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Official Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
02/23/2026

For Approval

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

Call to Order: Senate President Erika McPhee-Shaw called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

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

- February 3, 2026 ACC Minutes
- February 5, 2026 ATC Minutes
- February 9, 2026 Faculty Senate Minutes

Reports and Announcements

Erika McPhee-Shaw, Senate President

- The invitation from President Randhawa and Provost Johnson to senators to meet and discuss challenges and opportunities was noted.
- The Senate's February report to the Board of Trustees focused on the work of the Faculty Legislative Representative. She thanked Bidisha Biswas for her work as FLR and as vice-chair of the Council of Faculty
- Last week, the Senate Executive Council focused its meeting on discussing First-Year SMNR courses with the Provost.
- She will be presenting to the Council of Deans on Tuesday, February 24.
- Senators were reminded that it is difficult to manage hybrid meetings and were encouraged to attend Senate meetings in person in Spring Quarter.

Sabah Randhawa, University President

- The House and Senate operating and capital supplemental budget proposals have been released. (House Operating, Senate Operating, House Capital, Senate

Capital). The big news is that the reductions impacting WWU in the operating budget proposals are much smaller than the Governor's proposed budget. The difference would be made up through the capital budget.
- On Wednesday, the House Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee will hold a hearing on HB 2070, a bill to provide state funding parity for WWU. He will testify at the hearing, as will the Chair of the Board of Trustees, faculty, and students. The goal of the hearing is to lay the groundwork for the future.

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President

- He is traveling to a DC for a gathering of provosts to discuss AI and higher education. He will report back to the Faculty Senate, UFWW, and university leadership.
- Regarding First-Year SMNR courses, he has been hearing from department chairs and many questions have been raised. He is looking to answer them collaboratively and would like to inventory what is being done in GURs and also to have faculty advisors work with First-Year Academic Programs. The number of sections for SMNR courses will be scaled back, with a focus on GPA as the predictor of retention.

Ginny Dawson, Vice President, UFWW

- The Stewards Council met and will provide an update via email.
- UFWW is reaching out to faculty that work with ESEs to obtain feedback.

Tesla Monson, Faculty Senate Budget Representative

- The Budget Committee met last week and received updates on the legislative session and enrollment. The were initial conversations regarding tuition levels for non-resident students and athletics.

Cathy Wineinger, AAUP Support Task Force

- The Task Force has been meeting biweekly this quarter and continues to work on priorities related to academic freedom, support for non-citizen students and faculty, and ensuring that WWU's policies and practices are aligned with the AAUP demands approved by the Senate last Spring.
- The Task Force hopes that faculty can receive clarity on the emergency modality MOU that was passed by the Faculty Senate in October and strongly recommends that the Administration provide written guidance to Deans that emphasizes the intention of the MOU passed by the Faculty Senate so they can take this into consideration.
- Appreciation was expressed to the administration for creating private/public space signs. The Task Force seeks to ensure these signs are actually displayed and that it is not left to individual faculty or departments to put them up.

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- The Task Force met with Chief Katy Potts and Monica Jackson (Director of Emergency Management) about the university's emergency procedures related to ICE or other law enforcement presence on campus. They are happy to come to department or college governance meetings to answer any questions or concerns about these procedures.
- Immigration Enforcement FAQ and Guide to Expressive Activities have been added to the Western Safe App under "Support Resources" to hopefully make it easier for faculty, staff, and students to access.
- The WEA has an Immigration Legal Assistance Program for attorney advice as well as defense and legal counsel for specific situations related to ICE enforcement on school property. This is limited and runs through August. UFWW stewards should be contacted for more information.

Bidisha Biswas, Faculty Legislative Representative

- A written report was provided to senators regarding the legislative session.
- The House and Senate budget news is positive, with distance in funding to cover between the legislative proposals and the Governor's proposed supplemental budget.

Laura Free, ASWWU Senate

- There were no reports or announcements from ASWWU.

Action Item

- **Approve 2026 Election Calendar and Distribution List:** A motion by Appointments and Elections Officer Gabe Gossett (and seconded) to approve the 2026 Election Calendar and Distribution List was approved by a vote of 25 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions.

Discussion Items

- **Research and Sponsored Programs Update:** David Patrick, Vice Provost for Research, gave a presentation on the role of grant funding at WWU and the impact of research grants on faculty and students. This information was shared with the Board of Trustees at its February meeting. He reported that Western ranks nationally near the top of undergraduate alumni who earn research doctorate degrees as result of having exceptional faculty, providing access to students, and employing graduate TAs. Information about indirect costs in light of federal policy changes was shared.

- **Canvas AI Features:** George Zhao, ATC Chair, and Michael Wilder, ATUS Assistant Director, provided information about and demonstrations of three free IgniteAI tools recently released by Canvas: Smart Search, Discussion Summaries, and

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Translations. The features are currently disabled at the University level. (AI for Academic Tools link)

The ATC Chair stated that the Canvas AI features are an example of the need for an AI approval process and that, given the natural affinity of ATC for technology, there is a concern that it would not be representative of broader faculty viewpoints.

The Discussion Summaries tool analyzes discussion posts for relevance and provides student names and evaluation notes, and is available only for faculty. If turned on by WWU, it can be enabled on a course-by-course basis. Students would not be able to see whether it is activated.

The Search tool adds a way to search via course navigation menu for faculty and students to use. This also would be opt-in on a course-by-course basis if enabled at the University level.

The Translations tool allows students to translate discussions, announcements, and inbox items into a preferred language. This feature would automatically be enabled for all courses if enabled at the University level.

During discussion, the following issues and concerns were raised:

- Would there be faculty control for the translation tool, especially for language courses? It was reported that the tool could be disabled on a course-by-course basis.

- Would there are privacy and intellectual property issues regarding the search tool? It was reported that WWU materials would be accessed through the cloud in a way that protects security and privacy through contractual language and that the information would not be saved elsewhere. The AI would create a "table of contents" for the course.

- There was a follow-up question about cloud security because there is a feedback option for the search tool. It was reported that the feedback would not be personally identifiable, would be stored in WWUs segregated database, and would be used to train the AI.

- Would the discussion tool constitute AI doing grading?

- Where does Instructure intend to go in terms of rolling out products? It was reported that the focus seems to be on creating more tools for faculty to generate/improve courses and to manage grading tasks.

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UFWW requested consultation before AI tools are implemented in Canvas to ensure that they comply with the CBA, especially regarding intellectual property.

Senate President McPhee-Shaw referenced the January 26 Senate discussion regarding AI at WWU regarding framing AI issues in terms of terms of ethics, values, academic honesty, and academic freedom.

There was a suggestion that the Senate vote in two weeks about whether to support enabling the AI Senate Tools. Concerns regarding creating a Task Force to consider this and future similar decisions were raised. There was a question regarding whether there has been movement on University-wide policy. President McPhee-Shaw stated that the January 26 Senate meeting comments showed a lack of support for a university-wide policy beyond looking at AI-related issues through ethics, values, academic freedom, and academic honesty.

The Senate Executive Council will discuss constituent feedback on the Canvas AI tools and bring the issue back to the full Senate for action. President McPhee-Shaw requested senators provide feedback via email (Faculty.Senate@wwu.edu) before Monday, March 2.

Items from the Floor

- There were no items from the floor.

Adjournment

The Senate adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

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Faculty Senate Attendance Senate
02/23/2026

Voting Members			Non-Voting Members		
Brianna Delker	CHSS-SBS-Psychology	x	Laura Free (Proxy)	ASWWU Senate	x
Camilo Ponton	CSE-Geology	--	Sabah Randhawa	President	x
Catherine Clark	CSE-Chemistry	--	Brad Johnson	Provost	x
Dawna Drum	CBE-Accounting	x	Christopher Bianco	Council of Deans	x
Dennis Whitcomb	CHSS-HUM-Philosophy	x	Ginny Dawson	UFWW Vice resident	x
Erika McPhee-Shaw	President (At-Large)	x			
Ernest Hartwell	CHSS-HUM-LLC/Linguistics	x			
Gabe Gossett	Libraries	x	**Committee Chairs and Senate Representatives**		
Greg Youmans	CHSS-HUM-English	x	Bidisha Biswas	Legislative Rep	x
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	--	George Zhao	ATC	x
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	x	**Recorder**		
Lindsay Foreman-Murray	WCE-ELIT	x	Becky Johnston	Faculty Senate	x
Margarita Ruiz Guerrero	WCE-ECE	x			
Maura O'Leary	CHSS-SBS-Linguistics	x			
Patrick Buckley	CENV	x	**Guests**		
Ramadha Piyadi Gamage	CSE-Math	x	Michael Wilder	Assistant Director, ATUS	x
Ron Helms	CHSS-SBS-Sociology	x	Cathy Wineinger	Chair, AAUP Task Force	x
Sondra Cuban	WCE-HCS	x	David Patrick	Vice Provost, RSP	x
Stephanie Gomez	CHSS-HUM-Jou/Com	x			
Steven Sehman	Fairhaven	x			
Tarek Algeddawy	CSE-Engineering & Design	x			
Tesla Monson	CHSS-SBS-Anthro	x			
Tim Bruce	Graduate School	x			

Voting Attendees	27	**Non-Voting Attendees**	13	**Total Attendees**	**39**

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