



SAC General Meeting Notes

January 14, 2025 – 9:00 AM in CEC, Rm 231, in person or [Zoom](#)

This meeting will be held under [Chatham House Rule](#). Topics and decisions will be fully and accurately represented but not individual speakers.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Introductions
- III. [Approval of Minutes](#) (click link)
- IV. Guest Speakers:
 - A. Victoria Kohout
 1. [Guidelines for Political Engagement by Employees of the University of Nebraska System](#)
 - a. New VP for Gov't Relations – Matt Blomstedt
 - b. He brings a collaborative spirit to working with the campuses.
 - i. We need a solid coordinated effort between all campuses.
 - ii. Remaining aligned in our priorities and what we're asking for (as a System) gives lawmakers a stronger perspective to the needs of the System.
 - c. We want lawmakers to utilize the expertise within the NU System.
 - i. If anyone is contacted to testify or share expertise, please contact Victoria Kohout and Chase Kratochvil.
 - ii. Nothing prevents NU employees from expressing personal views, on personal time, with personal resources (such as personal emails.) Employees should make it clear their opinions are their own and do not represent the university.
 2. Appropriations Committee
 - a. Tomorrow, Jan 15, Governor Pillen will submit his budget. We have asked for 3.5% increase in our base as well as several other asks.
 - i. Appropriations Committee Members – group of 9 members who meet 5 days per week.
 - ii. To receive the funding we requested, we need 5 out of the 9 votes.
 - iii. Office of the President devises a strategy to work with lawmakers and senators to encourage them to vote on NU's behalf.
 3. Education Committee
 - a. Group of 8 Committee Members; we need 5 votes
 - b. We expect to see bills related to Tenure, DEAI funding
 - i. What / How does the campus take a position:
 - i. When a bill is introduced, it is discussed in the President's Council – President plus all Chancellors. All requests come to President's Council, then go to the



Board of Regents. The BOR works closely with NE legislatures.

4. [2025 Revised Tentative Legislative Calendar](#)
 - a. Bills can be introduced up until January 22, 2025.
 - b. In NE, every bill introduced gets a hearing. This does not necessarily mean the bill will pass. Senators like to push for early hearing dates for bills they want to see passed.
5. [NU Advocates](#) – employees can sign up to join a group of individuals who desire to preserve the University’s impact on Nebraska.
 - a. (Q) What is the best way for a staff member to share their opinions regarding certain matters in the legislature?
 - b. (A) Individuals may submit their comments in the bill and have their opinions part of the record
6. State Relations Group – briefings every month. Group dives a little deeper into legislation. Typically, this group works with Senior Leadership teams and Deans.
7. [I Love NU Week](#) March 31 – April 4: Weeklong event to support the NU System.
April 2, 1:00pm – celebration at the State Capitol building.

B. Steve Kerrigan

1. During holiday shutdown, President Biden declared Christmas Eve as a federal holiday. Pursuant to state law, Gov. Pillen declared Christmas Eve as a holiday for Nebraska state employees.
 - a. This was ‘fixed’ in the system by UNO Payroll by entering DECL (Declared Leave) in Firefly and returning the day (vacation, floating holiday, etc.) to your bank of leave.
 - b. If you received a floating holiday back in your bank, you will need to use a floating holiday by November in order to earn all 5 days for 2025.
 - c. It was suggested to use this floating holiday as soon as possible so you don’t run into any issues later in the year.
2. Similarly, President Biden declared January 9th as National Day of Mourning. Pursuant to state law, Gov Pillen declared January 9th as National Day of Mourning
 - a. Non-exempt employee: mark the date in Firefly as DECL
 - i. If an employee did work a regular day, they would mark it as regular time. Employee and Supervisor would work together to allow an employee to take a day off another time to cover the declared leave day. This communication must be done via email.
 - b. Exempt employee: put in a formal request for DECL leave in Firefly
 - c. Essential employee: Employee receives extra compensation for that day
3. (Q) When will sick leave reset? (A) Sick leave reset (for managerial/professional employees) is now happening at the beginning of each fiscal year and no longer at the beginning of the calendar year. This does not apply to office/service personnel.

V. Officer Reports

A. President’s Report

1. Complete the Mid-Year Survey by January 17th.
2. Wellness Coaching - Connie Schafer and Cathy Pettid wrote a proposal from the Weitz Innovation Grant to include staff in Wellness Coaching. This would give



430 staff members, over three years, the opportunity for 1:1 wellness coaching. SAC is listed as a partner and, if approved, would be part of the implementation.

- a. Current model is five (5), 1-hour sessions, per individual. Session would allow staff members to grow in areas outside of their specific position.
 - b. Metrics include involvement, utilization numbers, participant's experiences
3. Officers' elections – begin January 15 – February 11, 2025. SAC members may nominate themselves or another member.
- a. A list will be provided of those who are returning to SAC next year.
 - b. Individuals elected to Officer positions would start attending meetings in March.
 - c. Details of Officer's duties are available on meeting PowerPoint.
- B. President-Elect's Report – No report
- C. Treasurer's Report – No report
- D. Community Engagement Chair
1. Community Corner is live in the SAC Newsletter.
 2. MLK Day of Service – January 20
 3. Weekly engagement events happening across campus
 4. Mini Passport:
 - a. Will include activities that are external to campus (volunteering in multiple modes (direct service, remote opportunities, drives, etc.)
 - b. Will have incentives for participation in designated number of passport events- linked website page forthcoming.
- E. Professional Development Chair
1. \$38,537.21 Awarded to date
 2. Six (6) applications pending
 - a. \$3,514.55 requested
- F. DEAI Chair
1. Attended AT Miller's DEAI council meeting last week. Discussed MLK Day of Service
 2. DEAI Symposium Series beginning at the end of January, will be announced in MavDaily
 3. Faculty and Staff Affinity Groups available, see QR code on PowerPoint
 4. No update on goals
- G. Events Committee Chair
1. Monthly Mini's - all TBD and in planning stages
 - a. February; Valentine's Day
 - i. Discount at the Bookstore
 - b. March; Pi Day (3.14)
 - i. Discounts at local bakeries and pizza shops
 - ii. Other campus/department connections
 - c. April; Earth Day
 - i. Pot painting/planting
 - ii. Seeds of Nebraska Extension office
 - i. Suggestions – Benson Plant Rescue, Keep Omaha Beautiful, community gardens
 2. Awards Banquet Conversation



- a. Rethinking, reimagining the event that will take place later this semester
- H. Strategic Planning & Culture Chair
 - 1. Day 1 Onboarding: SAC one-pager to be included in the folder every new employee receives
 - a. About SAC, how often we meet, details on newsletter, current membership, PD fund, SAC webpage.
 - 2. People Are Everything: Please use the tile in Firefly to send an E-card to at least 5 people and award them P2P points.
 - a. Currently gathering more info on utilization

- VI. Campus Events & Announcements
 - A. 2025 Health Insurance Reminders
 - 1. No new ID cards were mailed unless changes to plans were made.
 - 2. Deductibles & co-insurance start over for the plan year.
 - 3. Full amount of the FSA dollars is available right away
 - B. BestCare Employee Assistance Program
 - 1. Hundreds of resources available for personal and professional growth
 - 2. Free counseling, legal and financial resources, and so much more
 - 3. 100% confidential and 100% free
 - 4. www.bestcareeap.org
 - a. Login: bcUNOe
 - b. Password: UNO
 - C. J-Term Challenge Continues with daily activities
 - D. January 14th, 11:00am – NCITE Speaker Series: Prosecuting Terrorism – A conversation with U.S. Attorney Trini Ross, moderated by UNO Senior Research Faculty and Policy Assoc., Seamus Hughes
 - E. January 16th, 7:00pm – Women's Basketball vs. NDSU, Baxter Arena
 - F. January 18th, 2:00pm – Women's Basketball vs. St. Thomas, Baxter Arena
 - G. January 20th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observed
 - H. January 20th, 8:30am - Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2025, CEC
 - I. January 21st – Spring Semester classes begin
 - J. January 24th, 6:30pm – UNO Faculty Showcase, free concert as part of the BOCH Festival
 - K. January 25th, 3:00pm – BOCH Festival Finale Concert
 - L. January 25th & 26th – Global Game Jam – Omaha
 - M. January 30th, 7:00pm - The Schwalb Center Presents: Deadly Deception at Sobidor, film showing at Strauss Performing Arts Center

- VII. For the Good of the Order
 - A. Suggestion Box Submissions:
 - 1. Regarding January session (J-term) returning to a schedule that leaves little time between the fall and spring semesters to work on student retention.
 - a. As FYI – this is the last J-term
 - 2. Thank you for making all meetings virtual as well as in-person.

- VIII. Adjournment