



## Official Minutes Faculty Senate Meeting April 8, 2024

**Call to order:** Senate President Brandon Dupont called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the March 11<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate meeting were approved as written by general consent. Minutes of the March 5<sup>th</sup> ACC meeting and March 12<sup>th</sup> SLC meeting were accepted as written.

### **Reports and Announcements**

#### **Brandon Dupont, Senate President reported that:**

- [Professor Joann Otto died on March 22<sup>nd</sup>](#). Otto came to Western from Purdue in 2004 to chair the Biology Department and helmed the department until her retirement in 2016. In lieu of flowers, Joann's family asks that anyone wanting to honor her memory consider giving to one of these three organizations: the [Troutdale Historical Society](#), [San Juan Preservation Trust](#), or Western's [Joann Otto Microscope Endowment](#).
- The NWCCU site visit will occur this week. Senators can expect to hear updates related to their visit at the next Senate meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Becky Johnston, Faculty Senate Specialist, is preparing orientation materials for incoming Senators beginning their term in Fall Quarter. Current Senators are encouraged to email suggestions of what information to include to Brandon Dupont or Becky Johnston.
- There are several vacancies for Faculty Senators on the Academic Coordinating Commission, Senate Library Committee, and Academic Technology Committee for Spring Quarter.
- Senate elections for the next academic year are approaching. Elections for Senate officers will be held at the last meeting of the quarter on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **Sabah Randhawa, University President reported that:**

- The focus of the NWCCU's site visit will be the University's mission fulfillment. This includes the articulation of learning objectives at both the course and programmatic level.
- Ground breaking for the House of Healing Longhouse is scheduled to take place on April 11<sup>th</sup>. The City of Bellingham is considering approval of the lease for the planned site location at its April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- At its meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Trustees plans to consider reviewing a statement on Student Academic Freedom, extending the current strategic plan to 2028, and several contract approvals including one associated with the House of Healing construction. Senators can expect to hear updates on the results of this meeting at the next Faculty Senate meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President reported that:**

- Faculty are encouraged to attend the Faculty Forum with the NWCCU on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. Student and staff forums will also be held on April 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The Board of Trustees statement on Student Academic Freedom has been revised based on feedback provided by the Senate. Senators can expect to hear updates about the statement at the next Senate meeting.

**Peter Pihos, UFWW President reported that:**

- Elections for the UFWW board will be held in the near future. Openings include President, Vice President, Treasurer, and two At-Large positions.
- UFWW is engaging in discussions with the Provost's Office regarding pay compression and equity in an effort to address the rising cost of living.

**Gabe Wong Associated Students Senate President reported that:**

- The AS Senate is drafting a statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence. The Senate can expect to be presented with this statement next month.

## **Discussion Items**

**Update on [Academic Freedom Language To Be Presented To Board of Trustees](#):** Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President, presented the Student Academic Freedom Statement to be considered by the Board of Trustees (BOT) at its upcoming meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>. The BOT took into account feedback offered by the Senate in drafting this statement. The Senate can expect to hear a report of the results of the BOT vote on the statement at the next Senate meeting.

**ACC Update:** Kristi Tyran, ACC Chair, provided a [Quarterly Report](#) detailing the work of the ACC. Of note, the ACC has continued to see new approaches to instruction, including entire programs with Hybrid or Online courses. The ACC reviewed over 100 Alternate Modality proposals and continued to evolve in its understanding of both the higher scrutiny of online education due to regulation and the need for better guidance to support faculty. The ACC is developing a revised Credit Hour Policy and Guidance Document for the regulatory emphasis on Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI). The Faculty Senate can expect to see the approved ACC documents by the end of April.

Senators raised questions and concerns about the current Credit Hour Policy and RSI requirements, including regarding Western's position as a face-to-face University. Tyran clarified that new programs are reviewed and approved by their colleges according to the applicable modality policy before ACC review. Senators raised questions about the federal guidelines related to RSI. Tyran reported that the University is required to provide a clear

message to students regarding the amount of work that is initiated by the instructor of a course. Tyran clarified this is separate from the definition of a contact hour. Senators expressed concern regarding the degree of detail relating to RSI that is required to be included in syllabi. Tyran reported the ACC is looking forward to receiving further information about RSI expectations from NWCCU accreditors.

**Proposed Faculty Handbook Revisions - Constitution:** Brandon Dupont, Senate President, reported on the [Proposed Changes to Section I: Constitution](#) of the faculty handbook. Dupont presented a [summary of the changes](#). Senators are encouraged to review the proposed changes to prepare for voting at the next Senate meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Senate can expect to review proposed changes to the bylaws in Spring Quarter.

### **Items from the Floor**

**Programs Offered by Third Parties in Association with Western:** A senator presented a constituent concern regarding media coverage of a WWU partnership with third party companies offering non-accredited, non-credit programs. Senators noted the appearance that the programs were being offered by Western professors. Senators expressed concerns regarding damage to Western's educational reputation. Robert Squires, Vice Provost for Outreach and Continuing Education, reported that this specific third party vendor contract was terminated following the press coverage. Senators expressed questions regarding the benefit of relationships with third party vendors. Brandon Dupont, Senate President, reported that Jennifer Seltz, SOCEC Chair, has been notified of the above events and plans to address this topic at an upcoming SOCEC meeting. The Senate can expect to hear an update as to the results of this discussion at a future Senate meeting.

**Senators adjourned at 5:37 p.m.**

## Faculty Senate – ROSTER 2023-24

| VOTING ATTENDEES       |                           |     | NON-VOTING MEMBERS   |    |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----|--|----|
| Faculty members        |                           |     | Student members (if applicable)                                    |    |
| Troy Abel              | CENV, UEPP                | --  | Gabe Wong, AS Senate President                                     | P  |
| Charles Anderson       | CHSS-HUM, History         | P   |  |    |
| Rich Brown             | CFPA, Theatre & Dance     | --  | <b>Standing Committees</b>   |    |
| Tim Bruce              | Graduate School           | P   | Eva Gil, SLC Chair   |    |
| Xiaofeng Chen          | CBE, Decision Sciences    | P   | Bidisha Biswas, Leg Representative                                 | P  |
| Kristen Chmielewski    | CHSS-SBC, HHD             | --  | Allison Giffen, Budget Representative                              |    |
| Catherine Clark        | CSE, Chemistry            | P   | Derek Moscato, ATC Chair   |    |
| Sondra Cuban*          | WCE, HCS                  | P   | Jennifer Seltz, OCE Chair  |    |
| Kristin Denham         | CHSS-HUM, Linguistics     | P   | Shevell Thibou, CUE Chair  |    |
| Dawna Drum             | CBE, Accounting           | --  | Kristi Tyran, ACC Chair  | P  |
| Brandon Dupont*        | At Large                  | P   | <b>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS</b>  |    |
| Lindsay Foreman-Murray | WCE, Ed Leadership        | P   | Christopher Bianco, Council of Deans                               | P  |
| Ramadha Piyadi Gamage  | CSE, Math                 | --  | Brad Johnson, Provost  | P  |
| Allison Giffen         | CHSS-HUM, English         | P   | Peter Pihos, UFWW President  | P  |
| Jim Graham             | CHSS-SBS, Psychology      | P   | 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                 | P   |  |    |
| Tesla Monson           | CHSS-SBS, Anthropology    | P   |  |    |
| Mark Peyron            | CSE, Engineering & Design | P   |  |    |
| Clayton Pierce         | Fairhaven                 | P   |  |    |
| Camilo Ponton*         | CSE, Geology              | P   |  |    |
| Jason Query            | CBE, Economics            | P   | <b>Recorder</b>  |    |
| James Ray              | CFPA, Music               | P   | Abby Peterson  | P  |
| Michael Slouber        | CHSS-HUM, GHR             | P   | <b>Guests</b>  |    |
| Shevell Thibou*        | Libraries                 | --  | Becky Johnston, Faculty Senate                                     | P  |
| Derek Yip-Hoi          | CSE, Engineering & Design | P   | Robert Squires, Vice Provost for Outreach and Continuing Education | P  |
| CHSS-HUM (VACANT)      |                           | N/A | Jamie Lawson, Registrar's Office                                   | P  |
| WCE (VACANT)           |                           | N/A |  |    |
|                        |                           |     |  |    |
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|                        |                           |     |  |    |
|                        |                           |     | <b>Voting attendees</b>  | 20 |
|                        |                           |     | <b>Non-voting attendees</b>  | 11 |
|                        |                           |     | <b>TOTAL ATTENDEES</b>   | 31 |