say thank you for considering me for the position.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you so much, Eve. Thank you so much, Risa. I know we have some folks with questions, and I see one hand up already. Ken Birman.

KEN BIRMAN: Let me just say my own thanks to Eve and Risa for wonderful statements that really give a sense of where each of you is coming from. My question is about shared governance, and I want to give a little bit of context for those who might not recall the period.

When President Pollack was brought in, we had come out of a period, I would say, of tension between the university administration and the senate. We saw that particularly under President Garrett, when the Business Program was created without much consultation with the senate. There was a breakdown of governance in that situation.

Risa, you were a leader in protesting that, which I respect, but you also argued for a vote of no confidence in the president. What I'm recalling is when she fell sick and was unable to come and talk with us about her reasoning for creating that structure, rather than pull away from this to give her an opportunity -- because as it turned out, she had cancer at that moment and was hospitalized -- it was pushed forward.

You were on the UFC and, in fact, we were going to vote on no confidence when President Garrett was in a coma, as it turned out. She passed away on March 6, 2016, and we canceled the Faculty Senate meeting, but the agenda included your vote, your proposal on this no confidence vote. It strikes me that there's a question here of what I would call social norms of the proper mode of engagement between the senate and the administration.

I would have been very embarrassed, had we gone forward and had a vote of no confidence directed towards a dying president in the last days of her life. I wonder if the two of

you could speak a little bit to this question of what we do when we have a strong tension around a question of shared governance, and how far we go before, in some sense, we back down, which, in some cases, we have to do.

NEEMA KUDVA: If we could hear maybe from Risa and Eve, before we move on.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Thanks. Yes, since that was initially directed at me, I'm glad to be able to respond. Factually, Ken, I wanted to make a correction, which is that, indeed, we did decide to pull the no confidence vote. It wasn't actually literally a no confidence vote. It was more of a censure. We were very disturbed, of course, by what had happened with the College of Business, as were many faculty, which was unilaterally created and announced, with no faculty governance involved at all.

I was on the UFC, the University Faculty Committee, at that time, as you noted. And we were called together by the provost to simply tell us this had happened. And we were also told by the provost that, when we asked why wasn't there shared governance involved, why didn't this got to the senate, why didn't this come to the UFC first, we were told that the Administration realized there would be opposition to the unilateral creation of the College of Business, so they went ahead and did it. Of course, there was a very reasonable response to the failure of the Administration to respect the Senate in any way with regard to the creation of the College of Business.

Those are issues that are not new, they were not new at that time, the lack of respect for faculty governance. It really was a tense time. There were a lot of issues that led up to that. Outside of the College of Business, there were other issues. This was an issue that many of us felt were very important to address.

It was, of course, very tragic that President Garrett died. It was a very sad and very tragic situation. We're all in agreement on that. In light of that, we, in fact, decided that it was appropriate to pull the motion.

Now, having addressed your preface, I want to go to your actual question of how is it that we should address times of stress and times where there's vehement disagreement. I agree with Eve that we should, as much as possible, use and look at shared governance as a democratizing process, bringing in lots and lots of voices and broadening and deepening our shared governance processes.

There will, in fact, be times of conflict. Whether we have shared governance or not, there will be times of conflict. Shared governance is a long term, it's been in effect for more than 100 years from the AAUP developing it. Shared governance, I think, is a process that we can build so that when times of conflict occur and disagreement, what we have is a strong democratic process for full discussion.

As we strengthen our shared governance process, then that, I believe, will create an incentive for the administration to show more respect for the shared governance process, similar to what we saw with the statement of academic freedom. I think that's a perfect model for success, and that the other situations of unilateral action by the University really are models that will just simply lead to people feeling demoralized, disturbed by a lack of respect for our collective voice and consultation as the faculty. I think that really having strong shared governance will lead to resolution of conflict.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Risa. I see on the chat that there's some concern over the question that Ken raised. To me, it felt appropriate. He did ask me if it was okay to raise the question, because I think it was a difficult period in our history, and all of us did the best we could. But I felt it was important for Risa to be able to speak to that question, to address what

was sort of factually not quite right, and that it was important for the rest of us to hear Risa respond to that.

I also want to give Eve a chance to respond, if you want to, Eve.

EVE DE ROSA: First, I would want to say, Risa, amen. I think that everything you said I do also agree with. I would use the example of something that's been brought to our attention, has been an apology, and whether it should exist and whether it should become a school of public policy.

I would argue that the fact that it still exists is because of the Faculty Senate. I'm thankful for it; and hence, I'm here today because of it. I understood the power. It impacted me personally. Most of the discussions were happening on the Social Science review. There was a disproportionate representation from PAM on the Social Science review that's making this decision for us. This is not coming from us. We did not ask for this. The majority of the faculty, the two largest departments weren't represented in those proportions.

There's that saying that if you are not at the dinner table, then you're on the menu. That's what that felt like. A lot of us asked for our senators to bring our voices into this process. When it looked like the Senate was not going to support this, it was taken off the table. That's a lot of power, so I thought it was beautiful. I'm thankful, so I have gratitude to you guys, and that's why I'm here today.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Eve. I see Richard BenseL had the next question.

RICHARD BENSEL: I have a question for both Eve and Risa. To me, one of the most important provisions of the organizations and procedures of the University Faculty is in Article 11, which says, which provides that the Faculty Senate shall have, quoting, a speaker who will serve as an impartial moderator of senate meetings and that the speaker, quoting again, shall be selected by the Senate.

The Faculty Senate has not had a speaker during this academic year. The responsibilities for presiding over the senate have been taken over, absorbed by the dean of the university faculty. If you were elected, Eve and Risa, dean of the university faculty, would you support the election of a speaker by the Faculty Senate as the presiding officer at our meetings?

NEEMA KUDVA: Eve, I guess you get to go first this time.

EVE DE ROSA: Yes. I'm obviously at a disadvantage, historically. I have not been at the university for a long time, so I don't know what was behind why an independent voice was not selected, but it seems quite reasonable to follow that mandate, so my answer is yes.

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Thanks. I certainly agree. We should have a speaker. It's something I've thought about, and this has been an unusual year, to say the least. And I think we are all trying to do the best we can in a very difficult situation, but I believe that a speaker is important, in order to actually enable the Faculty Senate to function in a way that's consistent with the governance body, to have somebody whose position is not taking substantive positions, but rather the job is to make sure that the agenda's followed, the time limits are followed, that people have a chance to speak, to do the votes, et cetera.

I think it's very important. It's one thing I've thought about, to extend my answer just a little bit, in terms of what I'd like to see with regard to reports at meetings. I would like to hear more from the University Faculty Committee. I don't think that most faculty, including senators who haven't had a chance to be on the UFC, really know how it functions.

I was on the Governance Review Committee, I chaired that committee that put out a report in 2007. One of the things that we recommended was having reports from the UFC regularly to the Faculty Senate. I think that would also expand the voices that you hear.

Then, along those same lines, I would like to hear from the committees when they have reports, more than we have. I appreciate what Charlie has done in increasing the number of

meetings we've had this year and really keeping us with a full agenda, and I know how hard that is to do. And I appreciate the work that Charlie and Neema have both done, but I'd really like to hear from more faculty voices, which will increase participation, and I think simply enrich our discussion.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Risa.

EVE DE ROSA: I'm curious, if you don't mind just one minute -- what the impact was of not having a speaker and that neutral voice?

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Sorry. Are you asking me?

NEEMA KUDVA: Richard, I think.

RICHARD BENSEL: Let me reply. Look at the situation we had today, where the dean of faculty, on his own initiative, brings a report before the Faculty Senate, then moderates the discussion, also is moderating the chat. I tried to post yesterday, and it took ten hours. It was a critical post against what I thought was the report, but it took ten hours to post it.

The concentration of presiding power with committee power, the dean of faculty appointed himself co-chair of that committee, then brings the report, on his own initiative, before the Faculty Senate. The concentration of power, it makes me uneasy. And the presiding officer, one protection in situations like that, is to have, as our rules say, a speaker who will serve as an impartial moderator of senate meetings. I think that's incredibly important.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you. Carl Franck, please.

CARL FRANCK: Thank you so much, and I very much appreciate what Eve and Risa have said and willingness to serve. It makes me very optimistic about what happens next. My question was -- Risa touched on it, and if Eve could speak as well, but I'm very curious as what they see as the importance of the University Faculty Committee and -- I'm not even familiar enough with the rules -- is it that's malleable in their hands? I know it sets the agenda for our

meetings, but if they could just speak to how that would be important in their administration as dean of faculty.

NEEMA KUDVA: Risa?

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Thanks, Carl. Yeah, having served on the University Faculty Committee, I found it to be a very interesting committee. I haven't been on it for a while, so I don't know how it's evolved in different ways; but as you said, Carl, it does set the agenda for the senate.

Of course, that sounds very sort of neutral, setting the agenda, as if things are just sort of coming over and you set an agenda. That's a very important job, because it means that priorities get set, that the UFC can, and I think should, influence the agenda. That's why we elect people on the UFC, so that we can have an elected body that -- kind of like an executive committee in that way, that can really shape what the Faculty Senate does, which is one of the reasons why I think it's so important for the UFC to come and speak to us on a regular basis in the senate.

Another thing that the UFC does is meets regularly with the president and the provost. That's kind of Q&A discussion. Sometimes I think it worked well. Other times, it felt a little bit like we were playing 20 questions, to try to see what question we could ask that would actually elicit information.

That's also a very important role, because the UFC, I think, can really act on behalf of the senate in order to emphasize the importance of the Faculty Senate having early information about potential proposals, potential actions that the administration is considering and that we need to get in early. Sometimes we are chasing after a *fait accompli*, which is an ongoing frustration, so the UFC can be a voice and advocate for the senate to get early information, to

get information and to make sure that the Administration understands that many issues, all of them that fall within educational policy very broadly, should go to the senate.

Then, the UFC can emphasize the timing issue, to make sure that we are in early and that we have full participation. In other years I have been on the UFC, the UFC has been far more proactive in bringing its own proposals. I think it can do that as well, but I'd like to see the UFC with a more vocal advocate for strengthening shared governance.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Risa. Just wanted to let you know the UFC actually still sets the agenda. When we have the dean of faculty election slate, you'll see there's a slate for the UFC and there's a slate for the Nominations and Elections Committee. Those are the two committees we elect as the faculty, and they both set the agenda. The UFC sets the agenda for the senate, and the Nominations and Elections Committee nominates people, our colleagues, to sit in all the committees of the senate.

Eve, did you want to add something?

EVE DE ROSA: Yes. If I was to be honored with this position, I'm anticipating a couple of things, concerning things. I'm seeing bubbling up, even in my position as dean's fellow, cultural clashes between the two components of the super-departments. I think the dean of faculty should be going out there, speaking to the deans and chairs, to find out where the faculty level is bubbling up. And the tensions are there.

I think the trustees and their perspective, that's, I think, absent of our voice, so I wouldn't go to the trustees to understand what's anticipated; because I do realize they're the controllers of the budget, but I would actually love for us, the dean of faculty, University Faculty Committee, to go to them and say these are the things we're concerned about, these are the things that our faculty want resolution around, and to really negotiate and collaborate and advocate with them that they should be considering the resources that might go to that.

I might go the other way; rather than going to the trustees and saying where you can spend your money, more like hey, there's a whole bunch of things here that are concerning to us that we need resources for. And I see the University Faculty Committee as like an executive committee, so I think there should be places for the senators to bring things.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Eve.

Mark Lewis.

MARK LEWIS: Thank you for recognizing me. Eve may have just answered my question, but I know that the dean of faculty also goes to the Tuesday morning meetings with all the rest of the deans, and it seems an opportunity there to connect with people that are in charge of large budgets. I wondered how you envision your role as dean of faculty influencing those meetings. Thank you.

EVE DE ROSA: The reason why I was excited about this position, I love the freedom of no budget, which I actually think that's a good thing, because then you get to focus on the issues. I think of collaboration with the vice provost of academic affairs or the vice president of undergraduate education. I'm thinking at the provostial level, there's a lot of places for collaboration and advocacy and persuasion.

In terms of the deans and chairs, I almost want to sit back and listen. I don't want to put myself into that body because I am actually supposed to be neutral and I am actually supposed to be just understanding, from the faculty's perspective, what is going on. I don't think that's my place for persuasion and advocacy. I think it's more at the provost level.

NEEMA KUDVA: Risa?

RISA LIEBERWITZ: Thank you. Thanks for that question. I think that the dean of faculty's role is very important in being in these kinds of meetings with deans and chairs, and I certainly agree with Eve that listening and learning is a very big part of this.

But I also think that the dean of faculty, in those meetings, is in a very instrumental position to, again, advocate for and be the voice of the Faculty Senate. Certainly, the dean of faculty is also the voice of the faculty as a whole, but the Faculty Senate is the governance body for the faculty. These are the places where ideas are going to get floated, where there's going to be discussion about possibilities that relate to structural changes of the kind that Eve was talking about with Human Ecology.

And certainly, ILR, we face the same kinds of potential for folding Human Ecology and ILR together, and we opposed that from the faculty standpoint. Learning about those issues early is essential, and I think these kinds of meetings is where you can learn about these issues early.

I don't see the dean of faculty as a neutral. The reason that I would disagree with the use of that term is because the dean of faculty is there to represent the faculty's interests. That, in itself, is an advocacy position, to make sure that the governance process will be active, will be respected, will be energized, and that this is the advocacy position of the dean of faculty. Once the Faculty Senate has spoken, the dean of faculty, I think, should remain an advocate for the governance process to be implemented well.

I also just want to agree with what Eve had said before about the different layers, the different levels of governance in the university. One of the things we've talked about in the past is kind of having both listening tours, as well as educational tours by the dean of faculty and the UFC, to go to the different colleges and to not only hear what is of interest to those colleges, but also to make sure that colleges and departments really understand what governance means and how important it is that it takes place at every single level of the university.

EVE DE ROSA: Neema, do you mind if I just pop in and clarify something? I think the deans and chairs meeting, I do think, for me, that it's neutral there, but not at the college level.

I will be advocating for the faculty. I will go individually to deans. I don't want to insert myself at that level. I want to insert myself at the provostial level, for sure, and at the college level and at the departmental level. I just wanted to clarify that.

NEEMA KUDVA: Thank you, Eve. I don't see any other hands. It's also 4:58, so we are drawing to a close here, but we have time for one last question, if anybody has one. If not -- people might be thinking. This is like being in class. Patience.

I guess the questions are up. Nobody else has a question. I just want to express my gratitude to both Risa and to Eve for stepping up, for accepting the nominations, for being so gracious today in answering all the questions, some of which were difficult.

Risa, Eve, much gratitude, and thank you. We look forward -- I look forward to working with one of you. If both of you could come on, that would be fantastic, but one way or the other. So thank you so much, and thank you for staying on.