

**2023-2024 University Senate Governance Retreat**  
**Presiding Officer Rob Sumowski Welcome Message**  
**14 August 2023**

President Cox, Provost Spirou, Vice Presidents, Deans, Senators, Volunteers, Staff Members, and Guests:

Good Morning and welcome to the University Senate Governance Retreat!

We are the 2023-2024 University Senate. I anticipate we are going to encounter some challenges during the coming year. We may face some tough discussions surrounding issues about which we feel very passionate. But I am positive that come rain or shine, thick or thin, agree or disagree, we all will understand that none of us can master these challenges alone, and none of us have all the answers to what likely will involve tough and complex questions. But whatever happens this school year, let's agree to do it together.

Let's maintain the University Senate's longstanding approach of honest discussion, transparency, and approaching issues with positivity, open minds, and reason. We are a body that always has placed the best interests of our students and our University before anything else. As long as we continue to do that while we search for consensus, nothing will be able to stand in the way of our doing the right thing by our students, our colleagues, our beloved institution, and by each other.

In that spirit, I welcome *all of you* to the 2023-2024 University Senate.

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Before we proceed with the program, I would like to thank the members of the Governance Retreat Planning Committee, who spent all summer planning this entire event: Senators Jennifer Flory, Catherine Fowler, Alex Blazer, and Desaree Murden. Please stand, if you will.

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Now, I'd like to welcome President Cathy Cox for her message and presentation.