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Official Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
02/24/2025

For Approval

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

Call to Order: Senate President Michael Slouber called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes: The following minutes were approved by consent:

- November 4, 2024 ATC Minutes
- February 4, 2025 ACC Minutes
- February 10, 2025 Faculty Senate Minutes
- February 11, 2025 SLC Minutes

Reports and Announcements

Michael Slouber, *Senate President*

- Senators were reminded to communicate regularly with constituents.
- Given the stressful time with respect to federal actions, it is important to have compassion for each other and students.
- The Provost's Office is going to take on central reporting on faculty harassment through Faculty Relations.
- He was contacted about a public records request that included office locations for all full-time employees, and he pushed back on this. The request was dismissed on a technicality.
- There is an all-faculty email on removing public-facing classroom locations. To find classroom location information, log on to Web4U and navigate to Browse Classes. It is important to communicate this information to colleagues and students for this process to work.
- A Faculty Senate Budget Representative update is posted to the website. Key budget issues include the $12-13 million reduction from the base budget this year and addition reductions next year to close the $18 million deficit, the reduction of around 50 staff positions (~50% vacant) in the coming months, and reductions to Academic Affairs. He noted that there have been varying levels of communication

from Deans after the Academic Affairs cuts and that some of the staff cuts also will impact Academic Affairs.
- The Library Subscription Review process is underway, with a deadline of March 21 for feedback on the spreadsheet.
- "What Are the Promises and Perils of AI at Western?," the next session in the Building Community Through Difficult Conversations series is Wednesday, February 26.
- Becky Johnston has been sending daily news digest emails to Senate Exec. If Senators would like to be added to the distribution list, they should email Becky.

Sabah Randhawa, *University President*

- A communication about the previously announced staff reductions will be sent in the next four to five days.

Brad Johnson, *Provost and Executive Vice President*

- Tonya Alexander, Faculty Relations Director, will work on the faculty harassment reporting form. Before it is rolled out, there will be meetings with the Chief of UPD, the Executive Director of Student Life, and the Vice President of Business and Financial Affairs to finalize the reporting process.
- No inversions have been found to date with respect to the NTT pay rate concern raised at a previous Senate meeting. He will continue to look into this issue.
- Centralization of the scholarship process is moving forward and is targeted for Fall 2025 enrollment. This is being communicated via a message to Deans. There is a new software system to streamline the process.

Vicki Hsueh, *UFWW President*

- The contract reopener this Spring will cover compensation and up to two sections per side. There are two in-person forums (this week and March 3 to get faculty feedback on priorities.
- She met with legislators in Olympia last week. The current $10-12 billion budget deficit could be as high as $15 billion. The Governor has proposed a 3% cut to four-year public higher education institutions, but there is talk that he is now seeking a 6% cut. Legislators are sympathetic to concerns, but they need constituents to reach out to the governor and legislators about what a cut would mean to the campus, community, and students.

Bidisha Biswas, *Faculty Legislative Representative*

- The Council of Faculty also has been told by legislators that the Governor has asked for a 6% cut to higher education.
- Some counterpart colleges have raised concerns about WWU's focus on raising the per-student funding issue with legislators. She has assured them that they are not seeking to shift funding away from other colleges but instead working to increase overall funding for higher education.
- The public records legislation (HB 1949) had good support this year but did not make it out of committee in time. There will be a push to advance the bill next year.

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- The Presidential search transparency bill (HB 1337) has advanced.
- The student aid bill (SB 5402) has advanced out of committee, but the cost is raising concerns among legislators.

Moose Abou-Harb, *AS Senate President*

- He attended Lobby Day in Olympia and focused on supporting financial aid and scholarship programs. There is pushback on anything with a fiscal note.

Johann Neem, *Appointments and Elections Officer*

- Elections emails will be sent to faculty governance chairs on March 3 and will include the names of any Senators who have indicated that they would like reappointment.

Information Item

ACC Temporary Policy on Course Scheduling and Delivery at Olympic College-Poulsbo (Spring 2025): On February 18, ACC unanimously approved an ACC Executive Committee motion to approve a temporary policy for Spring 2025 to address class scheduling and delivery issues related to construction at Olympic College in Poulsbo. This policy is now expected to impact only one course. Due to timing issues, this was brought by Senate Executive Council as an information item prior to submission of ACC minutes to the Senate at the March 10 Senate meeting.

Action Items

- **Creating a Task Force on Qualitative Course Evaluations:** The Senate unanimously approved a motion from Senate Executive Council to create a Task Force on Qualitative Course Evaluations. Senate President Slouber noted that the issue of student voice was not a fit for the charge and that it will be considered separately. He has met with ASWWU Senate President Abou-Harb about this.

- **Supporting Efforts to Improve Faculty Harassment Reporting Procedures:** The Senate adopted by consent a motion from Senate Executive Council to continue supporting efforts to improve the procedures surrounding the reporting of faculty harassment. During discussion, there were comments about processes for staff/administration who experience harassment too and about including anonymous harassment from within WWU.

Discussion Items

- **Update on Federal Research Grants:** David Patrick, Vice Provost for Research, provided an update on federal administration actions impacting research grants, including an overview of the Executive Orders issued over the last month and their impact on WWU. He reported that WWU is being reimbursed for grants at this time and that there currently is only one grant that has had a stop-work order (due to an

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outside partner) compliance. With respect to the Executive Order on NIH indirect cost rates (currently paused by the courts), WWU has about six grants and the change would cost tens of thousands a year. However, if the reduction to indirect cost rates were extended to other federal funding agencies, that would have a large impact on funding.

He also reported on several other issues that are starting to come forward, including grant-by-grant keyword reviews. WWU has been contacted about two grants and asked about whether they comply with EOs. For the multi-year Americorps grant, the words are diversity, equity, and climate change. The federal notice gave a three-day deadline to certify compliance, return funding, or amend the grant. There was a Temporary Restraining Order issued last Friday that relieved WWU of the need to respond on that timeline and currently the university is not changing the scope of work in anticipation of something that might happen. He said that the worst that could happen is not being reimbursed for costs and that the risk is manageable.

During discussion, a concern was raised regarding putting reimbursable grant expenses on a personal credit card. The Vice Provost stated that WWU would remain responsible for reimbursement. A concern was raised about how faculty can plan ahead, especially regarding hiring. The Vice Provost said that WWU has a limited capacity to pick up salaries if the federal government pulls the grant funding rug out from under WWU.

President Randhawa said that he is confident that research funding will come back if the country is to remain competitive. In response to concerns about faculty whose career trajectories are tied to research, the Provost said that there are lessons from COVID about how to make internal adjustments.

There was a question about who is responsible for determining if a grant is ADEI. RSP will work with PI, and if the issue is complicated, call in the Assistant Attorney General for guidance.

- **Discussion on Department of Education OCR Dear Colleague Letter:** Senate President Slouber expressed his views on the February 14 OCR Dear Colleague letter, stating said that he believes the state's messaging is inaccurate and that many people conflate a range of discourses and practices under the banner of "DEI programs." He described how WWU programs could be evaluated using the following three buckets: "clearly in compliance," "in compliance but could be misconstrued as out of compliance," and "may not be in compliance." He stressed that the letter is not about curriculum or free expression, but rather focuses on actions which discriminate based on race and other protected characteristics. He will be attending an Office of Equity ADEI meeting on Wednesday for university leadership.

  The Provost said that there have been talks with the Assistant Attorney General about how to look at programs such as affinity groups and the Centers. Those are all open to every student.

Vice President McPhee Shaw said that people want to want to know who is in charge and whether WWU will continue to stand firm and not comply in advance.

UFWW President Hsueh said that language on page three of the Dear Colleague seems to reference curriculum and she is heartened by the Provost's comments.

Items from the Floor

- **Art/Art History Instructional Technician:** Senator James Ray raised a constituent concern regarding an Art/Art History instructional temporary staff position that is only 20 hours per week with a request that the Senate support its being made permanent and increased to either two positions or, at a minimum, be either a full-time position or two part-time positions.

- **Campus Sanctuary Network**: Senator Johann Neem raised a constituent concern about whether the Senate or individual Senators would sign a petition that calls on on the Washington State Attorney General to "issue guidelines for the protection of the many valuable, and currently vulnerable, students on our campuses." He can share a link with interested parties.

Adjournment

The Senate adjourned at 5:27 pm.

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Faculty Senate Attendance
02/24/2025

Voting Members			Non-Voting Members		
Tim Bruce	Graduate School	x	Moose Abou-Harb	AS Senate President	x
Xiaofeng Chen	CBE-Decision Sciences	--	Sabah Randhawa	President	x
Catherine Clark	CSE-Chemistry	x	Brad Johnson	Provost	x
Jim Cooper	CSE-Biology	x	Christopher Bianco	Council of Deans	x
Sondra Cuban	WCE-HCS	--	Vicki Hsueh	UFWW President	x
Dawna Drum	CBE-Accounting	x			
Maria Timmons Flores	WCE-Elem Ed	--	**Committee Chairs and Senate Representatives**		
Lindsay Foreman-Murray	WCE-Ed Leadership	x	Bidisha Biswas	Legislative Rep	x
Yanara Friedland	Fairhaven	--	Kristi Tyran	Budget Rep	--
Ramadha Piyadi Gamage	CSE-Math	x	Melissa D'Eloia	ACC	x
John Gialanella	CFPA-Design	x	Derek Moscato	ATC	--
Gabe Gossett	Libraries	x	Shevell Thibou	CUE	--
Kameron Harris	CSE-Computer Science	x	Cindy Elliser	CUP	--
Ernest Hartwell	CHSS-HUM-LLC	x	Eva Gil	SLC	--
Ron Helms	CHSS-SBS-Sociology	x	Brandon Dupont	Ad Hoc Handbook	x
Erika McPhee-Shaw	CENV-ESCI	x	Shawn Knabb	SOCEC	--
Jeffrey Meier	CSE-Math	x			
Tesla Monson	CHSS-SBS-Anthro	x	**Recorder**		
Johann Neem	CHSS-HUM-History	x	Becky Johnston	Faculty Senate	x
Mark Peyron	CSE-Engineering & Design	x			
Camilo Ponton	CSE-Geology	x	**Guests**		
Steven Garfinkle	CBE-Economics	--	David Patrick	Vice Provost, Research	
James Ray	CFPA-Music	x			
Anne Riggs	CHSS-SBS-Psychology	x			
Michael Slouber	At Large (President)	x			
Nick Washburn	CHSS-SBS-HHD	x			
Dennis Whitcomb	CHSS-HUM-Philosophy	x			
Greg Youmans	CHSS-HUM-English	x			
Stephanie Gomez	CHSS-HUM-Jou/Com	x			
Vacant	CENV-UEPP	na			

FOR AGENDA

Voting Attendees	24	**Non-Voting Attendees**	9	**Total Attendees**	**33**

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