Chancellor Rebecca Blank called the online meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. with 174 voting members present (113 needed for quorum.) Memorial resolutions were offered for Professor Emeritus James O. Bailey (Faculty document 2896), Professor Emeritus Harlan Marquess (Faculty document 2897), Professor Emeritus Akira Miura (Faculty document 2898), Professor Emeritus Glen E. Myers (Faculty document 2899), Professor Emeritus William Vogelsang (Faculty document 2900) and Professor Emeritus William Weidanz (Faculty document 2901).

Chancellor Blank gave her annual State of the University address (full text). She shared news about the demographics of the incoming freshman class, the large number of new faculty members (record-breaking), and student graduation rates. She reviewed the COVID-19 testing and other public health measures in place for the return of students in the fall. She recognizes that there are opinions on all sides regarding face-to-face instruction. She outlined changes made when positive tests spiked: dorms are tested every week, emergency testing can be implemented as needed, and test results are returned more quickly with on-campus processing. There has been no evidence of transmission in classrooms or laboratories.

The majority of students have been complying with public health protocols. Those who do not face consequences, and there are 650 individual investigations and 21 referred for emergency suspension. Students are being asked to avoid travel other than to their home address when classes go online after Thanksgiving.

The Big Ten chancellors and presidents reconsidered their initial decision and agreed to play football this fall. In August, the three main concerns were 1) inconsistent testing regimes, 2) too many games postponed due to illness, and 3) a heart condition found in some athletes with COVID-19. A Big Ten medical advisory board responded with new safety protocols: all players, coaches and officials will be tested daily, players testing positive must be examined for heart issues before returning to play, and only players, staff, officials and parents of players will be in the stadium. There will be no open parking lots and no events held on game days.

Many revenue streams for the university are down and expenses are up because of public health protocols and testing for COVID-19. Auxiliary functions (self-supporting units) have lost more than anything else. About $40-50 million in state dollars have been lost. To hold costs, there is a hiring freeze, a furlough program, a workshare program for some employees, and cancelled planned fund distributions. More budget decisions will be announced in October.

A record number of students from under-represented groups are enrolled this year, due in part to expanded financial aid and deploying admissions staff to recruit in large cities across the country. A $10 million fundraising campaign was launched by UW Foundation for additional scholarships. In the last two years, the TOP program has helped recruit 32 new faculty hires who are under-represented in their fields. The campus must be more welcoming to under-represented students. UW-Madison police department has launched its own racial equity initiative, to include a review of department policies and practices with stakeholders, and an accountability tool.
Professor Kirsten Wolf introduced herself as chair of the University Committee (District 120) and provided introductory remarks.

Chancellor Blank addressed some questions about her remarks.

The minutes of the May 4, and September 14, 2020 meetings were approved by consent.

Professor Grant Nelsestuen (CANES, District 110) presented the University Curriculum Committee Annual Report for 2019-2020 (Faculty document 2902). Provost Karl Scholz presented the University Academic Planning Council Annual Report for 2019-2020 (Faculty document 2903). University Committee Chair Wolf presented the University Committee and Faculty Senate Annual Report for 2019-2020 (Faculty document 2904). There were no questions regarding any of the reports.

The senate discussed and voted on a resolution supporting UW-Madison’s effort to become a Fair Trade Certified University (Faculty document 2905). The resolution passed.

University Committee Chair Wolf presented a first reading of Changes to Faculty Policies and Procedures Chapter 3 that creates a mechanism for academic staff to maintain graduate faculty status following retirement or resignation (Faculty document 2906). One comment was received.

Professor Bill Tracy (University Committee, District 120) presented a first reading of Changes to Faculty Policies and Procedures Chapter 6 (Faculty document 2907), which would remove the Commission on Faculty Compensation and Economic Benefits. Comments were received.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 pm.

Heather Daniels
Secretary of the Faculty