

FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
Charles Hunter Room, R. Haze Hunter Alumni Center
November 20th, 2025
4:00-5:30 pm
Approved

Attending: Chris Monson, Scott Knowles, Grant Shimer, Jacob Dean, Ryan Siemers, John Benedict, Xun Sun, Masoud Malekzadeh, David Hatch, Rick Brown, Chelsea Gambles, Kevan LaFrance, Michael Kroff, Elise Leahy, Jon Lee, Crystal Koenig, Rachel Parker, Shane Yardley, Jean Subjack, Lee Wood, Chris Younkin, Jon Karpel, Chris Graves, Qian Zhang

Not Attending: Brandon Wiggins, R. Alexander Nichols, Hayden Coombs,

Proxies: David Berri for Elijah Neilson, JH for John Meisner, JT for Nate Slaughter,

Guests: Mindy Benson, Shauna Mendini, James Sage, Matt Mckenzie, Tom Herb,

1. Call to order (4:02)
2. Recognition of Presenters and Guests (4:02)
 - a. President Mindy Benson
 - b. Interim Provost Shauna Mendini
 - c. Associate Provost James Sage
 - d. Assistant Provost Camille Thomas
 - e. Assistant Provost Jake Johnson
 - f. Executive Director, Belonging and Engagement and Staff Association President Ashleigh Zimmerman
 - g. Graduate Council Chair Thomas Herb
 - h. SUUSA Vice President for Academics, Brandon Walton

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes: (4:03)

- a. Nov 6 Minutes

Motion was made to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded. Minutes were approved.

4. Events and Announcements: (4:05)
 - a. The admissions office has asked to remind faculty that, if they see students on tours, be friendly, say "hi" and welcome them to SUU. Tours are a vital recruiting tool and when faculty are friendly students get a good impression of SUU.
 - b. QPR trainings the first Tuesday of every month in Escalante room (144 E, in student center), 1-2:30

- c. Monday, November 24, there will be interviews for Disability Resource Center Coordinator, Ashleigh would like 1 or 2 faculty there if possible from 10-11 - if interested let Ashleigh Zimmerman (Staff Association President) know
- d. Welcome to Dr. Prosenjit Chatterjee, new CSCY senator

5. Information Items (4:06)

- a. [Policy 0.0](#) (This is a draft - we are still working on it, but I wanted to share the current version.) [Feedback form](#).

6. Action Items (4:07)

7. Discussion Items (4:07)

- a. [Policy 6.1](#) and [memo](#)

Simple changes that need to be made which were discovered by the Academic Affairs Committee. In the year you apply for tenure or promotion, it did not count towards your next 5-year review or promotion and became a weird gap year. We've made it clear in policy with two added sentences that you apply, any work that is accomplished that year will count towards your next five-year review or your next promotion. And that applies to both non-tenure track and tenure-track faculty.

This will be an action item for next week. Share with your faculty.

- b. WaFSEC [charge](#) and [faculty compensation procedure](#) changes

Updated language in faculty compensation procedures. Seeking faculty senate approval. The changes are minor on the whole stating that any college with more than 20% of full-time faculty will get two representatives.

Get feedback from your faculty. This will be an action item for next week.

- c. We need a new CSTEM member for WaFSCEC (former CSCY member) Senators are supposed to decide amongst themselves who the next senator will be. I'll be sending an email to get your suggestions on the next representative. They do not have to be a senator.

Grant: What is the workload expectation?

Chris: Meet once a month for about an hour and they discuss faculty compensation issues.

d. Do we want a “law seminar” by Jake Johnson to better understand policy 0.0?

Would we like a seminar with Jake Johnson to better understand policy 0.0?

Kevan: I would like to understand this policy better.

Chris: We could do this in a faculty senate meeting. I see comments that there are many interested in this. We'll look at doing this in January.

Mindy: What Jake does is go through the law and what we are doing to comply with Senate Bill 192.

e. Crosswalk at Bristlecone (Ryan Siemers)

David: There is a safety issue there.

Chris: I feel like we've talked about this before. I believe that is a road owned by the state and we can't just put a crosswalk there. This is where we landed when we talked about this before.

f. Bias statement for course evaluations (Jacob Dean)

Chris: I received an email from Jacob Dean about a faculty member requesting a bias statement in course evaluations. We discussed this over the summer, and essentially we decided that we were not going to act on it.

Jacob: That faculty member reached back out to me, asking if we had brought it back up, and so I thought I would gauge if anyone has strong feelings one way or another. I think where we left off at the beginning of summer was that we had found some conflicting literature on the topic. Some studies seem to report that an intervention statement does change the statistics, and does counteract a little bit of the bias in student feedback. Others seem to report that the bias kind of changes around for different groups. Is this something you'd be interested in bringing to your faculty to see if they have strong feelings one way or another? Does anybody have any insights or comments that we haven't discussed yet?

Rachel Parker: My faculty were pretty adamant against it, because of all the controversy around it, and the studies that say bias statements cause bias. I'm totally willing to take something back to them to discuss, but they were quite vocal about not liking it.

Scott: I think if we really want to consider it again, we need a faculty member or a group of faculty members to actually do a deep dive on it and bring back all the research, all

the conflicting research, and present a case one way or the other about what we should do on that front. Then the Senate might be able to make an informed vote about it. We could then share that research out with all of the departments. I think this would be the approach going forward, because otherwise, people have different bodies of literature that they're looking at, and they're simply going to disagree, unless somebody can come forward with a new piece of information or evidence that shows that one way or the other is better or worse.

Jacob: I tend to agree. My cursory search on this topic, it does seem like the individual studies are tailored to particular areas that they're looking for, so it's not really comprehensive. That's part of the problem, I think. I will reach out also to that faculty member who had strong feelings about it, and have that person present their case as well.

Scott: I was going to add, the other approach could be to add additional questions that are specific to one faculty member's classes as we do have the ability to do this. We could talk to Matt, who I think is here, and ask whether it is possible for a faculty member to request, on an individual basis for their courses, to have the bias statement, and then it would be a tailored fit. Therefore the faculty members who really want the bias statement in there could include it and vice versa.

Jacob: I like that idea.

Matt Mckenzie: I would have to look to see if we can do a statement. I know we can do questions, I don't know if we can just do a straight statement. Because those individual questions are put into a different section than the main project, so that would be the only tricky part. I'll look into it.

Elise Leahy: Rather than give it all to Jacob, we could ask those who are interested in working on it. It seems like a big job for one person.

Crystal Riley Koenig: I think given the relatively limited support for it, I don't know if there's a need to focus a whole committee around this.

Ryan Siemers: I would be remiss if I didn't mention that there are people in the English department who are very, very, very strongly opposed to this. For reasons that are not entirely clear to me, but they're very opposed.

Jacob: Sounds like quite a bit of opposition. I do like Scott's idea, if it would be possible for individual faculty, if they feel strongly about this for their own courses.

Chris: Jacob, perhaps go back to the faculty who was passionate about this and have them do a deep dive into literature and give it to me. I'll be happy to give it to Faculty Senate, see if it changes minds, but right now, it sounds like this is not something that the Faculty Senate wants to move on.

James Sage: I might be wrong about this, but I think faculty can help steer students into the importance of these end-of-semester feedback forms, and tell them we take them seriously, we use them for improvement. If a particular faculty member has concerns, make sure that you're thinking about the course as a whole, about all the information I put into this. I would encourage faculty to use their voice to help shape this, and encourage students not only with response rates, which is an important thing. If you hear from your faculty member encouraging you to do this, but you can also say, make sure this is not just reflective of the last assignment I gave you, think about the class as a whole.

Grant Shimer: In addition to what James said, Jacob, one thing you might want to relay to the faculty member, or anybody, to people who are concerned about this, is it is part of policy that evaluators are supposed to consider bias in student evaluations. We did get that in to 6.1, part 5D. In terms of committees evaluating teaching effectiveness, they're supposed to consider that there is often systemic bias in student evaluations, so that might give them a little solace.

g. Any new business brought by senators

AI Curriculum:

Elise: My colleagues just wanted me to share that they are already developing curriculum around AI: AI Ethics and Literacy Program, which includes an undergraduate minor and certificate, as well as a graduate certificate currently making its way through the curriculum process. In fact, part of the reallocation plan involved investing in this very program.

Festival of Excellence:

Crystal: I received a torrent of feedback from the faculty in my department about the proposed scheduling change, and specifically about moving Festival of Excellence to an evening or weekend. This was wildly unpopular with 5 total of my faculty, which is more feedback than I've gotten about any Faculty Senate issue thus far. Concerns about declining participation in Festival of Excellence, concerns about faculty having to support students on nights and weekends after teaching a full day or a full week.

Chris: That's interesting, because when I sent out the survey, the votes were in favor of getting rid of the Festival of Excellence and moving it to evenings instead of during the day. So this is obviously very polarizing.

Crystal: A lot of faculty have this embedded into their course requirements.

Rachel: I heard back from a couple of my colleagues and it was positive feedback. The time changing to evening was well received, and they liked the idea of getting the day of teaching back.

Elise: I did have one colleague who expressed concern about moving FE to the evening.

James: I can give an update. I did share this with Provost Mendini, and based on her guidance, I've kept the Festival of Excellence as a non-instructional day in the proposed calendars that she asked me to share with the deans. It will then go from the deans to the president's cabinet for review by our vice presidents and the president. This wouldn't take effect until spring of 2028. Provost Mendini would rather not change something that's established during her interim period as provost.

Shauna: Given that this won't affect next year, I'd rather that this was an Academic Affairs initiative. I would really like the new provost to weigh in. I know some classes have this embedded in. So I would really like the next provost to decide on this.

8. Standing Committee Updates (4:41)

- a. Faculty Review Board (Michael Kroff)
- b. Parking Ticket Arbitration Committee (Victoria Zhang)
- c. Staff Association Liaison
- d. General Education Committee (David Hatch)
- e. Honors Council (David Hatch)
- f. Graduate Council (Thomas Herb)
- g. University Curriculum Committee (Rachel Parker)
- h. Student Association Liaison (Brandon Walton)
- i. Benefits Committee (Cody Bremner)

Still in the same holding pattern – the state is still looking at a statewide initiative so we will continue as is for this year and look at this next year.

- j. Faculty Awards Committees
 - i. Distinguished Faculty Lecturer (Christopher Graves)

Have more after the break.

- ii. Outstanding and Distinguished Educator Award Committee (Crystal Koenig)
- iii. Distinguished Scholar/Creative Award Committee (Kevan LaFrance)
- iv. Distinguished Faculty Service Award Committee (Jon Lee)

9. Reports

- a. Treasurer's Report (Jacob Dean)
- b. Past President's Report (Scott Knowles) – Academic Affairs Committee, University Faculty Leaves Committee

The Academic Affairs committee reviewed 6.2 and are awaiting Jake's response to our thoughts on this. Once we hear from him, it will come to the Faculty Senate. So I would expect that probably at our 12/4 or the January meeting. We are still working on the new faculty grievance policy. We're trying to revise it specifically to align with the Faculty Review Board's operating procedures, because we realized that we were really creating a different set of operating procedures and policy, and that if we could align them specifically, then we won't have two different sets of operating procedures for people to keep track of. So we're revising it to try to reference those procedures as opposed to replicate them or recreate them. Hopefully that will be our last major revision and you will see that in the new year as well.

- c. President Elect's Report (Brandon Wiggins) – UCFSL, Workload and Faculty Salary Equity Committee (WaFSEC), Ad Hoc committee on policy outside of 6.0
- d. President's Report (Chris Monson) – Policy/Procedure Arbitration Committee, President's Council, Dean's Council

Things have been moving along with the university. No new information. One thing to think about is that there have been a lot of cases of people getting in trouble for things they've posted or said and being taken out of context. Please be careful about what you say to protect yourself.

10. Executive Session? (4:48) A motion was made.