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Official Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
02/09/2026

Draft Approval

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

Call to Order: Senate President Erika McPhee-Shaw called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

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

- January 20, 2026 ACC Minutes
- January 22, 2026 SOCEC Minutes
- January 26, 2026 Faculty Senate Minutes
- January 27, 2026 Senate Library Committee Minutes

Reports and Announcements

Erika McPhee-Shaw, Senate President

- The Recording in Classrooms policy has been finalized and is posted to the WWU policy website. Past Faculty Senate President Slouber, President Randhawa, and Provost Johnson were thanked for their work on this policy.
- The voting results for the Direct Admit to Major action item on February 9 has been corrected in the minutes to 23 yes, 1 no, 6 abstain.
- Since the Faculty Legislative Representative is unable to attend today's meeting due to illness, President McPhee-Shaw directed senators to the FLR's written report. Questions or feedback may be directed to the FLR.
- She has been talking with other faculty governance leaders in Washington about shared governance issues.
- The Senate Executive Council met with President Randhawa last Monday and had a nice, productive conversation. One item discussed was the Senate Exec request for an external review of DAC. President Randhawa committed to following up on the request. Most of the conversation focused on shared governance and

communication between the President and faculty. It was noted that the President's February 9 letter to the community reflected the latter.

Sabah Randhawa, University President

- The President and Provost are scheduling small group breakfasts for newly-promoted faculty.
- He appreciated the conversation with Senate Executive Council.
- The Board of Trustees is meeting this Thursday and Friday, with a focus on grants and research. There are no major decisions scheduled.
- He was invited by the WA Education Association to participate in a session with a group of legislators who have formed a Higher Education Caucus. This is an encouraging development for long-term issues. The current three budget priorities are to protect and restore financial aid, protect institutions from further cuts, and protecting revenue devoted to WEIA (workforce education investment account).

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President

- BFA is printing a card stock version of the private space signage that he referenced in an all-faculty email. They will be available through dean's offices.
- He is following up on constituent concerns raised during Senate meetings through case-by-case meetings, and did so regarding the parking closure issues raised at the January 26 meeting.

Theresa Warburton, UFWW President

- Lobby Day is coming up, and AFT is coordinating transportation from Bellingham. Any individuals interested in attending and using transportation may contact the UFWW President or their steward.
- UFWW is working on Know Your Rights Training, along with other campus labor organizations. The hope is to have it scheduled prior to Spring Break.
- The UFWW Executive Board has approved a series of committees. A service call will go out via stewards. Senators were reminded that service to UFWW counts as university service.
- The Spring party has been scheduled for May 29.

Tesla Monson, Faculty Senate Budget Representative

- The University Budget Committee is meeting on Tuesday, February 10, and an update to the Senate will be provided after that.

John Hardgrove, ASWWU Senate

- The ASWWU STF Initiatives Committee reviewed 18 abstracts, and 13 have moved to full application phase. Several applicants were asked to combine proposals

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due to similarities. There was $600,000 in requests for $180,000 in funding. Proposal review is scheduled for early Spring Quarter.

Discussion Items

- **2026 Senate Election Calendar and Distribution List:** Appointments and Elections Officer Gabe Gossett reviewed the proposed 2026 Senate election calendar and distribution list required under Senate Bylaws 4.2 and 4.4.

  During discussion, there was a question about the faculty percent number in the distribution being 99.6% rather than 100 percent. This will be verified prior to the next Senate meeting. and this will be checked prior to the next Senate meeting.

  There was a question about whether filling a vacancy in the middle of the term would count toward three-term limit, six-year limit. This issue is not specifically addressed in the bylaws.

  There was a question whether there were substantial differences between TT/NTT levels compared to last year. It was reported that nothing substantial was noted but it can be re-reviewed prior to the next Senate meeting.

- **First-Year Courses and Student Retention**

  - **John Krieg, Director of Institutional Effectiveness**, provided data regarding student retention. He discussed the WWU retention rate, comparisons with other WA State public higher education institutions, and the effects of various factors on retention. It was noted that the federal government defines retention as the number of first-year students who return for their second year.

  - **Jack Herring, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Shurla Rogers-Thibou, Faculty Director of Academic First-Year Programs**, gave a presentation about the history of and proposed changes to the SMNR 190 series courses to expand them to all first-generation students and all first-year students with GPAs below 2.5 (approximately 900 students, 35-40 sections). There is an open call for faculty interested in teaching the courses during a AY 2026-27 pilot, which will be evaluated for effectiveness and impact. It was noted that ongoing, broad faculty participation will be needed to develop and refine the curriculum and other targeted academic support.

  - **Senate Discussion** – During discussion, Senators expressed support for services to support students while raising a number of concerns and questions regarding the specifics of the SMNR expansion proposal, summarized below.

    - A senator noted that it is striking that students are not returning because of mental health, basic needs, and lack of community, none of which are

curricular. It seems that adding three additional one-credit classes might increase student stress levels. In response, it was noted that the peer mentor position is paid and that first-year programs works with other campus partners to address mental health and other concerns. It was reported that there is literature showing that high-impact, cohort-based experiences for first-year students are successful.

- A concern was raised regarding whether requiring an extra one-credit class would complicate student first-year courseloads and whether the goal might be achieved without impacting student courseloads.

- A senator expressed appreciation for the funding that is being dedicated to the pilot but would like to see it used to reduce GUR class sizes instead, which would improve student-faculty relationships.

- It was reported that the courses will be taught by faculty, in response to a question regarding this issue.

- A senator noted that the proposal would create a faculty commitment to teaching two or three one-credit courses with high-impact interactions, which raises major workload concerns. It was reported that the interaction requirement is for students to meet with faculty once per quarter.

- It was asked how faculty can mentor 60-90 students.

- A question was asked whether there was consideration to have the courses be for just the GPA category, rather than GPA and first-generation students.

- It was reported that another strategy that has been discussed is a conditional admissions approach, but this would create a punitive consequence.

- A senator stated that the workload concerns with one credit creates a sustainability concern and asked what kind of training and support can be provided to faculty to incentivize them. It was stated that faculty are teaching from the heart and that the incentive is seeing students succeed. Departments provide training and the first-year programs office provides an annual workshop.

- A question was raised about course content by a senator who sees students in 100 level courses struggle with notetaking and basic study skills. It was asked whether there is space for that type of content in the SMNR courses. It was reported that there are efforts to build those skills

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through collaborations with Western Libraries and Academic Advising. Each of the students (of the 900 expected) will have an assigned advisory.

- It was reported by the Associate VP for Academic Affairs that this is a pilot to see what will work at WWU. There currently is no data to demonstrate that it will.

- A senator stated that she does not see how the time commitment works for faculty, especially due to the interaction requirement. It was reported that the expectation would be 10-15 meetings during regular office hours.

- A senator who was a first-generation student spoke about having so much to do as a student. It was stated that the program needs to be seen as labor for both students and the first-generation student faculty who will want to mentor students, not just as a heart project.

- Several senators, as well as the Senate and UFWW presidents, spoke about the need to talk about faculty retention issues. It was noted that the labor in giving time for these projects falls to underrepresented groups. It was reported that faculty retention issues are almost the same issues as student retention issues, and that there is a need to have faculty who can give students reasons to stay.

- It was asked whether there is work being done with faculty who teach courses such as English 101 and Math 99, because it seems that the content could be integrated into those classes.

- **Update on Student Immigration-Related Concerns**: Aspen Cates-Doglio, ASWWU President, provided an update on recent student organizing with respect to immigration-related concerns. The walkout had nearly 2,000 campus participants throughout the day. Students want safety plans and are frustrated. Organizers presented a list of demands to the Provost, had a good conversation, and are working to schedule another meeting. The ASWWU Executive Board supported the walkout and is working to support students in as many ways as possible. It was reported that the legal support pilot of $5,000 approved by ASWWU passed last spring is close to being up and running. The top requests from student organizers are direct communication when ICE is in the area and funds for immigration crises.

Items from the Floor

- **Heterodox Academy:** Senator Dawna Drum (CBE) presented information on behalf of Brandon Dupont (Economics) regarding the Heterodox Academy (HxA) "campus community" at WWU, which he founded with Paul Chen (Political Science) a few years ago. The mission is to advance open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive

disagreement across higher education – the foundations of our universities as truth-seeking, knowledge-generating institutions. The campus community is invited to join the HxA campus community and may email Brandon Dupont at dupontb@wwu.edu for more information.

WWU faculty also are invited to attend the upcoming West Coast Regional Conference of HxA ("The Value of Viewpoint Diversity: Why It Matters and How to Practice It Well") from April 23-24 at the UC Berkeley campus.

Adjournment

The Senate adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

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Faculty Senate Attendance Senate
02/09/2026

Voting Members			Non-Voting Members		
Brianna Delker	CHSS-SBS-Psychology	x	John Hardgrove	ASWWU Senate	x
Camilo Ponton	CSE-Geology	x	Sabah Randhawa	President	x
Catherine Clark	CSE-Chemistry	x	Brad Johnson	Provost	x
Dawna Drum	CBE-Accounting	x	Christopher Bianco	Council of Deans	--
Dennis Whitcomb	CHSS-HUM-Philosophy	x	Theresa Warburton	UFWW President	x
Erika McPhee-Shaw	President (At-Large)	x			
Ernest Hartwell	CHSS-HUM-LLC/Linguistics	--			
Gabe Gossett	Libraries	x	**Committee Chairs and Senate Representatives**		
Greg Youmans	CHSS-HUM-English	--	Bidisha Biswas	Legislative Rep	--
Heather Moore	CHSS-SBS-SLHS/HHD	x	Tesla Monson	Budget Rep	NA
James Ray	CFPA-Music	x	Michael Slouber	Past President	x
Jane Wong	CHSS-HUM-Ethnic Studies	x	Melissa D'Eloia	ACC	x
Jason Query	CBE-Economics	x	George Zhao	ATC	--
Jim Cooper	CSE-Biology	x	Kendra Dupuy	SLC	--
Johann Neem	CHSS-HUM-History	x	Shawn Knabb	SOCEC	--
John Gialanella	CFPA-Design	x			
Junaid Khan	EECE, Physics & Astronomy	x			
Kameron Harris	CSE-Computer Science	--	**Recorder**		
Lindsay Foreman-Murray	WCE-ELIT	x	Becky Johnston	Faculty Senate	x
Margarita Ruiz Guerrero	WCE-ECE	x			
Maura O'Leary	CHSS-SBS-Linguistics	--			
Patrick Buckley	CENV	--	**Guests**		
Ramadha Piyadi Gamage	CSE-Math	--	Jack Herring	AVP – Academic Affairs	x
Ron Helms	CHSS-SBS-Sociology	x	Shurla Rogers-Thibou	Faculty Director, Academic First-Year Programs	x
Sondra Cuban	WCE-HCS	x	John Krieg	Director, OIE	x
Stephanie Gomez	CHSS-HUM-Jou/Com	x	Aspen Cates-Doglio	President, ASWWU	x
Steven Sehman	Fairhaven	x			
Tarek Algeddawy	CSE-Engineering & Design	x			
Tesla Monson	CHSS-SBS-Anthro	x			
Tim Bruce	Graduate School	x			

Voting Attendees	24	**Non-Voting Attendees**	11	**Total Attendees**	**35**

Not Approved