



Date: November 19, 2025

Time: 4-5 pm

Location: Zoom

Agenda:

- Dr. Henry Flax: Statewide participation update
- Assembly/Town Hall with President Riley in December
- Member Ehlke: Sabbatical policy across the different schools
- Nominations Committee Chair, Brigitte Desport, to present slate of Senator nominees

Present:

Cristopher Roman Edeline Mitton Alithia Alleyne Kathleen Bratby Rose Calixte Marlene Camacho-Rivera Anika Daniels-Osaze Daniel Ehlke Lori Hoepner	Chella Kamarajan Allen Norin Efekona Nuwere Nkiruka "Kiki" Nwokoye Nick Penington Katherine Perkins Mark Stewart
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### I. Opening

- The meeting was called to order by Secretary Mitton.
- A request was made for any revisions to the minutes of the previous meeting.
- A motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Ehlke and was seconded and approved unanimously.

### II. Agenda Adjustment

- PO Roman proposed deferring regular reports to accommodate a presentation by guest Dr. Henry Flax, citing the importance of the topic and the need to prioritize time for discussion.

### III. Presentation by Dr. Henry Flax (University Faculty Senate Parliamentarian)

Topic: Senator Participation and Governance Communication Issues

- Background: Dr. Flax formerly served as Downstate’s representative and is now UFS Parliamentarian.
- Concern Raised: Downstate is allotted four senators but has shown poor attendance at UFS plenaries. Only two senators attended the Fall plenary; no alternates were present.
- Consequences: A lack of representation limits the ability of Downstate to gain support from SUNY peers—especially critical during crises such as potential hospital closures.

Key Points:

- Senator Responsibilities:
  - Attend all plenary meetings or ensure alternates do.
  - Report campus issues to UFS and vice versa.
  - Communicate campus actions back to UFS.
- Communication Breakdown:
  - No reporting from senators at the May 5 Faculty Assembly following the Spring plenary.
  - Bylaws changes and election results were not submitted to UFS, hindering onboarding and participation.
- Plenary Schedule:
  - Winter 2026 (virtual): January 15–17
  - Spring 2026 (in-person at Farmingdale): April 16–18

Discussion:

- Member Daniels-Osaze explained that late elections and lack of onboarding prevented participation. She had international travel and was denied virtual attendance.
- Member Jumbo sought clarity on whether alternates could attend and be reimbursed. It was clarified that only voting senators are funded unless an alternate is substituting for an absent senator.
- Member Hoepner clarified that UFS now handles all senator travel reimbursements directly (transport, hotel, food), removing the need for Downstate travel approval.

Dr. Flax Suggested:

- Update bylaws to specify who submits election results.
- Add senators to UFS listservs promptly post-election.
- Improve local processes for notifying UFS of changes.

Discussion

1. Ensure Timely Onboarding and Listserv Access for New Senators:  
Responsible: *Presiding Officer* and *Secretary*
  - It was acknowledged that delays in these areas were due to campus-side issues, especially after elections.
2. Coordinate Senator and Alternate Attendance at UFS Plenaries:  
Responsible: *Each Senator* and their *Designated Alternates*
  - Coordination is a shared responsibility, but senators must notify the UFS office if alternates are attending in their place.
3. Verify Special Election Candidate Eligibility and Finalize Process:  
Responsible: *Elections Coordinator*
  - Member Despot presented the candidate list and committed to checking eligibility after questions arose about specific affiliations.
4. Travel Barrier Discussion
  - Member Daniels-Osaze - Reported that she was elected late and was not onboarded in time. She was out of the country during the Fall plenary and was told she could not attend virtually, resulting in a missed opportunity to participate.
  - Member Desport - Emphasized the importance of confirming participation with senators and alternates early. Mentioned that not everyone was clear on procedures and that missed communication impacted the ability to plan for attendance.
  - Member Hoepner - Provided clarification that UFS covers travel costs directly for voting senators. Explained that alternates are reimbursed only when they are substituting for a senator who cannot attend, and only with prior notice to UFS.

#### IV. Bylaws & Representation Discussion

- Member Perkins asked for clarification on submission responsibilities.
  - Submit Final Election Results to Jennifer Redinger (UFS):  
Dr. Flax clarified that this responsibility lies with the outgoing presiding officer or secretary.
  - Share Updated Bylaws with UFS:  
Responsible: Member Perkins *and/or* Secretary Mitton
  - Dr. Flax requested that the updated bylaws be sent directly to Jennifer Redinger and/or himself. Katherine offered to follow up.
- Coordinate Website and Member Directory Updates with UFS:  
Website inaccuracies were discussed; one senator had retired, and a special election was in process. Responsible: UFS Communications Committee and *Local Senate Leadership*
  - Member Kamarajan confirmed he and Alethea are responsible for updating the UFS website and requested that accurate information be sent to them.

#### V. Special Election Update

- Presented by Member Desport.
- Process Summary:
  - 12 nominations were received.
  - 5 nominees accepted, 4 declined, 3 did not respond.
  - All 5 who accepted meet eligibility criteria.
- Concerns raised about nominee Michelle Adams, whose affiliation with the School of Public Health could not be verified.
- Member Desport & Alleyne confirmed that Downstate Assembly Bylaws define eligibility based on academic appointment and participation in governance, not union membership. The University Faculty Senate also does not restrict senator eligibility based on union membership. It focuses on faculty status, campus governance elections, and proper notification.
- Noted that nomination protocols might need revision to ensure nominees are contacted before being nominated.

#### VI. Sabbatical Policy Concerns

Member Ehlke noted the current sabbatical policy:

- References a defunct committee, lacks transparency in review and decision-making, and requires updating to align with existing governance and ensure clarity

He proposed forming a working group to review and revise the policy.

#### VII. Parliamentary Status

- Member Penington was confirmed as the acting parliamentarian for the past two years. The Chair agreed to review and, if necessary, formally reappoint or replace.

PO Roman concluded by thanking all members for their time and active participation.

- Appreciation was expressed for Dr. Flax's presentation.
- Acknowledged that recent stumbles stemmed from transitions and communication gaps.
- The team resolved to improve planning, timely submissions, and participation going forward.
- Conversation topics for the fall Assembly with Dr. Riley will be done via email
- Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday.

Meeting adjourned at 5 pm.