



Official Minutes Faculty Senate Meeting January 29, 2024

Call to order: Senate President Brandon Dupont called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the January 16th Faculty Senate meeting were approved by general consent with minor corrections. Minutes of the January 9th ACC meeting and November 16th SOCEC meeting were accepted as written.

Reports and Announcements

Brandon Dupont, Senate President reported that:

- After discussing with the University Policy and Rules Review Group (UPRRG), the recommended changes to the Academic Honesty Policy appear to not require the full approval process. The Senate can expect to hear updates on the status of the proposed revisions at a future meeting.
- Regarding the issue of the AS Bookstore being frequently unable to stock requested materials, the concerns have been raised to Linda Beckman, the Division Director who oversees the AS bookstore. Beckman plans to discuss the issue with bookstore leadership and encourage increased communication with faculty when materials are unavailable to students.

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President reported that:

- Planning for the capital and operating budgets of Western on the Peninsulas is underway. The Senate can expect to hear detailed updates in the future.

Peter Pihos, UFWW President reported that:

- Conversations with the Provost's Office regarding the rollout of the Senior Instructor Merit Review are expected to conclude in the near future.

Gabe Wong, Associated Students Senate President reported that:

- The search for a Graduate Student Senator and Fairhaven Student Senator are ongoing.
- The AS charter has been revised and will be signed on February 1st.
- The AS Senate approved a resolution regarding Academic Student Employees as it relates to [SB5895](#).

Action Items

Resolution on Operational Student Employees' Right to Form a Union and Collectively Bargain:

Last year, a group of Educational Student Employees (ESEs) filed a petition to collectively bargain and organize with the Washington Public Employment Relations Commission. The State Legislature passed and the Governor signed in 2023 a bill (codified at Revised Code of Washington § 41.56.0215) to recognize the right of ESEs to form a union and collectively bargain. A petition filed by Operational Student Employees (OSEs) at Western and the corresponding bill currently before the State Legislature, [SB5895](#), allows OSEs to be on parity with ESEs in terms of their ability to collectively bargain. A resolution passed by the AS Senate calls for the support of the Faculty Senate in recognizing OSEs' ability to form a union and collectively bargain.

A motion made by Clayton Pierce (and seconded) **to approve** the Resolution on Operational Student Employees' Right to Form a Union and Collectively Bargain **passed** unanimously.

Discussion Items

Generative AI Working Group: Discussion was postponed until the Faculty Senate meeting of February 12, 2024.

Academic Freedom Accreditation Issues: Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented on accreditation issues related to academic freedom. Herring reported that the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Accreditation (NWCCU) is the University's main accreditor. NWCCU made several major changes to their procedures in 2020 which now consists of a two part review process. The University is undergoing a reaffirmation of its accreditation, with the first stage being completed last year. The review team provided a report regarding University policies. The NWCCU found that the University did not meet the standard in regard to communication related to academic freedom protections for students. If this issue is corrected before the NWCCU site visit in April 2024, the University will not receive a formal finding. Herring reported a two part strategy to revise University policy in order to meet the academic freedom standard. Herring suggested a revision to Appendix F in the catalog to articulate that students would be able to appeal a grade decision related to academic freedom as a way to satisfy the standard. This revision would also include a formal definition of academic freedom. Herring further suggested a proposal to the Board of Trustees to issue a general statement related to the University's stance on academic freedom as it relates to both students and faculty.

Senators raised concerns regarding the proposed revision and questioned whether it would lead to harm in the form of faculty receiving an increased amount of grade disputes as well as the potential for seeing a rise of hate speech in the classroom. Herring stated the grievance policy is narrow in usage and that there is a formal procedure already in place for these concerns to be evaluated fairly. Senators expressed further concern that the language was overly broad and suggested removing the term "viewpoint" from the proposed revision.

Senators questioned if the policy would override individual faculty syllabus language around pedagogical policies. Senators were assured that this change does not relate to classroom norms, but rather the assessment of student work.

Senators expressed concern regarding only addressing academic freedom in the grievance policy and instead suggested the creation of a new section in the catalog related to academic freedom. Herring stated that rights and responsibilities related to freedom of expression for students have already been detailed in University policy. However, the NWCCU is requesting language around protections for students, which is why a revision to the grievance policy was deemed to be an appropriate remedy.

The Senate Executive Committee plans to invite Jack Herring to their next scheduled meeting to discuss revisions to the proposal language. The Board of Trustees meeting will occur on February 9th and may offer further insight and feedback. The Senate can expect to hear updates on the results of these meetings and an updated proposal at the next Faculty Senate meeting on February 12th.

Planning for Campus Forum on Academic Freedom and Free Expression: In Fall Quarter, the Faculty Senate held discussions related to free expression on campus. The campus community has a responsibility to engage on the broader issues of academic freedom and free expression on Western's campus. While having additional discussion in a Faculty Senate meeting was considered, it was determined this issue is more appropriately dealt with in a separate forum that includes the full campus. The current plan is to have an initial forum followed by ongoing events throughout the year. Brandon Dupont, Senate President, invited feedback from senators related to organizing the forum and encouraged Senators to direct any suggestions related to forum planning or organization to him via email..

Senators were encouraged to attend a Teach-In on Palestine, War, and Academic Freedom on January 30th.

In planning the campus forum, Senators suggested having a facilitator that could guide attendees through potential scenarios related to academic freedom. Senators expressed the potential usefulness of including resources to make the classroom more equitable and other pedagogical tools.

Senators adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Faculty Senate – ROSTER 2023-24

VOTING ATTENDEES			NON-VOTING MEMBERS	
Faculty members			Student members (if applicable)	
Troy Abel	CENV, UEPP	P	Gabe Wong, AS Senate President	P
Charles Anderson	CHSS-HUM, History	P		
Blanca Aranda	CHSS-HUM, Modern & Classical Languages	P	Standing Committees	
Rich Brown	CFPA, Theatre & Dance	P	Blanca Aranda, SLC Chair	P
Tim Bruce	Graduate School	P	Bidisha Biswas, Leg Representative	P
Xiaofeng Chen	CBE, Decision Sciences	P	Allison Giffen, Budget Representative	--
Kristen Chmielewski	CHSS-SBC, HDD	P	Derek Moscato, ATC Chair	--
Catherine Clark	CSE, Chemistry	P	Jennifer Seltz, OCE Chair	--
Sondra Cuban*	WCE, HCS	P	Shevell Thibou, CUE Chair	--
Dawna Drum	CBE, Accounting	P	Kristi Tyran, ACC Chair	--
Brandon Dupont*	At Large	P	EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS	
Lindsay Foreman-Murray	WCE, Ed Leadership	--	Christopher Bianco, Council of Deans	--
Ramadha Piyadi Gamage	CSE, Math	P	Brad Johnson, Provost	P
Allison Giffen	CHSS-HUM, English	--	Peter Pihos, UFWW President	P
Jim Graham	CHSS-SBS, Psychology	--	Sabah Randhawa, President	P
Kameron Harris	CSE, Computer Science	--		
Ron Helms	CHSS-SBS, Sociology	P		
Erika McPhee-Shaw	CENV, ESCI	P		
Jeffrey Meier	CSE, Math	--		
Tesla Monson	CHSS-SBS, Anthropology	P		
Mark Peyron	CSE, Engineering & Design	--		
Clayton Pierce	Fairhaven	P		
Camilo Ponton*	CSE, Geology	P		
Jason Query	CBE, Economics	--	Recorder	
James Ray	CFPA, Music	P	Abby Peterson, Graduate Assistant	P
Michael Slouber	CHSS-HUM, GHR	P	Guests	
Shevell Thibou"	Libraries	--	Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	P
Derek Yip-Hoi	CSE, Engineering & Design	P	Becky Johnston, Faculty Senate Specialist	P
CHSS-HUM (VACANT)				
WCE (VACANT)				
			Voting attendees	20
			Non-voting attendees	9
			TOTAL ATTENDEES	29