

FACULTY SENATE MEETING AGENDA

Charles Hunter Room, R. Haze Hunter Alumni Center

September 18th, 2025

4:00-5:30 pm

Approved

Attending: Chris Monson, Scott Knowles, Brandon Wiggins, 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, John Meisner, Elijah Neilson, Crystal Koenig, Rachel Parker, Shane Yardley, Nate Slaughter, Hayden Coombs, Jean Subjack, Lee Wood, Chris Younkin, Jon Karpel, Chris Graves, Qian Zhang

Not Attending: R. Alexander Nichols

Proxies:

Guests: Shauna Mendini, James Sage, Jake Johnson, Ashley Zimmerman, Matt Mckenzie, Tom Herb

1. Call to order (4:00)
2. Recognition of Presenters and Guests (4:01)
 - 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
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes (4:02):
 - a. [Sept 4 minutes](#)
Minutes were unanimously approved.
4. Events and Announcements (4:06):
 - 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. First Six Weeks events – SUUSA is sponsoring events for the first six weeks of class (Big Six flyer)
- c. QPR trainings the first Tuesday of every month in Escalante room (144 E, in student center), 1-2:30
- d. If you're an evaluator for P&T, remember to check dashboard

5. Information Items (4:08)

- a. Programs likely being discontinued: Construction Management BA and Software Development Mobile App Certificate (Academic Affairs committee evaluating now, Faculty Senate and Deans' Council will vote when they are done)

6. Action Items (4:08)

- a. [Faculty Review Board Procedures and Guidelines](#)

Mike: We need to approve this procedural document so we can be prepared for this upcoming case. He went through the document and answered questions/issues. (1) Tenured faculty serve on the board per policy. (2) If you are uncomfortable with someone who is on the board, the faculty senate president would consider your reasons for objecting to this person. (3) During the hearings it will be transcribed and stored. (4) A simple majority is all that is required for an adverse finding by the FRB. Concerns were expressed about the seriousness and wanted to make sure the committee did their due diligence.

A motion to approve the procedures was made by Crystal Koenig. Kevan LaFrance 2nd motion.

Approved: 20/21.

- b. For Faculty Senate confirmation: Abigail Larson, University P&T committee, replacing Julie Taylor for CoHS during Julie's sabbatical

A motion to approve confirmation was made by Elsie Leahy and 2nd by Mike Kroff.

Approved: 20/22.

7. Discussion Items (4:15)

- a. Any new business brought by senators

Mike Kroff: Difficulties with P&T process. I'm on my department's P&T committee and there is confusion about how it's working because the committee chair puts together the assessment and votes before the committee members vote. This catches us by surprise because we can't do anything until the chair votes and then Parker sends out an email

to say committee members can now vote. I just wanted to alert everyone about how this works.

Chris: Do not wait until the last minute to cast your vote if you are the committee chair or there will be a problem.

Jake: There will be a campus wide meeting with department chairs and Parker to let them know how this works. So they can coach their faculty on this to be timely.

Rachel: On the university P&T Committee. The chair didn't know how he became the chair and there were also people on the committee that didn't know they were on the committee. Provost's office to the deans there was a disconnect in letting people know they were on the committee.

Chris: I received an email from department chairs about those that were chosen to be on the committee. So I passed it on to the Provost's office. We only confirm appointments, not make sure those on the committee were informed. This has now been discussed in several meetings so we are looking into how to notify those who have been nominated, starting with the deans and perhaps an automated approval queue.

Shauna: The deans have an incredible project. You have to wait until all the department committees are built, and then the university committees and then at that point you can put out a nomination for who you would like to serve. Please know this is a big process for deans.

Rachel: Can we clarify the language as to which one this is – the policy says full; chart says tenured.

Jake: There is a table there to identify what they are referring to. The policy means a full professor.

Rick Brown: A department member had a question – during the final exam period policy requires faculty to reach the minimum number of contact hours for accreditation at SUU?

James: The university does expect faculty to meet during the final exam period. That is part of our commitment to ensuring we have 15 weeks of instruction, or contact weeks, in the fall and the spring. So that's why we've established that as an expectation at the university. It is complying with the Code of Federal Regulations 34.

Rick: Having a test in the testing center applies to that?

James: Yes.

Rick: Having a final project instead of a final, and we don't meet, is that in compliance?

James: I think the expectation is that there is some sort of meeting, either individually in the testing center, they show up to do that. When I've taught a course, I use that as a final reflection with the students, even though they have an assignment or a final paper that's due.

I still use the assigned class meeting for face-to-face classes. I still would use that as an opportunity to meet. I would also bring in treats and stuff. So that is an expectation and why it is an expectation.

Crystal: If you have an online activity due during finals week that meets the same amount of time would that meet the requirement?

James: I would need to know more. I have heard of faculty offering a virtual office hours during the period of time, say it's 10 a.m. to noon on a Tuesday, even if the project isn't due until Wednesday or Thursday, that's very gracious of you as a faculty member, but if you held office hours that are virtual, if students had questions, I think we could potentially use that kind of flexibility, so that if students had questions at the last minute before they finished up their assignment.

Crystal: I know that some faculty in our department, the ones who have face-to-face finals, have projects that are due during finals week and they require a substantial amount of work, and that's their final, so they don't require them to come in person to their final exam. They ask that it be submitted online during finals week. I think they're going to push back and say this is an adequate amount of work that they have to do, it's comparable to meeting face-to-face, and we think this should count.

James Sage: I understand that. It is comparable from the student effort perspective, but if you're the federal government and you're expecting instruction or contact with the professor, then independent work during the week of finals week is not the same as a contact hour, or any contact whatsoever.

Chris: Just to be clear, that would be met by having that extra office hour, right?

James: Yeah, if you don't want to have the actual physical face-to-face. I would encourage you to be flexible in that sense, but still have the opportunity for contact. Just

like any scheduled class, students can choose to show up or not, right? You can at least say, I'll be holding a virtual office hour during our final... our assigned final exam period. Even if it's a project that's due later in the week, it's still a contact. You might be surprised, students might really utilize that because they realize they can just jump into your personal meeting room and get their questions answered.

Rachel Parker: I think it's important to mention what would count for online asynchronous courses.

James: For online asynchronous, all of that contact hour stuff is completely different, right? It's about time on task. It's supposed to be comparable learning. I would recommend not to accelerate the final... and make sure you have a complete fall semester course, full term, and to have everything due before the final week. Obviously, students can turn it in, but if you were to say you have to turn everything in before finals week, then they really aren't doing anything in finals week. They could turn it in early, but having due dates that are in the finals week, even the very first day of finals, might be a good way to have your footprint onto that final week. Again, students can choose to turn in earlier. This would be like if you have a 14-week full semester online course, and you make everything due before Thanksgiving, that would be kind of weird, right? I doubt anybody's doing that, but it allows students to have the ability to manage their time and all their demands.

Kevan: Faculty concerns about social fall out and push back following UVU. Push back faculty gave to private posts/social media. There have been some reports about student backlash and approaching faculty. What would the procedure be on this?

Chris: Administration had a meeting last week.

Shauna: Usually if there is a connection between the university and your private responses then there can be hostile responses. Realizing our position of faculty in this highly charged setting we can't control the response from the public and that's a concern.

James: If it's in your capacity as an employee in class, office, at work in all of those professional dealings, just assume that everything you say is being recorded. So choose your words wisely, you are a state employee. It's not a fun world to live in, but you are fulfilling professional responsibilities. Regarding your personal expression, if you don't do it at your place of work or use university equipment or during work hours. If you are exercising your rights as a citizen make sure you are completely separate from

your place of work. There have been backlashes even toward private citizens. It's a somber tone. We are sorry about it.

Kevan: A professor was ambushed by students during office hours. Is there guidance for students on this? And us when someone is getting frustrated over the things we've said or didn't say. Many of us are trying to be careful.

James: Follow up with Jared Tippetts – he's had students approach him about what others have posted and asking for students to be kicked out. Email about students and what their roles are, which is not to ask for people to be expelled from the university.

Scott: There are a lot of faculty who would love it if the university can be clear about free speech. It's hard to understand what that means in the everyday. We would love guidance on what we can do if we are ambushed by hostile students in our office.

James: It might help to have something from legal on this to see if that would help clarify for our employees.

Mike: Policy 6.28 has a section on how certain conduct can get you into trouble. It's worth being really careful.

Chris: There was an incident a few years back where someone was protesting on campus. And there was a public forum on campus about how we handle these kinds of things.

Chelsea: I teach social work – I'm very careful with showing our national accreditation standard statement in the classroom and in the syllabi but I still get negative evaluations on how I need to leave politics out of the classroom. I could use a lot more support in this area as a female teaching these kinds of classes.

Elise: A forum might be a bad idea with tensions so high. Love the idea of a statement though. Seems like the wrong time for people to get together publicly for a conversation.

James: There may be two different audiences for this – for students and faculty. Maybe we can have a series of modules or emails that come out weekly to remind people about this. Time, place and manners – classrooms are not the place, but the space out in front of the library is a public space for speech. We will put this on the radar for legal affairs and Jared Tippetts.

Shauna: Thank you for this very important conversation. I support the plan to address this.

8. Standing Committee Updates (5:02)

- a. Faculty Review Board (Michael Kroff)
- b. Parking Ticket Arbitration Committee (Victoria Zhang)
- c. Staff Association Liaison
- d. General Education Committee (David Hatch)

The task I was asked to bring up is about follow-up, if there would be a general education award as part of our faculty recognitions every year, so I'll just put that out there.

Scott: The awards fall under the President's office, so when we made that recommendation, we sent those on to President Benson and Provost Mendini. The ball is proverbially in their court to decide what they wanted to do with that. So, Chris, we probably want to follow up with the President's office and the provost's office and see where they are with that proposal. If they want to go that direction, if they've already gone that direction, just, you know, haven't really announced it yet, or what they're thinking.

e. Honors Council (David Hatch)

The honors contracts are due in a few days – students may approach you to rely on our expertise. They need us. Please do what you can to help them.

- f. Graduate Council (Thomas Herb)
- g. University Curriculum Committee (Rachel Parker)
- h. Student Association Liaison (Brandon)
- i. Benefits Committee (Cody Bremner)
- j. Faculty Awards Committees
 - i. Distinguished Faculty Lecturer (Christopher Graves)
 - 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 (5:06)

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

The Academic Affairs Committee is currently finishing up our education and academic considerations for a couple of program discontinuances, so we'll be forwarding those along to the Provost Office, tomorrow, and then the Provost Office will send those to the Dean's Council and to Faculty Senate to receive our consideration at that time. Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee is also going to be reviewing 6.36 course syllabus, 6.0 Definition of Faculty, and a new policy on providing credit for prior learning, so those are coming down the pipe to Faculty Senate shortly.

- c. President Elect's Report (Brandon Wiggins) – UCFSL, Workload and Faculty

WaFSEC Committee met this past week, and they're looking at revisiting the charge that they have, and they'll be looking at workload issues this year, so a lot of important work upcoming.

- d. Salary Equity Committee (WaFSEC), Ad Hoc committee on policy outside of 6.0

- e. President's Report (Chris Monson) – Policy/Procedure Arbitration Committee, President's Council, Dean's Council

Provost search is moving forward. Invitations will be extended to be on the committee. Looking for a broad representation. Positive reception to the presentation of the on the HB265 plan from President Benson and Provost Mendini. In fact, the legislator who was commenting on it, I don't remember his exact words, but said something to the effect of, next time we do appropriations, we're gonna try to get SUU extra money, or something like that. So, you know, the effort is appreciated and pays off. SUU's Plan was approved and the reinvestment money will be returned.

Emergency action plans are being refined and further developed for each building on campus. If you are asked to participate, please do.

Deans council – Discussing academic integrity issues having to do with AI – students do not know what is ok vs not ok when it comes to AI. Abigail Larson has requested that there are syllabus statements outlining what is ok and not ok. AI detection is not very good. Grammarly can trigger AI detectors. One of the suggestions they made was you can track changes in a Google Doc, and you can watch whether they copied and pasted it all from an AI program, but that might be the best thing you can do if you don't want them to use AI.

There was a discussion about credit for prior learning.

Pilot for GradPath to streamline students to attend Grad school at SUU. Degrees with more than 120 hours will require a plan by USHE.

Policy 0.0 is in the process of being revised. We saw a version that we thought had some significant issues and the administration is working with us on this in a way that the legislatures won't be concerned about.

10. Executive Session (5:13): A motion was made to hold an Executive /Session

11. Adjourn: