

## **FACULTY SENATE MEETING AGENDA**

Charles Hunter Room, R. Haze Hunter Alumni Center

April 17th, 2025

4:00-5:30 pm

**Attending:** Scott Knowles, Kelly Goonan, Chris Monson, John Karpel, Grant Shimer, Chris Graves, John Benedict, Christian Bohnenstengel, Jacob Dean, Scott Hansen, David Hatch, Derek Hein, Maren Hirschi, Bryan Koenig, Michael Kroff, Elise Leahy, Jon Lee, John Meisner, Elijah Neilson, Michelle Orihel, Rachel Parker, Amanda Roundy, Ryan Siemers, Nate Slaughter, Kevin Stein, Lee Wood, Chris Younkin, Qian Zhang

Online: Maren Hirchi, Qian, John Benedict, Wood, Subjsck, Johnson, NEilson, koernig

**Not Attending:**

**Proxies:** Shalina Kesar for R. Alexander Nichols

**Guests:** Mindy Benson, Shauna Mendini, James Sage, Camille Thomas, Jake Johnson, Matt Mckenzie, John Karpel, Cody Bremner, Clint Broadbent, Robb McCollum, Kevan LeFrance

1. Call to order (4:04)
2. Recognition of Presenters and Guests (4:04)
  - a. President Mindy Benson
  - b. Interim Provost Shauna Mendini
  - c. Associate Provost James Sage
  - d. Assistant Provost Camille Thomas
  - e. Assistant Provost Jake Johnson
  - a. Senior Director of CTI and Staff Association President, Matt McKenzie
  - f. Graduate Council Chair, Dr. Shalini Kesar
  - g. CTI Faculty Fellow, Dr. Robb McCollum
  - h. CTI Faculty Working Group, Dr. Clint Broadbent
  - i. Director, Grace A. Tanner Center for Human Values, Dr. Danielle Dubrasky
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes: (4:05)
  - a. [April 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Events and Announcements: (4:06)

- a. Faculty can submit [Caught Red Handed awards](#) to other faculty, staff, and student employees. Staff Association will deliver these awards monthly (if not more frequently).
- b. QPR Training - 75% Training Goal
  - i. Contact Madison McBride to schedule department level trainings: [madisonmcbride@suu.edu](mailto:madisonmcbride@suu.edu)
  - ii. [Spring Semester QPR Training Dates](#)
    - 1. [RSVP here](#)
- c. This spring (Jan.- Apr.), the Utah Academic Library Consortium's Open Education Resources Committee will hold a monthly lunch & learn series exploring the transformative world of open education. Join fellow educators and professionals for an engaging lunchtime session. Find details at <https://ualc.net/utahoer/> or reach out to Chris Younkin ([chrisyounkin@suu.edu](mailto:chrisyounkin@suu.edu)).
- d. [Thunderbird Awards](#), April 18th at 7pm in the Randall L. Jones Theatre.
- e. [Commencement Volunteers Needed](#)
- f. Employee Appreciation Lunch, April 22nd at 11:30am to 1:00pm in the Student Center Ballroom.

5. Information Item (4:07)

- a. [Spring 2025 Faculty Survey Results](#) (Scott Knowles)

Report printout distributed at this meeting. Responses were 100+ .There's a wide range of feelings on campus. 26 people out of 105 felt that SUU was doing very well. 43 had a negative viewpoint on the state of SUU. 17 were concerned. 12 had mixed feelings, and 5 were neutral. One of the primary drivers of all of this concern is the state and federal interventions in higher education. In Utah, particularly HP. 265, and HP. 261.

A critical view of administrative leadership was prevalent in the survey, focusing on issues of transparency, communication, and support for faculty. There was also a significant reduction in morale overall for faculty, based on the information that came from the survey faculty expressed concerns about job loss, tenure protections and job security. Faculty retention appears to be a pretty major concern with only 30 of the 103 responses to that question. Two folks do not respond, indicating that they feel SUU is

working to retain them either well or very well, and compensation and workload continues to be a major concern for faculty throughout.

What's going well with SUU is the faculty have a lot of positive interactions with their colleagues and the specific leaders, deans, and chairs, as well as expressing appreciation for interim Provost Mandini and President Benson.

The faculty also appreciated the past efforts for compensation, there was about 9% who said they want more of that. Faculty do appreciate their active culture, and they do appreciate faculty senate's ability to communicate and advocate on their behalf.

What is the role of the faculty senate in all of this? The majority of faculty responses suggested that we need to continue to advocate strongly and effectively for faculty concerns with administration. The faculty senate must continue to improve communication with faculty members across campus. So there's a degree to which our plan of giving department senators information and having that distributed out might not be working as well as we would hope, so that's a concern. The faculty senate should advocate and collaborate with administrators to develop shared governance and communication standards at SUU and the faculty senate should collaborate with multiple partners on campus to try to improve morale and support for SUU. Ultimately, all these concerns are certainly linked to the actions of the state and federal government.

There is the feeling that faculty roles in universities, i.e. shared governance, and probably across the country, but specifically at SUU, is being diminished. However, the overall sentiment does suggest that we need some significant attention on faculty and concerns to continue to cultivate that SUU culture of caring.

I did want to draw your attention to page 2, which is recommendations. There were a number of recommendations here that I came up with as I was going through all the data on things the Faculty Senate could work on in the coming years, I wanted to highlight just a few of them. One is working towards a clear understanding of shared governance at SUU and how faculty are involved. There's confusion about that from the survey. We see it on both extremes. Some faculty were reporting shared governance means faculty can say things. Whereas others felt that they needed to be directly involved in decision making to the point of making decisions. And it's probably somewhere in between those two things. But we clearly need some education on that front. I also wanted to highlight that the faculty senate should continue to advocate for the value of higher education broadly, and help our administration to lobby and the State Board of Higher Education and the State Legislature. This work should include all levels of campus governance from faculty to the board of trustees, and this comes from a lot of the sentiments that were in the survey, expressing deep concern for the future of higher education. We're not sure where it's going and faculty have a unique voice about what that means, what it can be, and we probably need to make sure that we're participating in that conversation.

I also wanted to highlight number 13, find ways to improve faculty, morale, and support on campus, to build a culture of caring. A lot of faculty feel alone, and not particularly engaged on campus, and not particularly supported. There were a number of faculty who felt supported by other colleagues on campus and by very specific administrators. But there were a number of folks who felt nothing was being done for them and feel like there's no help. There's no appreciation. These kinds of things that we're coming through. The survey makes me think we need to work on that.

Part of addressing that can be building connections between faculty on campus. We've tried to do socials for the faculty senate with raging success. I have to say just absolute gold medal success on that front (i.e. not so) So we have to come up with some new solutions there. What is it that faculty really want, and how can we try to build community amongst faculty on this campus so that there is support between us, if nothing else, while we're facing all the challenges that come.

The last one I wanted to highlight is number 11, which is to advocate for a different metric for measuring SUU's culture of caring with regard to faculty. So specifically, our strategic priority number three, which is cultivating a culture of caring, the metric we're going to use to measure that is the retention rate, which at SUU for faculty is 91%. This is not reflective of the information that we got from the survey about retention. So the retention part is on page 18. If you want to take a look at that, if you haven't had a chance, and what that boils down to is that of 103 responses, 20 faculty members responded that they feel like SUU is retaining them very well. 14 are saying that the efforts to retain them are being done poorly. 39 are saying that the efforts to retain them are somewhat effective. 25 are saying that they're being retained well, and 5 are saying, Very well, that's a pretty low number. It means 61.9% of faculty that responded to the survey are concerned and not feeling like SUU was working to retain them. That doesn't really match up with the 91% metric of faculty retention.

So I think we should talk about that and work on that. I'll close out my conversation on this just by pointing out I'm not a data scientist.

b. [Policy 5.41 Strategic Reinvestment Plans](#) (Scott Knowles)

New policy. Scott Knowles is not a fan but it is required by law. Created quickly and was unable to go through a review process. President Benson did still allow myself, Matt McKenzie, Staff Associate President, and SUUSA's president, Coulter Bennett, to review the policy. Please read the policy. This will be distributed on May 2nd to campus. It will then go to USHE and there will be some revisions and then the final will be submitted by May 20th.

Question: How will this be shared?

President Benson: Shared with leadership and then sent out to campus. We want to protect people and not share names, so we hope to share who has been impacted carefully. Plan will be taken to USHE to make sure we are going in the right direction.

6. Action Items: (4:20)

a. Proposed Student Feedback Forms (Robb McCollum and Clint Broadbent)

- i. [Proposed Feedback Questions](#)
- ii. [Potential Revisions](#)

A third option was proposed by the English department.

Ryan: Brought in the revised questions on Tuesday to the meeting. The language has shifted to questions about classroom behavior. The English department would prefer that we consider these. Could we take the summer and come back and vote on these?

Nathan Slaughter: received feedback on perceptions of students. English departments' questions align more with our department's feedback. Some liked the 2nd option.

Chris: Clarification needed on what we are deciding.

Scott: Questions about procedure. We have two options. If we are going to go with the English departments option, we need to go back to our departments before we vote. So either we accept the CTI groups questions or the original or the English departments revisions.

David: There has been some talk about a different type of survey. I like the focus on what is taking place in the classroom. We had some concerns about question 8 from the original survey. Is there a different assessment tool for online teaching?

Scott: Yes, that's what started this. We wanted to find a way to get a different kind of survey to serve online education more than our standard survey, which includes questions that don't make a lot of sense.

Camille: The executive council asked that we have an online and face to face.

Clint: We did talk about online in the proposed student feedback iteration.

Jason: Chemistry and Physics love the new concise version. Has unconscious or gender bias been addressed? There is a study from some Idaho state survey that put a paragraph at the top of the survey to be mindful of the unconscious bias as they take the survey. There was a statistical difference by adding that paragraph.

Scott: We discuss this all the time in my department.

Ryan: The English department has concerns as well.

Comment: Not sure that actually helps.

Scott: There is not a rule against this. We need to collect feedback before moving forward on these new proposals.

Shalini: Now we have three versions to review. How long are we going to be looking at this and taking back to the department. Is there a deadline?

Rachel: That is my question too. When will this be ready?

Scott: There is not a specific deadline. It is more about how fast we can implement.

Matt: It won't go into effect until Spring semester if we don't vote now.

Chris: Can we send one through and then consider the English department or others as well as this amendment about bias later for Spring semester.

Mike: Moves to vote in the fall when we return.

Rachel: I second.

Ryan: If we don't accept this then we are stuck with the current survey.

Rachel: Can we review and meet back in a month.

Kelly: This could happen and be an online vote.

Rachel: This would give us time to put this in front of our faculty.

Scott: There is a motion on the table that we postpone the proposal on the action item on the new proposed survey so we can further gather feedback on the other options and the discussion in fall. We need to vote this down before we can talk about another option.

Postponing definitely until fall. 2 votes to postpone definitely. 11 against the motion.

Ryan: I move that we review the three options and the anti-bias language with our faculty and meet back in two weeks in a digital/email meeting.

Hatch: Let us recognize the ad hoc meetings efforts on the revisions of the survey.

Motion was carried.

b. [Policy 6.15 Faculty Leaves Revision](#) and [Appendix](#) (Kelly Goonan)

The sabbatical portion does not change the process of eligibility. We are just making it clear. The only change is the policy recommends adding the year of the previous sabbatical. The appendix is a visual timeline to those who have been awarded or have had to see when they are eligible when they can apply. Those are the changes.

Parental care we thought to clarify the scope and change the language more inline with the updates in 6.1 in scholarly and creative activities and also include info about the procedures for requesting and approving modified duties and reasonable timing amount assigned to faculty.

Motion from Nathan to approve and seconded by Jacob Dean. Motion was approved.

7. Discussion Items: (4:48)

- a. [Proposal to add language about bias to Student Feedback Forms](#) (Jacob Dean)
- b. [English Department Proposal for Revised Student Feedback Forms](#) (Ryan Seimers)
- c. Faculty Sick Leave Policy (Maren Hirschi)

Is this worth pursuing – is this a concern we want to address. Not much feedback was received. Will look at this next year.

- d. Festival of Excellence (Scott Knowles)

Orihel's department thought it should be kept – but change the title to reflect research.

David Hatch: Preferred it to be much more interdisciplinary or organized thematically and undergrad and grad as well as online.

Camille: We are ready for an online version but we haven't had submissions. We are still working on this in the fall.

Christian: Music has been unable to participate because of performances in April.

Ryan: I am teaching the senior capstone course for English lit and rhetoric, and I would support this. We had 10 students and then we attended a literature conference. We would also like to invite family as I think this is great outreach to the kind of education that we offer.

Nathan Slaughter: We appreciate this festival.

Comments: The sharing of student and faculty research is great for integration across campus.

Mike: Comments received on losing the day and squeezing our curriculum even more. Is there a way around this in not taking a full day of classes?

Scott: Let's get more feedback from faculty on this.

- e. [Proposal for Distinguished Faculty Lecture](#) (Danielle Dubrasky)

Scott: There have been some problems with communication and the Tanner award occurring in a timely manner. Danielle would like to be a nonvoting member and be a chair to administer everything that needs to be done in an appropriate time frame.

Please take this back to your departments for feedback for a vote in fall.

- f. Call for New Business / Faculty Input
- 8. Standing Committee Updates: (5:01)
  - a. Faculty Review Board (Michael Kroff)
  - b. Sick and Medical Leave for Faculty Committee
  - c. Parking Ticket Arbitration Committee (Victoria Zhang)

Reported on the appeals and reductions received.

- d. Staff Association Liaison (Amanda Roundy)
- Spent the hour with President Benson asking questions.
- e. General Education Committee (Ryan Siemers)

Voting unanimously to remove from VVV moving from 30-33 down to 27-30. We need to make sure that each GE designated class has a learning outcome. But labs can't meet all these. We have gotten feedback. WE might move to not have a GE designation on labs. We want the classes to be successful so we're recommending this to department chairs.

Chris: Will this affect students and the credits they need?

Camille: No

Question: Will we have to go through change forms?

Camille: Yes - we will work with department chairs.

- f. Honors Council (Maren Hirschi): <https://www.suu.edu/honors/>
- g. Graduate Council (Shalini Kesar)

Shalini: We are meeting on May 7th to discuss more about 6.2.

- h. University Curriculum Committee (Rachel Parker)
- i. Student Association Liaison (Om Mehta)
- j. Benefits Committee (Cody Bremner)
- k. Faculty Awards Committees:
  - i. Distinguished Faculty Lecturer and Grace A. Tanner Committee (Christopher Graves)



This will be from now through September CHECK THIS

- ii. Employee Commitment for Access and Belonging (Kelly Goonan)
  - iii. Outstanding and Distinguished Educator Award Committee (Bryan Koenig)
  - iv. Distinguished Scholar/Creative Award Committee (Christian Bohnenstengel)
  - v. Distinguished Faculty Service Award Committee (Derek Hein)
- I. Treasurer's Report (Jon Karpel)
- m. Past President's Report (Kelly Goonan) - Academic Affairs Committee; University Faculty Leaves Committee

I'll just share what we accomplished this year. The Economic Affairs Committee spent a lot of time and effort working on revisions to policy, 6.1 faculty, evaluation, promotion and tenure. 6.2 2 Bona Fide Program, Discontinuance Procedures and 6.2 8 Faculty Professional Responsibility. Those three policies were passed by the Board of Trustees at their March 2025 meeting.

As you're communicating with your departments, just remind them to review those policies, especially policy 6.2 8, because that has taken faculty due process out of 6.2 8 so that it's all just in one policy. They thought that that would be a lot cleaner and easier for faculty to refer to that policy.

The policy 6.6 Academic Freedom should be finishing up its 21 day campus review, or maybe has just finished up. Faculty Leaves policy was passed by the senate today.

We did develop the new Faculty Grievances policy which was passed by the faculty senate back in March. We looked at some other policies, but a lot of them moved to other areas that were maybe a little bit better suited to review them like the LRB policy, etc. But I do want to publicly recognize the work that the Academic Affairs Committee put in this semester.

- n. President Elect's Report (Chris Monson) – UCFSL; Workload and Faculty Salary Equity Committee (WafSEC); Ad Hoc committee on policy outside of 6.0

Ad hoc committee discussed two more policies and we reviewed many other policies.

WAFSEC workload survey going out to department senators to see what the official workload is and then we will look at faculty perception.

The UCFSL all the faculty senate leadership discussed ICE enforcement with immigrants and the HB265.

- o. President's Report (Scott Knowles) - Policy/Procedure Arbitration Committee; President's Council; Dean's Council

We currently have 10 students who have had their visas revoked. Faculty are working incredibly hard with these students. Reach out and support your international students.

Policy 6.6 Academic Freedom will be moving forward to the Board of Trustees. There were two comments in the 21 day review period that I did want you to know about. First, there wasn't a desire to add curators and curatorial scholarship to the definition of faculty scholarly and creative work that was included in the policy and so the decision was made to refer the definitions of those things back to policy 6.1. so that we have one specific place where those definitions exist.

The other change is that the definition of academic freedom has been slightly adjusted. So it's not just freedom from censorship, freedom from discipline if we espouse an unpopular idea, but it is also freedom to do XY. And Z. So a little bit of language has changed there. So it's a bit more active, which I also think is a great change.

So that'll go forward to the Board of Trustees next Thursday, and they will go on that policy. 6.2 0, International Review Board and Policy, 6.3 2. The repeal of Faculty resignations will also go forward to the Board of Trustees.

Construction updates. Sewer line on 200S and should be finished by the end of June. Storm Drain replacement on 1150W 70-90 days. Eccles is 1 year away from completion. Burgess Business by November. Engineering building is #2 on the project list.

We must be engaged to solve the problem with the current perception of Higher Ed.

Gavel was passed by Scott Knowles to Chris Monson.

- 9. Thanks to Senators and Executive Committee with terms ending; Introduction of new Senators and Executive Committee
  - a. Mathematics: Derek Hein → **Rick Brown (present)**
  - b. Music: Christian Bohnenstengel → **Xun Sun (present)**
  - c. Family Life and Human Development: Maren Hirschi → **Chelsea Gambles**
  - d. Nursing: Amanda Roundy → **Shane Yardley**
  - e. Engineering and Technology: Scott Hansen → **Masoud Malekzadeh**
  - f. Psychology: Bryan Koenig → **Kevan LaFrance**
  - g. Languages and Philosophy: **Elise Leahy** will serve another term.
  - h. History, Sociology, and Anthropology: Michelle Orihel → **Crystal Koenig (present)**
  - i. Communication: Kevin Stein → **Hayden Coombs**
  - j. Film, Art, and Design: **Christopher Graves** will serve another term.
  - k. Past President: Kelly Goonan → **Scott Knowles**
  - l. Incoming President: Scott Knowles → **Chris Monson**
  - m. President Elect: Chris Monson → **Brandon Wiggins (present)**

- n. Nominations and vote for Executive Committee:
    - i. Treasurer: **Jacob Dean**
    - ii. Parliamentarian: **Grant Shimer**
    - iii. Secretary: **Ryan Seimers**
  - o. Committees needing Faculty Senate representation:
    - i. Faculty Review Board
      - 1. Aviation:
      - 2. Business:
    - ii. Faculty Leaves Committee
      - 1. Aviation
      - 2. Engineering and Computational Sciences:
      - 3. Health Sciences
      - 4. Natural Sciences
      - 5. Humanities and Social Sciences
      - 6. Library
      - 7. Performing and Visual Arts
    - iii. Awards Committees
    - iv. Honors Program Faculty Council
10. Call for Executive Session: (5:44) move was made
11. Adjourn