

Robbins Addresses Diversity, Strategic Planning at Faculty Senate

University Communications
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UA President **Robert C. Robbins** ^[1] fielded questions from members of the Faculty Senate for more than 40 minutes on Monday, touching on topics ranging from diversity to strategic planning.

Robbins, who was met with applause when he began his remarks, noted the "lively discussion" of the items that preceded him on the **agenda** ^[2] for the senate, which was meeting for the first time this semester.

"This is not an easy room to play," he joked.

Robbins opened with an update on efforts to create a new strategic plan for the University. The process is expected to take 12-15 months and will incorporate feedback from people across campus, including faculty, deans and department heads, he said.

"My intention is for us to go through a universitywide strategic planning process," Robbins said.

Speaking on the UA's financial outlook, the president said the University needs to look at more diversified streams of revenue and at increasing the number of endowed professorships. He said he is ready to help raise money for the latter and hopes that goal will be addressed as part of the strategic planning process.

Commercialization of UA technology and inventions, which brings money to the University, also is likely to be part of the plan, Robbins said.

On another topic, Robbins gave updates on the searches for two senior leadership positions. A search committee has been formed to lead the search for a new senior vice president for health sciences, while efforts are underway to select a search firm to help identify candidates for senior vice president for marketing and communications, he said.

Robbins was asked for his thoughts on the **recommendations** ^[3] put forth last semester by the Diversity Task Force, which was formed in 2016 after students called on the UA administration to address concerns related to diversity and inclusion.

He said he had met with members of the UA's senior leadership team about the recommendations and hopes to speak with the concerned students about the progress that has been made as well as the priorities going forward.

"You can expect that I will put something out very soon. Diversity is incredibly important to the University, and to me," Robbins said.

Robbins said he also is working with the senior leadership team on plans for building renovations and new infrastructure.

Lynn Nadel, Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and chair of the faculty, asked Robbins for his thoughts on the legal battle over whether the state's public colleges and universities can offer in-state tuition to Arizona students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status. The Arizona Board of Regents has stated that it will continue doing so while the case is under consideration by the Arizona Supreme Court.

"It's never the wrong time to do the right thing," Robbins said. If the court rules that DACA students are not eligible for in-state tuition, the UA will have to comply, he said, adding that he is open to finding other ways to help DACA students afford higher education.

In other business:

- Robbins signed the **Guidelines for Shared Governance** ^[4] Memorandum of Understanding along with Nadel, Provost **Andrew Comrie** and **Michael Brewer**, interim senior information resource officer for University Libraries and vice chair of the faculty. The guidelines, first signed in 1997, express a mutual desire for UA faculty and administration to work together on issues related to the governance of the University.
- Comrie announced the appointments of several new deans: **Tannis Gibson**, interim dean for the College of Fine Arts; **Nancy Pollock-Ellwand**, dean of the College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture; **Terry Hunt**, dean of the Honors College; and **David Besselsen**, interim dean of the planned College of Veterinary Medicine.
- Comrie said that the structure and function of the Office of Global Initiatives are being considered and that campus conversations are planned.
- The senate voted to advance a proposal to add a new voting member representing the Classified Staff Council. The proposal will be voted on by the general faculty.

Next month, Robbins is scheduled to speak to the **Appointed Professionals Advisory Council** ^[5]. That meeting is

scheduled for Sept. 25 in Crowder Hall.

Source URL:<https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/robbins-addresses-diversity-strategic-planning-faculty-senate>

Links

[1] <http://president.arizona.edu/> [2] <http://facultygovernance.arizona.edu/committee/meetings/faculty-senate-meeting-2> [3]

<https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/hart-outlines-next-steps-diversity-task-force-proposals> [4]

http://facultygovernance.arizona.edu/sites/facgov/files/signed_guidelines_for_shared_governance_9.2014.pdf [5] <http://apac.arizona.edu/>