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Official Minutes
Senate Academic Technology Committee Meeting
11/6/2025

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

Call to Order: ATC Chair George Zhao called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The October 2, 2025 ATC minutes were approved electronically on October 8, 2025.

Reports and Announcements

George Zhao, ATC Chair

- Committee members were reminded that Zoom's AI Companion will be used for documenting the November and December meetings, as voted on during the October ATC meeting.
- There was no objection to a request from the Chair to add the following two items, which were brought to his attention after the agenda was distributed, Discussion Items:
  - Faculty Use of AI Tools Permissions for Job-Related Tasks
  - AI Text-to-Speech Applications and Faculty Intellectual Property Considerations

Discussion Items

Outreach and Faculty Assistance for Digital Accessibility: Justina Brown, Senior Instructional Designer and Director of the Center for Instructional Innovation, provided information about outreach and faculty assistance for digital accessibility standards. The meeting focused on accessibility compliance and AI usage policies at Western University. Justina reported on outreach efforts including CII emails, workshops, and info sessions across campus, while highlighting challenges with PDF remediation and the need for better technical solutions.

There are campus-wide efforts to address accessibility compliance in Canvas courses by April 2026, as per a DOJ ruling. She highlighted the implementation of the Popetech accessibility dashboard tool and shared concerns about faculty perceptions of Western's approach to accessibility requirements. Justina also discussed the challenges of low enrollment in accessibility workshops and the limited demand for student remediation assistance, despite available resources. Justina specifically highlighted that only one faculty member has made use of the accessibility assistant service and the accessibility workshop that has been offered to faculty did not fill up, which limits CII's ability provide additional resources towards this initiative.

Justina discussed the upcoming Winter Workshop dates and explained that Popetech can only scan Canvas content, not linked files or PDFs. She highlighted the importance of making content accessible, particularly PDFs, and mentioned tools like Adobe Acrobat for remediation. Justina also covered captioning and audio description options in Panopto for videos. There was a question about the difference between errors and alerts in Canvas, and it was clarified that both are important, but errors should be prioritized. The group also discussed the challenges of making PDFs accessible, including issues with formatting and optical character recognition. There was a question about the use of Arial font for accessibility, and Justina confirmed that it doesn't matter for screen readers, but clear fonts and formatting like underlining is important for low vision students. There was a question about the necessity of designing courses with accessibility in mind if students can use the Immersive Reader tool in Canvas. Justina emphasized that it's the law to ensure accessibility, and while the tool is helpful, it doesn't replace the need for proper design.

The following links were shared:

- Accessibility at Western – Presentation
- Teaching & Learning Cooperative Workshops
- PDF and Digital Materials Remediation Checklist – Orbis Cascade Alliance
- WebAIM: Link Contrast Checker

Faculty Use of AI Tools Permissions for Job-Related Tasks: The Committee discussed a new CHSS policy banning AI usage in tenure reviews, with faculty expressing concerns about privacy and questioning the enforceability of such a policy, considering the inaccurate detection capabilities of AI detection tools. The policy change that was the subject of the discussion is on page 7 of the CHSS EPOP:

> "No member of CHSS faculty, departments, or committees is permitted to use artificial intelligence, generative AI, or LLMs for any step in the process of evaluating applications for probationary review, tenure, post-tenure review, promotion, or professional leave."

Committee members raised concerns that the policy is too restrictive, as the policy bans the use of generative AI to efficiently learn theoretical concepts that they may not be familiar with that are present in faculty evaluations or using AI to help revise writing. Committee members indicated interest in continuing the discussion on the AI policy and learning more about the motivations that led to the creation of the policy. Committee members also mentioned considering a similar policy for the University.

The following links were shared:

- Guidance | Artificial Intelligence Hub | Western Washington University
- AI in Communications and Marketing | University Communications and Marketing | Western Washington University

AI Text-to-Speech Applications and Faculty Intellectual Property Considerations: The Committee briefly discussed the use of AI text-to-speech applications in classrooms, particularly regarding student use of tools like Otter.AI and Glean for recording lectures, which raised questions about intellectual property rights and recording policies. The committee was also made aware that the DAC offers students Glean as an assistive technology accommodation for qualifying students.

The following links were shared:

- Recording Content in Instructional Spaces | Faculty Senate | Western Washington University
- POL-U2100.08 Recording in Classrooms (Interim) | Policies & Procedures | Western Washington University
- Glean – Work AI that Works | Agents, Assistant & Search
- Otter Meeting Agent - AI Notetaker, Transcription, Insights
- Notely

Items from the Floor

There were no items from the floor.

Adjournment

Committee members adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

ATC Attendance
11/6/2025

Voting Members			Non-Voting Members		
Derek Moscato	CHSS-HUM	x	Chuck Lanham	VP for IT/CIO	--
Paul Chen	CHSS-SBS	x	Michael Wilder	Asst Dir, Teaching, Learning, & Tech	--
Derek McCroom	CFPA	x	Colin Hanson	IT Professional	--
Jiexun Li	CBE	x	John Farquhar	Director, ATUS	x
Claudia Johnson	Fairhaven	--	Vacant	Student Affairs Purchasing Professional	NA
Andy Bunn	CENV	--	Andrea Rodger	BFA Purchasing Professional	x
George Zhao (Chair)	WCE	x	Vacant	ASWWU Senate	NA
Sid Devarenne	Libraries	x	**Recorder**		
Wala Saadah	CSE	x	George Zhai	Chair	na
Rob Berger	CSE	x			
Vacant	Faculty Senate	NA	**Guests**		
Vacant	ASWWU Senate	NA			
Lauren Nicaandri	OCE	--			

Voting Attendees	8
Non-Voting Attendees	2
Total Attendees	**10**

Quorum - 6